

is produced, it is transported, and it is sold by transnational criminal cartels—criminal cartels. They import chemicals to make the poison from communist China and then traffic it into the United States.

The secure border that President Trump is delivering does take a chunk out of the cartels' bottom line, and they notice it. The cartels are actually having to shut down their drug labs. They are running scared. We need to keep them on the run. Now is the time to turn up the heat.

Passing the HALT Fentanyl Act will aid President Trump's successful efforts to secure the border and to stop these killer cartels.

On one point, let me end with this: The Senate Judiciary Committee heard from parents who lost their children to fentanyl overdoses. One of those parents who testified, Jaime Puerta of California, lost his son to a fentanyl overdose. His son was just 16 years old. Listen to what Jaime had to say here in the Senate. He said:

My son had consumed what he thought was a blue M30 Oxycodone pill, but, in fact, had, unknowingly—

And the man went on to say—

I repeat, unknowingly ingested an illicitly manufactured counterfeit opioid made of nothing more than filler, a binding agent, and illicit fentanyl. This was deceptively made to look exactly like a pharmaceutical grade oxycodone pill, and it killed him.

Look, we need to pass the HALT Fentanyl Act. We need to do it today. We need to turn the tide against this fentanyl epidemic. This is the legislation that deserves to become law. Every major law enforcement group supports it. Most importantly, families of victims support it as well.

We have an opportunity to act today to save lives, to act now. Let's work together to get it done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

ECONOMY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, my friend and colleague from Wyoming mentioned the New York Times this morning and reports, articles, on the economy, and so I took a quick look to see if I could find the column that he was referring to, though I couldn't find it, I did find this on page B2.

Headline: "Stocks Decline Further As Investors Struggle To Make Sense Of Trump's Latest Tariff Talk."

The article says:

Markets whipsawed on Tuesday, as investors puzzled through President Trump's commitment to tariffs, with stocks dropping in early trading before recovering late in the day. The S&P 500 index fell 1.5 percent at its low point before recovering some ground and ending the day 0.8 percent lower.

Same page B2:

Business confidence falls as uncertainty sets in. The confidence level of small businesses dropped for a third straight month in February wiping away much of the gains notched in the aftermath of President Trump's election victory.

I don't think the Trump plan for this economy is all that clear, and it ap-

pears that the writers of the New York Times agree. Many of the people in the business community are puzzled. Some are alarmed by the tariff talk of this administration and the zigzagging approach to the economy.

So I would say, at this moment the jury is still out and sending messages to the court that they are dubious about this policy at all.

If the Presiding Officer has any question in his own mind, I suggest he starts with the farmers in his State and ask them what they think of this tariff policy. I have been meeting with them over the last several days, and they are very skeptical, to say the least.

HALT FENTANYL ACT

Mr. President, the second point I would like to make is on the HALT Fentanyl bill which is coming before us. I am going to vote for it. It extends the classification of fentanyl-type drugs as schedule I drugs, the most serious narcotics in our country.

I do say this: What we are doing is extending current policy. There is no new approach in this bill. It was reported out of committee virtually as it passed the House, and the effort in the committee—Judiciary Committee—to make it stronger or better was turned back with the argument: We can't change a word. We have to accept the current language.

As Senator BOOKER of New Jersey has said on the floor—and I have heard him—unfortunately, saying that we can't change a word means the policies of today must continue indefinitely.

I think that is a mistake. We need to consider several other elements that could help us fight these cartels and stop fentanyl, which is taking so many American lives.

Let me give you a couple examples. No. 1, the President had thunderous applause when he suggested that he was designating the cartels in Mexico as terrorist agents. I applauded along with the rest of the people in the Chamber, but I wonder if we are seriously, as a nation, treating the cartels as terrorist agents. And here is why I raise the question: One of the major complaints in Mexico is the fact that the cartels are heavily armed, sometimes more heavily armed than the Mexican military and law enforcement forces.

And they are heavily armed with weapons provided by the United States, high-powered rifles that we are sending in volume down to the cartel members to fight the Government of Mexico and to spread their deadly product into the United States and beyond.

If we seriously believe the cartels are a terrorist group, what in the world are American gun manufacturers doing supplying them with the arms that they can stop the reach of the law and military forces in Mexico? Are they terrorists, or are they customers? If they are just customers, then I don't understand this bragging about designating them as terrorists. Let's treat

them as terrorists, and let's stop the flow of deadly weapons from the United States to the Mexican drug cartels.

Secondly, 80 percent of the drugs that end up in the hands of our children in America are there because of the internet. Kids have access to buying drugs. The Senator from Wyoming gave a good point and illustration of that when referring to a recent hearing we held. The 16-year-old thinking he was buying some form of oxycodone ended up buying fentanyl and dying as a result of it.

Why in the world aren't these social media sources and internet sources being held responsible? Why don't we pass laws now saying they cannot develop the end product for these cartels to sell to our children in a deadly fashion?

If they are truly terrorists, let's treat them as such. And those who are complicit in the terrorist strategy of poisoning our youth should be held accountable.

NOMINATION OF MARTIN MAKARY

Mr. President, I would like to make the following statement: The Food and Drug Administration is one of the most important Agencies in the Federal Government and the world. Every day the FDA makes life-and-death decisions, whether to approve a new cancer drug, initiate a recall of contaminated food, or keep deadly tobacco products out of the hands of our children.

This Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, oversees 20 percent of the entire American economy, nearly \$3 trillion in product and services, on a budget, the FDA budget, of \$6 billion annually.

Yesterday, I met with President Trump's FDA nominee Dr. Martin Makary. It was a good discussion. There were areas where I would imagine we would be able to work together, such as promoting healthy food or addressing deceptive direct-to-consumer prescription drug advertisements you see everywhere on television.

These commercials overstate the benefit about the latest wonder drugs, rattling off side effects so quickly you can hardly hear them, but always keeping you in the dark about one crucial element on each one of these drugs: How much does it cost?

My bill, which I introduced with Senator GRASSLEY, Republican of Iowa, would end Big Pharma's secrecy and require these ads to show a pricetag—just that simple. They declare the price, and they advertise it. I appreciated Dr. Makary's comments that medication can give a patient false hope if it is not affordable.

But let me share my concerns with Dr. Makary's nomination, in general. The FDA requires a Commissioner who is willing to withstand a lot of pressure from Big Pharma, Big Tobacco—maybe even the President—to protect public health. We cannot afford an FDA Commissioner who gets chewed up by Elon Musk's chain saw or stands idly by while RFK, Jr., pushes his deadly bias

against vaccines. To safeguard the foods we eat and the drugs we use, we need a leader of the Food and Drug Administration with the courage to say no.

Cigarettes are responsible for more than 480,000 deaths each year. They were responsible for my father's death. So when I came to Congress, I vowed to fight this entity. While we have succeeded in reducing youth smoking rates, anyone who thought Big Tobacco would disappear was mistaken. They rebranded with flashy new products, vaping and e-cigarettes, and they followed the same playbook they used to drive sales of Marlboros back in the 1980s, target kids.

For years, the Food and Drug Administration utterly failed. This is during the Biden administration. As a Democrat, I am reluctant to say it, but it is true, and I am going to say it. For years, the Food and Drug Administration utterly failed to protect children from the lifetime addiction fueled by e-cigarettes, many of which are sold by the largest tobacco companies.

Under the law, a vaping product is required to first prove to the FDA that its product, e-cigarettes, is "appropriate for the protection of public health." That is a requirement under law. They have to prove that before they can sell on the market in the United States legally. It didn't happen under the previous Food and Drug Administration. Instead, thousands of dangerous, highly addictive e-cigarettes illegally flooded the market without FDA review, hooking a generation of kids.

By law, FDA is required to remove all unauthorized tobacco products from the market. In fact, it can do so today.

So the question is, Will the new President's FDA nominee follow the science and the law to protect our kids or will he align with the tobacco corporations that peddle this poison?

At the same time, President Trump and Elon Musk have fired thousands of Federal health workers. Before you run off celebrating efficiency, let me tell you who was terminated. One hundred twenty cancer researchers at the National Institutes of Health who were running clinical trials for new cures, disease detectives at the Centers for Disease Control who help identify and respond to outbreaks of new viruses. Does that sound like efficiency to you, to tell these cancer researchers that we don't need them any longer?

At the FDA, those fired include inspectors of drug manufacturing plants, regulators in charge of recalling faulty medical devices, and those monitoring the safety of infant formula.

For goodness' sake, we have a measles outbreak in Texas that has killed 2 and sickened 220 people, mostly unvaccinated children. It is the worst measles outbreak in a generation in America.

Instead of encouraging vaccinations to save these kids, Secretary Kennedy diminished their significance by falsely

stating that measles outbreaks are "not unusual"—his words—and issuing a statement about the outbreak stating that "the decision to vaccinate is a personal one." Of course, it is a personal one. But what is his position, questioning the efficacy of vaccines, doing to that personal decision process for the ordinary American?

NIH is cutting 40 grant awards for promoting the vaccine updates and addressing hesitancy, which breaks the promise that he made to Republican Senators who were skeptical of his nomination.

The list goes on. You cannot claim that you want to make America healthy again and then allow preventable diseases to come roaring back, all while firing scientists working to address these challenges.

Will Dr. Makary stand up to Mr. KENNEDY and encourage parents to vaccinate their kids? Will he stand up to the buzz saw of Elon Musk's chain saw? to Big Tobacco? I hope that he will.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum with respect to the Miran nomination be waived.

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

Mr. SCHATZ. I ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled roll-call vote begin immediately.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill 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. 31, Stephen Miran, of New York, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

John Thune, Ted Budd, Tom Cotton, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tommy Tuberville, Katie Britt, Ashley B. Moody, Pete Ricketts, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Dan Sullivan, Roger F. Wicker, Cynthia M. Lummis, Eric Schmitt, Joni Ernst, John Hoeven, Jerry Moran, Lindsey Graham.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Stephen Miran, of New York, to be

Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 116 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Banks	Graham	Mullin
Barrasso	Grassley	Murkowski
Blackburn	Hagerty	Paul
Boozman	Hawley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeven	Risch
Budd	Husted	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lankford	Sheehy
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Cramer	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	Marshall	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Curtis	McCormick	Wicker
Daines	Moody	Young
Ernst	Moran	
Fischer	Moreno	

NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Reed
Baldwin	Hirono	Rosen
Bennet	Kaine	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schumer
Booker	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Lujan	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Fetterman	Murphy	Warnock
Gallago	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Duckworth	Justice	Sanders
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(Mr. RICKETTS assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 45. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, last night, the House of Representatives passed a short-term government funding bill that would extend funding through the end of this fiscal year. That is the end of September.

I was surprised to see only one Democrat in the House, JARED GOLDEN from Maine, saw the light that a shutdown is a bad choice. Nevertheless, 212 Democrats voted against the continuing resolution, effectively voting to shut down the government.

It remains to be seen whether our colleagues here in the Senate, our Senate Democrats, will vote for a SCHUMER shutdown or not. The cognitive dissonance, though, is striking and I think worth commenting on.

If I listen to our colleagues across the aisle, they claim to have a lot of