

was handled by the Rules Committee. The staff did a lot of work, and I thank all who were involved in bringing this nomination forward.

We have heard from my colleagues, Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BLUNT, about the extraordinary qualifications of Dr. Hayden. She has the academic credentials, experience, and proven leadership, as we saw with the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore and what she was able to do.

I wish to add one more dimension to this, if I might, and that is the person she is. She is admired by all. She knows how to bring people together. She has incredible people skills in addition to having the technical skills to be an extraordinary CEO and to manage a complex operation. The Library of Congress is a complex operation. It takes a great deal of management skills.

She has received many acknowledgements and awards during her career, but the one that I think perhaps speaks to her character the most was when the Daily Record gave her the award for the most admired CEO 2 years ago. That is a hard award to get, and it just shows that she knows how to lead—but to lead in an effective way. Quite frankly, the Library of Congress, I think, will benefit from those skills and use those skills very effectively.

I also want to share with my colleagues that, in addition to her credentials in her profession, which we have already gone through—including being president of the American Library Association and also serving on the accreditation committee—she has done a lot of the nuts and bolts with regard to libraries both locally and nationally.

She has also been involved in many community activities. I know that locally she served on the Goucher College board, the Baltimore Gas and Electric board, and the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women. I could mention a lot more activities. She has been an extremely engaged individual in our community.

I know she will do a great job in this capacity, and I know she will make us proud. We know the Library of Congress is the envy of the world, and I think we have a world-class leader to lead the Library of Congress. I urge my colleagues to support this confirmation.

If there is no one else who seeks recognition, I suggest that we yield back all time and move toward a vote.

Mr. BLUNT. I yield back our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

All time is yielded back.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Hayden nomination?

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 74, nays 18, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 128 Ex.]

YEAS—74

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Murkowski
Baldwin	Franken	Murphy
Barrasso	Gardner	Murray
Bennet	Gillibrand	Nelson
Blumenthal	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Peters
Booker	Hatch	Portman
Boozman	Heinrich	Reed
Boxer	Heitkamp	Reid
Brown	Hirono	Schatz
Burr	Hoeven	Schumer
Cantwell	Johnson	Shaheen
Capito	Kaine	Stabenow
Cardin	King	Sullivan
Carper	Klobuchar	Tester
Casey	Lankford	Thune
Collins	Leahy	Tillis
Cooms	Manchin	Toomey
Corker	Markey	Udall
Cornyn	McCaskill	Warner
Donnelly	McConnell	Warren
Durbin	Menendez	Whitehouse
Enzi	Merkley	Wyden
Feinstein	Mikulski	

NAYS—18

Cassidy	Ernst	Perdue
Coats	Heller	Risch
Cotton	Isakson	Rubio
Crapo	Kirk	Sasse
Cruz	Lee	Scott
Daines	McCain	Vitter

NOT VOTING—8

Cochran	Rounds	Shelby
Inhofe	Sanders	Wicker
Roberts	Sessions	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to talk about the pace of judicial confirmations with my friends, the Senator from Hawaii and the Sen-

ator from Massachusetts, who have been real leaders on this issue.

Well, we have only one more day of legislative session before Congress breaks until September. It is an appropriate time to take stock of how the majority has handled their job of scheduling and confirming judges. More than a year into this new Congress, the Republican leadership has allowed only 22 judges to be confirmed—only 22. In the last 2 years of the Bush administration with a Democratic majority—the mirror situation of what we are in today—there were 68. So that is 68 versus 22.

The Republican majority is confirming judges at the slowest rate in more than 60 years. This has real consequences across America. Vacancies have risen from 43 to 83 since Republicans took over the majority; 29 have been judicial emergencies. I know that in my city of Buffalo in Western New York we had an emergency. We have one of the busiest courts, and for a while we had no judges. Now we have one.

At this point in time in the Bush administration, with Democrats in control of the Senate, we had reduced the number to 39. That is half as many vacancies as now exist. From the district courts to the Federal courts of appeal, all the way up to the Highest Court in the land, the Republican majority has been showing the American people that when it comes to judges, they just are not doing their job.

This is hardly a Senate that is back to work. The nuts and bolts of governing is the process of nominations, especially for the judiciary. By this measure, the Republican Senate and its Judiciary Committee are not back to work; they are sleeping on the job. There is no better example of it than the irresponsible, partisan blockade of President Obama's Supreme Court pick, now in its fifth month.

The speedy application of justice, the right to petition the government for redress of grievances is a bedrock of American values enshrined in the Constitution. This is not an abstract concept. It has real, everyday consequences for American litigants. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Without judges on the bench, justice is denied for a woman who was unjustly fired, suing to get back her job and support her family.

It is denied for a small business owner seeking to resolve a contract dispute and keep his stores open. Any small business owner can tell you that when lawsuits hang over them, whether they are plaintiffs or defendants, it causes them sleepless nights. My dad was a small business man. Our Republican colleagues are just twiddling their thumbs.

It is denied for criminal defendants who deserve to have their cases heard in a courtroom before an impartial judge and a jury of their peers. This matters in so many of the States, including my home State of New York.

One of the judges who has been languishing on the calendar is Gary Brown. He is currently serving as a magistrate judge in the Eastern District of New York. He has been nominated for a seat on the Islip court, a crowded bench. Long Island has 3 million people, more than many States. That seat has been vacant for 18 months—18 months.

The small business people in Long Island who need these cases settled and the many others who are awaiting justice are in anguish. Our Republican colleagues just sit there. We know why. The American people know why too. They are not doing their jobs.

Gary Brown is eminently qualified for this seat. As a magistrate judge, he heard a number of cases related to the fallout from Superstorm Sandy. Only through Judge Brown's intelligence and integrity were deficiencies in the insurance claims process uncovered, and hundreds of homeowners began to recoup their losses. So we need a Judge Brown. The people of Long Island need a Judge Brown. Without judges on the bench, we are diminishing that corps.

Our majority leader likes to talk about the fact that the Senate is working again. Give me a break. If you can't even appoint judges, how can you say the Senate is working? There is no good reason other than the usual political games, games that Democrats did not play when we were in the same position in the last 2 years of George Bush's term and we had the Senate majority.

Well, we have 1 day left before we break. Yet this body has failed to pass adequate legislation dealing with Zika, failed to pass real funding on the opioid crisis, failed to pass sensible gun safety measures after another senseless tragedy in Orlando, and failed to fill our benches, whether it is the Supreme Court, the circuit courts, or the district courts.

Our Republican majority owes it to the American people to make some progress on judges before Members run for the hills. We should not be adjourning with this many vacancies, this many judicial emergencies. It is time to confirm these uncontroversial nominees. I say to every one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, particularly the majority leader, it is time to do your job.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 11, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 359, 362, 363, 364, 459, 460, 461, 505, 508, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 597, 598, 599, and 600; further, that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations; and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object—and, of course, I

will. I would like to put all this in perspective and talk about the theatrics that we sometimes call the discussion on the Senate floor. You know, I think that we have a tendency here—maybe it is because we are busy and we have got a lot of other things we are doing, but we have a tendency to have very short memories.

We should remember that we confirmed a judge last week and the prior week. In fact, one of those judges was a judge put forth, supported by Senators from the State of New Jersey, both Democrat Senators. We moved forward with the confirmation.

I also want to talk a little bit about history because I am new here. But my facts seem to stand in contrast to what is discussed on this floor from week to week. When it comes to judicial nominations, the President has been treated much more fairly, I would submit, than President George W. Bush. To date, the Senate has confirmed 329 of President Obama's judicial nominations. At this point, President Bush had only 312 judicial nominations confirmed.

In fact, President Obama has now surpassed President Bush in terms of the total judicial nominees confirmed for the entire Presidency of George W. Bush. During his entire Presidency, the Senate confirmed only 326 of President Bush's judicial nominations. We have already confirmed 329. So I would submit, that is getting the work done. That is getting the job done. That is doing our job.

I know the other side of the aisle does not like the fact that they don't set the floor agenda. But any reasonable, objective review of the record demonstrates that President Obama has been treated more fairly than his predecessor, George W. Bush.

So, for that reason, I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, Donald Trump spent years pedaling Trump University, a sham college that his own former employees refer to as one big, fraudulent scheme. Now he is being sued for fraud and, worse, for targeting the most vulnerable people he could find, lying to them, taking all their money and then leaving them in debt.

Now, the judge presiding over Trump's case is Gonzalo Curiel, a former Federal prosecutor who has spent decades quietly serving his country, sometimes at great risk to his own life. The Republican Governor who first appointed him calls him an American hero, and he was confirmed with bipartisan support from the Senate.

Like all district court judges, Judge Curiel's work is not political so he is following the law in the Trump University case, but Donald Trump wants Judge Curiel to bend the law to suit Trump's own personal financial interests and Trump's very, very fragile ego.

A little over a month ago, Trump began savagely attacking the judge's

integrity and his Mexican-American heritage at political rallies. Some Republicans in Congress claimed to be shocked by the assault on our legal system. PAUL RYAN called Trump's attack the "textbook definition of a racist comment."

Oh, please. Spare me the false outrage. Where do you suppose Donald Trump got the idea that he can demean judges with impunity? He got it from Republicans right here in Congress.

It is bad enough that Senate Republicans will not even give Merrick Garland, the President's Supreme Court nominee, a hearing—while the Republicans' allies spend billions of dollars conducting a nonstop campaign of slime against him. But the story is actually much bigger than Judge Garland.

Sixteen noncontroversial district court judicial nominees—16—are waiting to take their seats alongside Judge Curiel on the Federal bench. They have been investigated, they have gone through hearings, and they have been voted out of committee. About half have been sitting there for more than a year.

But in a few days, the Republicans who control the Senate are planning to pack up and shut down this body for most of the rest of the year, leaving every single one of these men and women to twist in the wind. Why? Because in 6 months Donald Trump might be President. Make no mistake, Republicans want Donald Trump to appoint the next generation of judges. They want those judges to tilt the law in favor of big businesses and billionaires like Trump. They just want Donald Trump to stop being so vulgar and obvious about it.

It is ridiculous. If Republicans expect the American people to believe they don't agree with Trump's disgraceful attacks on an independent judiciary, they should confirm these judges.

We have just one message for the Republicans: Do your job—now—before shutting off the lights and leaving town. At least confirm the 13 noncontroversial district court judges who were nominated before 2016.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 359, 362, 363, 364, 459, 460, 461, 508, 569, 570, 571, 572, and 573; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

Sometimes when I come to the Senate floor, I can't help but think that people who are watching me in the Gallery and watching on C-SPAN are thinking: What's going on? I thought we were working on funding the veterans, coming up with a solution to Zika, funding the DOD, making sure States and localities have adequate resources to combat drug addiction and the opioid epidemic. Instead, we get floor speeches that have nothing to do with doing our jobs.

I am doing my job today in objecting to these measures so we can actually get back to the pressing matters that hopefully will get passed out of the Senate before we go to the state work period and return in September.

Mr. President, for that reason, I object to the motion from the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I am not sure what version of the Constitution you are reading that doesn't say confirming judges is part of doing your job in the U.S. Senate.

These judges have all been completely vetted, they are noncontroversial, and they have bipartisan support. The amount of time it would take to get these judges confirmed is simply: Don't object. Let us go forward.

We hear a lot of talk these days from Republicans in Congress suddenly caring about the rule of law. Talk is cheap. Real cases are piling up. Real courts are starved for help. Real justice is being denied, and the American people aren't easily fooled. If Senate Republicans leave town without putting a single one of these highly qualified, noncontroversial judicial nominees on the bench, they are making it clear that for them politics is everything 24/7, that politics trumps everything, even an independent judiciary.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I thank Senators SCHUMER, WARREN, and others for their efforts to get some movement on these neglected judicial nominees. When we talk about the Senate doing its job, of course confirming judges is a part of the Senate's job. In fact, only the Senate can do that job.

So far 23 of the 24 nominees on the Executive Calendar were approved by the Judiciary Committee by voice vote, including 16 district court nominees. This includes Hawaii's own Clare Connors. Before I speak about Clare, I want to also mention that she and the other nominees before us today—who were unanimously approved by the Judiciary Committee—will be kept from serving on the Federal bench, kept from doing those jobs because of Republican inaction.

I will tell you something about Clare. She has wide-ranging experience, in-

cluding district and appellate venues, criminal and civil arenas, and litigation on issues ranging from tax law to tough cases such as crimes against children.

I met with Clare in Hawaii and when she came before the Judiciary Committee. She is more than qualified to serve on the Federal bench today. Senator GRASSLEY has indicated that Republicans will shut down the nomination process this month, even though vacancies have nearly doubled.

If Clare is not confirmed, the Hawaii district court seat would be left vacant for a year. Historically, the Senate has held confirmation votes on widely supported nominees into September of a Presidential election year.

The nominees before us all have bipartisan support and come from States throughout the country: Tennessee, New Jersey, New York, California, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Utah, and of course Hawaii.

I urge my Republican colleagues to do their job.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 359, 362, 363, 364, 459, 460, 461, and 508; further, that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Carolina.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY H.R. 2577

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

I wish to just touch briefly on what the distinguished Senator from Hawaii mentioned regarding vacancies. If you take a look at the average number of vacancies over the last 25 years or so, during every presidency, the average vacancy rate has been higher than it is in 2016. It is a natural part of the process that when judges move up to senior status, we are filling the vacancies. This goes up and down. This is not a crisis. It is no different than a situation the Senate has dealt with long before I got here.

Mr. President, so that we can dispense with these matters and move back onto the legislation before us that can fund the VA, that can address the Zika crisis and do things that we need to do before we get out of town, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I want to get back on doing my job. I promised the people of North Carolina I was going to help fund the VA.

That is why I am proud to be a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. I told the soldiers down at Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune and across this Nation we were going to work to fund the Department of Defense.

What I wish to do is see if we can get back to these matters that are necessary and important. They will save lives. They will equip our men and women to take the fight wherever we may go.

Today I want to talk specifically about the MILCON-VA-Zika bill that is before us. It is a conference report. For those who are not familiar with conference reports, they are unamendable. We need an up-or-down vote, and we need to send it to the President's desk.

That is what lies before us. That is a bill we can pass this year, funding that the Democratic conference in large numbers supported at \$1.1 billion when it went to the House.

What is that funding going to do? It is going to fund remediation programs to make sure we don't have an epidemic that is spread through mosquito bites. Right now, the known U.S. cases are all travel related, but we are afraid of that threat—particularly as mosquito season sets in across the Nation. It has been going on in North Carolina and the South for several months. We want to give local health professionals and the CDC the resources they need to find a vaccine that the CDC promises we can get in a matter of 18 months, and we want to make sure we do everything we can to educate people about the potential dangers of this disease. That is what approving this conference report will do.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2577 and that the conference report be agreed to with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object, and I am going to say a few words.

I say to my friend, the junior Senator from North Carolina, this is the first time I have ever heard anyone say the problem with the judges is it is just one of those things, let's not worry about it, it happens all the time—but that is not true. Around America today, we have a number of extremely important judicial emergencies, meaning we have all these judicial districts where there are not enough judges to do the work.

Justice delayed is justice denied. Having practiced law quite a few years, it is very hard to go to a court and be told: We are sorry, but the judge is doing all civil cases today. He has no time for criminal cases—or vice versa.

So I appreciate his succinctness saying: Well, this is no big deal. Don't worry about the judges.

We are worried about the judges. It is very difficult.

Let's move on to the second subject he brought up, the second subject—judges are no big deal. I think that is a tremendously big deal and so do the American people.

Once again, the Senator from North Carolina seeks to pass the very partisan VA-Military Construction-Zika bill. Yes, he said—for those not familiar with the conference reports, I am familiar with lots of them. I have been through lots of conference reports. I understand the rules, but I also understand that we as a body can do anything we want to do. That is the way the Senate operates. We have the ability to change the rules in a manner of minutes and move on to change what is before this body. We know the reason the Republican leader cannot move forward on a Zika funding bill that is reasonable is because the House of Representatives is unreasonable.

We passed out of this body a very good bill. It wasn't what I wanted. I wanted \$1.9 billion that the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health said they need—\$1.9 billion. But I said: OK, \$1.1 billion will help a tremendous amount. It is emergency spending, no offsets.

So we agreed and sent it to the House. Eighty-nine Senators voted for it. The Democrats voted for it and the vast majority of Republicans voted for it. That was good. It wasn't perfect, but it was good.

So what did the House of Representatives do? They filled this report, this conference report. They ignored what we had done in the Senate, and they decided they were going to stick some of their favorite poison pills onto this legislation. Why? Because the Speaker, to his credit, is trying—but he is not doing much good over there. He is finding that Speaker Boehner couldn't do much better than he has done. That is why Boehner left. He couldn't handle it because, as Boehner used to call them, the "crazies" take over that caucus.

They have a rule in the House, Mr. President—and the Presiding Officer used to serve in the House of Representatives. All the time he was there, they had this rule. When I was there, there was no such rule. The rule they have now is called the Hastert rule. Of course, Hastert is in prison, so they should at least change the name of that rule. The Hastert rule says: We are only going to pass a bill if we can get a majority of the majority to vote for it. So to get anything done in the House of Representatives, you have to have a majority of the Republicans support a bill. It doesn't matter how the Democrats feel. Basically, they do not get to vote on anything.

So what they did, in an effort to get something back here—the Speaker has told lots of people: I can't pass anything dealing with Zika unless we do something about Planned Parenthood. That is what he has told everybody, and it is obvious from what they sent us. So this \$1.1 billion, no offsets, came back to us as a—I don't know what to

call it. They are not the same two vehicles. It restricts funding for birth control provided by Planned Parenthood.

There is an obsession by the House Republicans—and I am sorry to say the obsession over here is fairly well fixed also—and they want to do everything they can to dramatically negatively affect Planned Parenthood. That is what this is about.

If you are a woman in America today and you are worried about Zika, I think you should be concerned about birth control. And women all over America are. Some women can't go to a boutique physician and get a prescription; they need to go to Planned Parenthood, where the health care needs of millions of women are taken care of—but not under Republican guidance, no.

So as part of this conference report, funding for Planned Parenthood would be restricted—birth control.

Just to make sure they covered all their poison pill areas, they said: We have to do something to whack the environment, so we will change the Clean Water Act. That is what they did. That is what we got back.

We hear all these great speeches about "We want to do something to take care of the veterans." Well, \$500 million was taken out of veterans to help pay for Zika funding—\$500 million. What was that veterans money to be used for? Processing claims. There is a tremendous backlog. But that is in there.

Ebola funding. Two years ago, America was up in arms over Ebola. The epidemic has died down, but it is not gone. There are still pockets of real problems in Africa, and on any one day, they could burgeon into something like they were 2 years ago. The National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control want to keep some money there so they can take care of this epidemic, but, no, they whacked \$107 million off of that.

Everyone knows the money they took from ObamaCare—I could raise a point of order right now and it would fall. They can't do that. That is wrong. They have had 67 votes in the House to defund ObamaCare. None of them have passed, but they have had fun trying.

But in a final effort to kind of stick their finger in our eye, they said: Here is what we are going to put on this great bill. We believe it would be appropriate to fly the Confederate flag in military cemeteries. You can't make up stuff like this. That is what they did.

We have repeatedly reached out to the Republicans to try to compromise, to reach a solution to the threat of Zika. Of course, if we work together, we have a chance to prevent babies from being born with these terrible birth defects. The Presiding Officer is a physician. I wasn't able to listen to all of his speech last evening, but I watched part of it. He had a picture of a little baby, and he was explaining about what Zika is all about.

We have reached out to Republicans to try to work something out. We can work together. Even now, when we can see just over the horizon the Republican convention starting on Monday, we can still do it before then. We need to work something out. We want to do that. I have tried.

I know what is going on in the House. They can't pass anything on their own unless they put this kind of stuff in it. All they would have to do on the bill that passed the Senate with 89 votes—if the Speaker would allow a vote in the House of Representatives, it would pass overwhelmingly. Democrats, with rare exception, would vote for it. It would get 98, 99 percent of the Democratic vote, and a few Republicans would vote for it. It would pass overwhelmingly. That is what should happen, but it can't.

I understand the Speaker is constrained by—he hasn't gone this far, at least publicly. Boehner publicly said he had to deal with his crazies. Speaker RYAN is dealing with the same crazies.

So I am going to ask unanimous consent to pass the same Zika legislation that passed this body with 89 votes. As I said, if the Speaker allowed a vote on this, it would pass.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5243

So I ask whether the Senator from North Carolina would amend his request to this: I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 5243; that all after the enacting clause be stricken; that the substitute amendment, which is the text of the Blunt-Murray amendment to provide \$1.1 billion in funding for Zika, be agreed to; that there be up to 1 hour of debate, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with no intervening action or debate.

Finally, Mr. President, I would ask that everyone be reminded that we have had emergencies all over America. The Presiding Officer—I am sorry to keep referring to him, but this is the subject at hand. When his State had that terrible devastation with that terrible hurricane, we were there. We were there the next day, the next week, the next month, the next year, doing what we could to provide emergency funding for the beleaguered State of Louisiana. We did it because it was the right thing to do. It was an emergency. It was unpaid for. There were no offsets. We have done that with an earthquake in California and with a manmade fire in Texas. That is what we do. That is what emergencies are all about.

So I ask that my consent request that I have outlined be approved.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator from North Carolina so modify his proposal?

Mr. TILLIS. No.

Mr. REID. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

I guess the shake of the head takes care of it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object—and I will be very brief—sometimes when I hear these debates, they seem to be far-ranging and they are getting off the main subject.

The motion that is before us would basically unwind a carefully crafted compromise that could come crashing down if we don't move forward with this deal. What the minority leader has suggested takes us back to a process that takes days or weeks. We can't afford days or weeks; we need to get this done now.

The motion we should be considering—that the Senator from Nevada objected to—is the one that would get this to the President's desk. The Senator's request adds time, complexity, and most likely is going to suffer the same fate in the House, so for that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the modification.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. REID. I have objected to his request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

SENTENCE REFORM AND CORRECTIONS ACT

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I would like to give a few remarks about how I first became involved in the cause of sentencing reform within our Federal criminal justice system.

I will never forget when I first began to appreciate the full magnitude of this problem—the problem we face within a Federal criminal justice system that is sometimes too inflexible and sometimes doesn't allow judges to take into account the unique circumstances of each case. It was 2004. I was a Federal prosecutor, an assistant U.S. attorney in Utah. In some cases, I witnessed judges being forced by Federal law to impose punishments that simply, under any standard, did not fit the crime—first-time offenders sometimes being locked up for periods of time longer than some rapists or murderers, terrorists or kidnappers. These were real people—people with children, siblings, parents, spouses, and, of course, dreams for a better life. Yet in too many cases the so-called system that was supposed to correct their mistakes arguably compounded them. This system wasn't just wasting money, it wasn't just wasting physical material resources, it was wasting lives.

I know some in my party may view this as a progressive cause. I view it as a conservative one. Think about it. When there is a major problem tearing at our economy and our civil society—a problem that is threatening our most vulnerable families in our communities—conservatives don't just shrug their shoulders and expect a bunch of outdated laws and bloated government bureaucracies to take care of it. We know better. Criminal justice reform doesn't call on conservatives to aban-

don their principles, it calls on them to fight for them.

This process and the conservative cause are all about making our communities—these little platoons, if you will, of service and cooperation at the very heart of our constitutional republic—safe and prosperous and happy. It is about basing our laws and basing our court procedures and our prison systems on a clear-eyed understanding of human nature—of how human beings respond, what brings out their better selves and what doesn't, about man's predilection toward sin and his capacity for redemption—along with an uncompromising commitment to human dignity.

Respect for the dignity of all human life, the basic dignity of the human soul, no matter how small or how weak, how rich or how poor, and the redemptive capacity of all sinners, no matter how callous, are the foundation for everything that conservatives purport to stand for. Our approach to policing and of punishment should be no different.

Moreover, as a conservative, I believe we ought to watch out anytime we give the government extraordinary powers, especially powers that deprive the individual of liberty. And nowhere is the deprivation of liberty more severe, more intense, more long-lasting than the deprivation of liberty that occurs when a person is locked up for years or for decades at a time, with no opportunity to progress, no opportunity to interact with family members, no opportunity to interact with the vibrant growing economy.

So when I got to the Senate and I was assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee, I started looking for partners—partners on both sides of the aisle—who shared my concerns with the Federal criminal justice system, shared my concerns with the way Federal minimum mandatory sentences were working. I started looking for partners on both sides of the aisle who shared this commitment to reform. Progress in this area is difficult, and for a long time the progress we made in this area was slow, just as any deliberative process often is.

I found an ally in my colleague, the senior Senator from Illinois. We teamed up and put together legislation. That legislation gradually started gaining some support. At first, it gained more support on the other side of the aisle than it did on my side of the aisle, but we were pleased with the progress that was made. But in the fall of last year, we struck an agreement and we started making more progress. We introduced a bill called the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act. Like most legislative compromises, it isn't perfect and it doesn't accomplish everything that every member of our coalition might wish we could accomplish, but it is an extraordinarily great start, and it proves it is possible to design our laws in a way that can balance the sometimes competing interests of

retribution and rehabilitation, justice and mercy, the rights of victims and the rights of perpetrators.

The Sentence Reform and Corrections Act will expand the now-limited discretion of Federal judges so they can treat offenders like human beings and not mere statistics and punish them according to their particular circumstances. It would broaden the Federal safety valve, a provision of existing law that allows judges to sentence a limited number of offenders below the mandatory minimum. Contrary to what many of this bill's critics claim, this would not absolve offenders of their crimes, nor would it suddenly and indiscriminately release legions of violent predators into our communities. In fact, under this reform, the status of violent offenders would not change at all. They would remain ineligible for Federal safety-valve relief.

Our criminal justice system simply has to be flexible—at least flexible enough—to apply in many different situations. Prosecutors and judges need to have the ability to impose lengthy sentences on serious offenders who pose the greatest threat to public safety, just as they must have the ability to impose modest sentences on those who violate our laws but do not pose an ongoing threat to public safety. Whenever we interfere with the flexibility of either of these, we impair the effectiveness and the efficiency of our Federal criminal justice system. When we do that, we necessarily make our country less safe, rather than more safe.

So this bill would leave untouched the maximum penalty levels that exist under current law. It also would not eliminate any mandatory minimum sentences. Instead, it takes a targeted approach, reducing the harshest mandatory penalties and providing relief for low-level offenders with limited criminal history. It is this type of offender that helped draw my attention to this issue back in 2004, just as I described a few minutes ago.

One of the cases that was being handled by the office in which I worked, the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Utah, involved a young man named Weldon Angelos, a young man in his midtwenties, the father of two young children. He got involved in some criminal activity and was caught selling three relatively small quantities—dime-bag quantities—of marijuana to what turned out to be an informant. Because Mr. Angelos had a gun on his person at the time of these transactions, because of the way he was charged, and because of the way some of these provisions of law have been interpreted—including a provision of law in 18 USC, section 924(c)—Mr. Angelos received a sentence of 55 years in prison.

Now, we may ask: What on Earth was this judge thinking? How could such a judge be so cruel, so arbitrary, so capricious as to sentence this young man to 55 years in prison for selling three dime-bag quantities of marijuana? The

judge didn't have a choice. In fact, it was the judge who first drew my attention to the case because it was the judge who took the unusual—the almost unprecedented, almost unheard of—step of issuing a written opinion prior to the issuance of the sentence, disagreeing with the sentence the judge himself was about to impose.

Then-Federal district judge Paul Cassell issued a lengthy opinion stating: This is a problem. This young man is about to receive a sentence that is excessive under any standard. It is a longer sentence than he would have received had he engaged in many acts of terrorism or kidnapping. So why are we sending this guy away until he is about 80 years old simply because of this minimum mandatory penalty? But, the judge said: This is a problem I cannot address. This is a problem I am powerless to remedy. Only Congress can fix this problem.

Those words have haunted me ever since then: Only Congress can fix this problem. So when I became a Senator in 2011, I still remembered those words. Those words continued to haunt me and continue to haunt me to this day.

Miraculously, fortunately, Mr. Angelos has been released through a variety of procedural maneuvers that I don't have time to address right now. He himself has been released. Many others are still in prison, under the same system, who have been locked up for years—decades—at a time, much longer than any reasonable person would think would be a just sentence. In fact, I have yet to meet a single person—Democrat, Republican, old, young, male, female—who believes that the sentence Mr. Angelos received was just. His story, his example is a good reason why we need to pass this bill.

Finally, this bill improves the quality of our Federal prisons. If it became law, it would increase access to vocational training, therapeutic counseling, reentry services, and other programs, so that we would have fewer first-time offenders turning into career criminals.

All of these are commonsense and, I believe, long-overdue reforms. But make no mistake. We are at the beginning, not the end, of this generation's story of criminal justice reform. As all of us know, the road to reform is long and full of setbacks and obstacles. Today's movement for criminal justice reform is no exception. But so long as the people here today are involved in this effort, I am confident we can together succeed where our prisons today often fail—in preparing offenders to reintegrate into their communities as productive and law-abiding citizens, as spouses, parents, neighbors, and employees, instead of career criminals.

We can fix this problem. This bill would begin to address this problem. But we need to bring this up. We need to have the opportunity to debate this, to discuss this, to vote on it, and to pass it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Senator BOOKER from New Jersey is on the floor. The three of us asked to come to the floor at 3, because the rollcall was delayed.

I ask unanimous consent, if it is all right with the Senator from Ohio, that Senator BOOKER be allowed to follow and to complete his statement on the legislation we are supporting.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am going to be brief because I want to defer and give my time to the Senator from New Jersey.

We are going through a moment in America's history that we are going to remember for a long time. We are used to shooting deaths. Sadly, gun violence has become part of America. Unfortunately, we are also used to mass murders, where more than four people are killed in one of these shooting incidents. But it rocked America's conscience and soul when five policemen from Dallas were murdered. Those five policemen were Officer Brent Thompson, age 43; Officer Patrick Zamarripa, age 32; Officer Mike Krol, age 40; Senior Corporal Lorne Ahrens, age 48; and Sergeant Michael Smith, age 55.

Yesterday, President Obama and former President Bush were there for the memorial service to honor these men and to honor everyone in law enforcement who gets up each morning, puts on a badge, and risks their lives for us—for me, for my family, for my neighbors, for my community, for my town, for my State, and for my Nation.

America was rocked by the senseless murder that took place in Dallas, TX. But it isn't the only thing that has stunned the conscience of America. At the same time, we have seen some shocking and disturbing videos. In Baton Rouge, LA—the home State of the Presiding Officer—Alton Sterling, a 37-year-old father, was shot and killed outside a convenience store. In Falcon Heights, MN, Philando Castile, age 32, was fatally shot in his car during a police traffic stop for a broken taillight. His fiancée and her 4-year-old daughter were in the car.

Those three events came together—the killings of the police in Dallas, and these video shootings—and shocked the conscience of America in a way that I haven't seen before. It really called into question some basics about our country and where we are going and what we need to do.

President Obama said we must try to find common ground when he spoke at this memorial service. He is right. I thought about that over the weekend, and I called my colleague and friend from New Jersey and talked to him about it. I said to him: When it comes to really showing America, and particularly those who feel aggrieved by the current State of justice, our bill on criminal justice reform speaks to a fundamental issue as to whether or not minority populations—people of

color—are treated fairly in our system of justice.

Senator LEE just spoke. For those who may not know him, Senator LEE is a conservative—a tea party conservative, I believe he would probably say—Republican from the State of Utah. Senator LEE is joining us—DURBIN of Illinois, BOOKER of New Jersey, and Senator GRASSLEY of Iowa—in this effort. How many times do we run into that, where four Senators with such diverse political beliefs come together on one bill—this bill? As Senator LEE explained, what we are setting out to do here is to right an injustice—an injustice that is filling the Federal prisons, sentencing individuals to lengthy sentences for nonviolent, nongun drug offenses.

This is long overdue, and it is something that we need to do. If we did it, it would say yes to those across America who are asking: Is Congress listening? Is the Senate awake to what is going on in our country? It would say to them: Yes.

On a bipartisan basis, these four Senators, and many more, are prepared to bring reform to our criminal justice correction and sentencing system. Will it solve all of our problems? No, not at all, but it is a significant step forward.

I was serving in the U.S. House of Representatives over 25 years ago when a famous basketball star at the University of Maryland died from a drug overdose. We were shocked by this. They came in and said it is possible that he was a victim of crack cocaine. We had never heard the term before. What is crack cocaine? A new form of cocaine crystals that are cheap, highly addictive, and destructive. Len Bias was his name. We were asked to put into law a sentencing provision that would be a warning to everyone across America: Don't use crack cocaine.

We did. We imposed a new sentencing guideline for crack cocaine 100 times the penalty over powder cocaine—100 times. What it meant, sadly, over a span of 25 years is that hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals were convicted of possessing and selling crack cocaine and sentenced for extraordinarily long sentences.

I ran into one of them in the city of Chicago. Let me tell a story. It is brief, but it tells a story.

Alton Mills, age 24 in 1994, was a runner, a seller when it came to street drugs. He was caught on his third offense of selling street drugs. His third offense. He had never served a day in jail, not one. His two previous offenses ended up in probation, and he didn't end up with any correctional time. But this third one was the third strike. It turned out that Alton Mills at age 24, for his third sale of crack cocaine, was sentenced to life in prison—life in prison.

He languished there. Thank goodness, his mom and dad never gave up on him. He found a public defender, whose name, ironically, was MiAngel Cody. She went to work and fought for

him and took her message to every office, including mine, and I took her message to the White House. Alton Mills' sentence was commuted. He came out of prison after 22 years behind bars. That is one example—22 years.

What we are trying to do is come up with a sentencing system that is sensible, that punishes those who are guilty for sure, but does it in a smart and thoughtful way—reforming and saying to populations across America, yes, we can be a more just society.

This criminal justice reform idea is one that is not only bipartisan, but it passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee in October of last year—October—by a vote of 15 to 5. It was a bipartisan rollcall vote that came out of committee. Why haven't we taken up this bill? Why don't we take this up as soon as we return in September? Why don't we say to people across America that we are going to do something positive in terms of restoring justice in this country to everyone across the board in this bipartisan bill?

That is why we come to the floor today, and that is what we are asking for. It will save money for taxpayers in addition to bringing justice to the system. I believe the money we save can be brought back to our law enforcement agencies for training and equipment. So let's show our faith in their efforts to keep America safe, and let's show our commitment to justice in this reform.

I am fortunate because I was joined in this struggle by a brand-new Senator from New Jersey then named CORY BOOKER. He has been an extraordinary voice in this effort.

Senator LEE and I were doing pretty well until CORY BOOKER came along, and he has added more firepower and more horsepower to this effort than any other Senator could, certainly any new Senator. I commend him for helping us in this effort and being committed to it in his heart.

At this time I would like to yield the floor to my junior colleague from the State of New Jersey, Senator BOOKER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I want to thank MIKE LEE for coming to the floor and speaking with such heart and conviction. Also, I want to thank Senator DURBIN for his stand on the floor today.

Please understand, Senator LEE, Senator GRASSLEY, Senator DURBIN, Senator LEAHY, and so many Senators on both sides of the aisle have been speaking on this issue for years. In fact, since before I became a U.S. Senator, this moment has come. As Senator DURBIN began talking about the issues of the day, where there is so much frustration, so much concern, so much consternation, so much divisiveness on this issue of criminal justice in America, it made me think personally about this idea of hope because this week I have talked to a lot of people who seem

to be indulging in a dangerous, toxic state of being, which is hopelessness about criminal justice issues in our country.

I have appreciated Senator DURBIN, who has not just been a senior Senator, not just been steadfast in working on this issue, but he has been a friend, calling me up, not just this past week but weeks before, when lots of Americans were indulging in hopelessness about the divisiveness in our country, about the injustices in our country, about the ravages of a broken criminal justice system.

As I have been thinking about hopelessness, I keep coming back to this understanding, taught to me by teachers on the streets of Newark, NJ, that hope does not exist in an abstract; that hope is the active conviction that no matter how bad things get, despair will not have the last word; that hope is a choice that must be made amidst hopelessness; that amidst despair, amidst frustration, you have to choose hope; and that choosing hope means you commit yourself to a process that doesn't divide this country but that unifies it with the conviction that we can be a nation that makes real the words we pledge when we say we are a nation, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

This week we need those words. We need that hope. MIKE LEE and DICK DURBIN, two politicians on opposite sides of the spectrum, said: Hey, this is a time that we should be pushing hope, indivisibility, and we have a bill that addresses issues at the core of so much of the frustration going on. It doesn't solve all the issues, it doesn't wave a wand, but it will advance us toward liberty and justice for all because, unequivocally, we have gone off the rails.

Since 1980, the land of the free broke with the rest of the world and became the incarceration nation. Our prison population has exploded since 1980. The Federal prison population is up 800 percent. Our overall prison population is up 500 percent. We have only about 5 percent of the globe's population, but one out of every four incarcerated people on the planet Earth are right here in America.

In response to a criminal justice system that has lost its proportionality in its punishment and that seems to have become more about retribution than restorative justice, a criminal justice system that is rife with the stories that MIKE LEE talked about when he talked about Weldon Angelos and a judge who himself cried out about the injustice of sentencing someone to 55 years for a nonviolent drug crime or Alton Mills, whom Senator DURBIN spoke about, who was sentenced to life in prison for a nonviolent drug crime, we in America went off the rails.

I am hopeful today because on the right and the left, not just Members of this body but from the Koch brothers to Newt Gingrich, to Grover Norquist, to the ACLU, people on both sides of the political spectrum said we can do

better because this broken criminal justice system is hurting us. Rather than being a tool for public safety and social order, as was intended by our criminal justice system, it instead became an industry and an end to itself. It became a massive exploding bureaucracy, draining our economic prosperity.

In fact, one study has shown we would have 20 percent less poverty in America if our incarceration rates were similar to our industrial peers. This has been a divisive drain on our cohesive society, a misappropriation of taxpayer funds.

While our infrastructure has been crumbling, we have led the planet Earth in building out a prison infrastructure. In fact, between the time I was in law school in the mid-1990s to the time I became mayor of Newark, we were building a new prison in this country every 10 days.

Congress has increased Federal spending on prisons alone by 45 percent since about the year 2000. Congress has cut spending on the things that keep us safe, such as law enforcement at the State level, by 76 percent—putting someone like Weldon Angelos in prison for 55 years, hundreds of thousands of dollars in a long, disproportionate sentence for a nonviolent crime that could have gone to public safety, like hiring police officers for our community. What is painful to me in this time is that our criminal justice system—the data that I gave would be painful enough, but our criminal justice system clearly disproportionately affects poor people, leading authors like Bryan Stevenson to say that we have a criminal justice system that seems to treat you better if you are rich and guilty than poor and innocent.

Blacks and Whites have no difference in America in using or selling drugs, but African Americans are about 3.6 times more likely to get arrested for selling drugs. Instead of a criminal justice system that unites us under principles of justice and fairness, we see it disproportionately persecuting groups because they are poor or because they are of color.

If you look at Latinos, they account for the largest group of offenders convicted of offenses that have a mandatory minimum at 38 percent. Native Americans are grossly overrepresented in the criminal justice system with an incarceration rate 38 percent higher than the national average.

Eighty percent of Americans in our criminal justice system are represented by public defenders, meaning that they are deemed by the court to be indigent, to be too poor to afford an attorney.

Our justice system does not reflect our values. This drug war is not being carried out in a way that is fair or just, and it is not just hurting the poor, the mentally ill, the drug addicted, the minorities. It hurts all Americans because it drains our resources; it drains our treasure. When I say "treasure," I

don't just mean money. We have come to a point in America today where millions of children have had parents who are incarcerated, and it hurts generationally the best of our Nation, the promise of our Nation.

The irony about our lack of action in putting this bill to a vote is that States are already moving more quickly than we are. Red States, Georgia and Mississippi and Texas, have been doing things for years that we have been proposing in this bill, and have yet to enact, that have shrunk their prison populations. Guess what has happened in States such as Texas and Georgia and Mississippi, which have lowered their prison populations. Guess what happened. Their crime went down, as well, because when you have a system that is not about retribution but about restorative justice, that has proportionality in sentences, you not only save money for your State, but you also empower people to succeed and lower crime.

When States start to put drug addicts in treatment as opposed to jail, it empowers people to succeed, saves money, and lowers the prison population. It is common sense. Red states have acted. We have seen the success. But in the Federal prison population, there is an 800 percent increase. It takes away money that should be spent on homeland security, money that should be spent on investing in public safety, money that should be spent for our public universities, money that should be saved for the taxpayers but is now going, still fueling one of the biggest growing bureaucracies we have seen in the last 40 years.

This calls for unity in our country. I tell you, we have unity. When I can stand in partnership with MIKE LEE and CHUCK GRASSLEY, when you have people like PATRICK LEAHY and DICK DURBIN—these folks are not normally mentioned together as partners on legislation, but I am proud that some of the most esteemed Members, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, both agree that we can put more justice in our justice system. We can do something to reverse this trend, and we can begin to put rationality back so that the values of this country are made more real.

I am proud to have negotiated and worked with Chairman GRASSLEY, who is sitting across the aisle from me right now. I am honored. In the 3 years I have been in the Senate, one of the more proud things that I have accomplished is to find common ground with my Republican colleagues on the other side in a bill that I know—from the neighborhood and block that I live on to across the country—would make a difference.

Now we have encountered some sclerosis, some blockage. A dam exists between where we stand now and greater justice for our Nation. This has been a tough week. It has been a week of frustration and grief and sadness. This is a

time that we should choose hope. It is a time that we should choose unity. It is a time that this very body should be saying to America: Hey, we have challenges, but we can find common ground. We can come together, left and right, Black and White. We can do better than we are doing now. It is a hard walk that we have ahead, but this body can start leading on issues of justice.

There have been other difficult times in our country when this body answered the call. There have been times where people were fearful, people doubted, and there have been times where people felt their heart was heavy. I am proud that, in our history, it was in those times that leaders emerged and chose hope.

My prayer is that in the waning days of this Congress, with all the important things we have on our agenda, we remember that there are people right now who are stuck in despair. There are people who don't believe in our indivisibility, as we say in our Pledge of Allegiance. There are people who are frustrated. It is my hope, when it comes to issues of criminal justice, a system that is so obviously broken, that we choose reform; that we choose healing; that we demonstrate unity; that on this issue we bring forward a bipartisan bill that begins to cast away some of the darkness that hangs over our country with the light and wisdom that is in this bill that reflects both sides of the political aisle and, I believe, that reflects the best of who we are as a body.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise because I continue to believe that the Senate should take up the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act. There is still time this year for both the Senate and the other body to pass legislation reforming sentencing. In light of recent and justified public concern over treatment of suspects by some police and treatment of police by people who would do them harm, the need for the bill is even greater.

The Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act contains three parts, each of which was formed as the basis of a bipartisan compromise among Judiciary Committee members, as well as members off the Committee.

The first is a reduction in the mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug offenders. The bill takes great pains to limit sentencing reductions to people with minimal criminal histories and no history of serious violence. Second, the bill enhances prison programming that has been proven to reduce the likelihood of reoffending, and reduces the sentences of inmates who successfully completed those programs. Reducing the likelihood of future crimes reduces the crime rate. And third, the bill makes various reforms to the federal criminal justice system. For instance, it allows people convicted of certain crimes as juveniles

to expunge their criminal records if they turn their lives around. And it remedies a constitutional defect in Federal criminal law by permitting individuals sentenced to life sentences as juveniles to seek parole after many years, but doesn't guarantee that parole will be granted. It even adds two new mandatory minimum sentences to the Federal criminal code for serious crimes.

The confidence of people in the criminal justice system is not as strong as we would like. There are various reasons for this lack of trust, and some of them are valid.

The Judiciary Committee reported a compromise bill that is designed to address some of those concerns. The sponsors' willingness to compromise was further demonstrated by a managers' amendment that narrowed the bill's sentencing reductions.

Those changes responded to concerns of some of my Republican colleagues and brought on board a number of new Republican cosponsors.

I have been willing for a long time to enter into an agreement where members can offer amendments of various kinds and we can vote. For instance, the House has determined that a provision of substantive criminal law addressing intent should be part of any bill. I have been open to any compromise on that issue that could gain 60 votes. And I would agree to have a vote on the subject if a compromise cannot be reached. The differences can be aired and resolved.

I am certain that this bill would receive many more than 60 votes and that most of the Republican conference would vote for it if given the chance.

No one thinks the sentencing bill is perfect, as it represents a compromise among people with strong differences of opinion. But the people of this country want action to address deficiencies in the criminal justice system.

This bill would make important but limited changes in the way the Federal Government sentences those who commit crimes.

We should take the bill up, debate it, and show the American people that we are willing to take on one of the most important domestic challenges facing the country.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. We had a good vote earlier today on proceeding to that legislation, and it is my expectation and hope that we will vote on this legislation either today or tomorrow morning.

Let me say first say, this legislation called CARA, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, also includes some criminal justice reform. It is one step closer to this broader bill that Senator GRASSLEY and Senator BOOKER just talked about. I am a cosponsor of their bill because I do think we need sentencing reform, but CARA actually

has some reforms called diversion programs. Instead of putting people who are in the criminal justice system and addicted to drugs in prison, they are put into a treatment program, and those treatment programs have proven to be successful. We have drug court funding and specific new programs for our veterans. The notion is, this is part of criminal justice reform, to actually take people who are suffering from drug addiction in the criminal justice system and move them into treatment, which makes so much more sense for them, their families, taxpayers, their communities. That is part of this underlying legislation that we will vote on later today in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act.

I also support broader legislation. I am hoping the broader legislation will have more to do with the prisoner re-entry programs as well—the so-called second chance. I am the author of the Second Chance Act from my House days, and I hope that legislation can be reauthorized as part of this larger criminal justice reform issue.

Today I will focus on the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act because this legislation is badly needed. It is an emergency in our communities right now. This is the heroin and prescription drug issue that unfortunately many more people are learning about because it is affecting many more of us.

I had a tele-townhall meeting last night, which I do monthly. We had 25,000 Ohioans on the call. We typically have a few polls where we ask about the top issues. Last night, we asked how many people on the call were directly affected by the heroin and prescription drug issue. We asked people to indicate that by hitting “1” for a yes and “2” for a no. Sixty-eight percent of the people on this call said: Yes, they were directly affected. We had a lot of calls from people who were affected. We had a call from a woman whose stepson was addicted and he was trying to get treatment but couldn’t find a place, and they wanted me to help them find a proper place to get treatment and recovery services. Others called in about the legislation and asked why we haven’t passed it yet. My answer to them was, it is coming and help is on the way.

I am frustrated, just as they are, that we haven’t moved more quickly on this, but, again, we finally had a vote today to move this legislation forward. I hope the final passage vote will occur later today or tomorrow morning, and we will be able to get this to the President’s desk for his signature.

It initially passed the Senate with a 94-to-1 vote back on March 10. It then went over to the House of Representatives, where the House worked through their own process. They had 18 separate bills rather than 1 comprehensive bill, and then in the period between then and now, we have had this conference between the House and Senate to work out the differences. That conference re-

port was voted on in the House last Friday, and it was an overwhelming vote. Why? Because this makes so much sense. Again, on the Senate floor today we had a very strong vote result of 90 to 2 on the cloture motion to move this legislation forward, and I am hopeful we will have a strong vote tomorrow morning so we can send this to the President and get it to our communities and begin to get those who need it some help.

The legislation is considered by some to be inadequate because it doesn’t have enough funding in it. Well, it is not a funding bill. It is not an appropriations bill. It is a bill that establishes new programs to fund new and better ways to deal with addiction. It authorizes significant new spending. Since the Senate passed the bill with a 94-to-1 vote, only two things have happened with regard to funding. One is that we more than doubled the authorization so there is more funding authorized—\$181 million per year. Second, we also had the Appropriations Committee go through its process and both the Senate and House Appropriations Committee voted to actively increase funding in this area, and that is a good thing.

I think it is an emergency, I think it is urgent, and I think we should spend more money here because it will save money over the long haul and because there are so many people who are not achieving their God-given purpose because this addiction has taken them off track. We have to help them and help them now. We have to help keep people from getting into that funnel of addiction by focusing more on prevention and education, but all that has happened since the 94-to-1 vote in the Senate is that there has been a 93-percent increase over last year’s funding which will go into effect next year, and by the way that is a 539-percent increase over the funding just 2 years ago.

The House appropriations bill has a bigger increase in the funding. I will fight for that funding, and I will fight to ensure that that funding actually applies to the programs that are in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act because it is the kind of legislation that will actually make a difference helping to ensure that we can begin to turn the tide on this issue.

The legislation before us is one that 94 Senators have already voted for, and, again, it passed the House with big numbers so I am hopeful there will not be any roadblocks in the way of getting it done.

Today I was asked by some people: What does the bill really do? I started to go through all of the specific grant programs for our veterans, mothers who are pregnant, kids who are born dependent on drugs, and those folks who find themselves unable to get treatment. There are specific provisions for our law enforcement personnel, which is why the Fraternal Order of Police has been a strong supporter. I appreciate them for standing

up early as a law enforcement entity. Others have backed this legislation as well because it provides more training on how to use this miracle drug called Narcan, or naloxone, which will help save people who have overdosed. There are a lot of specific programs here, but I think the answer to the question as to what it does is pretty simple. For the first time ever in this United States Congress, it begins to treat addiction like the disease it is, and this means, by necessity, if it is a disease, we need to get people into treatment. It begins to change the way we approach addiction by saying: Let’s remove the stigma so people will come forward and families are willing to talk about it.

Last night on that call, when 68 percent of the respondents to the poll said they were directly affected by this issue, I bet many of those people had not thought about talking about that issue publicly. I think this legislation helps to establish the fact that this is a disease.

This legislation will also help deal with an underlying problem, which is how we will deal with prescription drugs in our communities. Too often in our society there has been an overprescribing of painkillers that are addictive.

I heard another story today, and I hear them every day when I am back home. This was somebody whose family member had gone to the hospital for a knee operation, and when he was done with the procedure, the doctor gave him 80 Percocets. He didn’t take any of them because he didn’t need them, but his point was: Why 80 pills? Four out of five of the heroin addicts in Ohio and around this country started with prescription drugs, and often it was very inadvertent. It was something where someone had a wisdom tooth taken out and was given a number of these prescription pain pills but didn’t understand the risks. When that person started taking them, there was a physiological change in that person’s brain. That person became addicted and that person went to heroin and that person then died of an overdose. That has happened to two families in my home State. Those parents have now come forward not to just tell that story and share their grief but to channel that grief into something positive, which is to let other parents know. That is in this legislation. We have a national awareness program to let people know about the fact that the prescription drug link to heroin, opioids, and addiction is real, and we must be very careful.

For the first time ever in Federal law, it also promotes recovery. Treatment is one thing, but as one of my friends back home who is in recovery told me, getting clean is easier, but staying clean is hard. In other words, so often what we found as we did our research around the country is that people go through a treatment program, but the recovery services aren’t

there to take them through that longer term support to enable them to stay clean. Tragically, we save a life only to see someone overdose again later. Recovery is about finishing the job and helping people get their lives back, and it is an incredibly important part of this legislation.

Earlier this week, I spoke to Faces & Voices of Recovery. They have been terrific in promoting this legislation, and just as important, letting people who are in recovery know that you have friends, that this can be addressed, and that you can come out on the other side as a person who is achieving their purpose in life and God-given abilities. You can get through this.

I was honored to speak at their rally here in Washington, DC. This was about a year ago, and they brought in people from all over the country. They had some great entertainers and people who were willing to stand up for the first time and say: I am in recovery. If you are in recovery, too, we want to embrace and help you.

One of the advocates whom I met with the other night is a woman named Sarah Nerad. Sarah is someone I have gotten to know over the years. A couple of years ago, we had a roundtable discussion as this legislation was being drafted, and Sarah told me her story. She was a recovering addict who went to Ohio State University. She found there were no support services at the university. She started a student recovery support community. That community at Ohio State University not only has a lot of people now joining and participating in it—recovering addicts, family members, and friends—but she is also now spreading this at colleges and universities around the country.

There are grants in this legislation to promote these support communities because they work, and I hold up Sarah as an example of someone who was brave and courageous enough to talk about her addiction and therefore was able to get other people attracted to her and her support group. As a result, she was able to go on and help so many other people and change so many other lives, and really, in her case, to be able to say that she is a major part of this legislation, because we included this partly because of her testimony and her stories.

Until we end this stigma, we are not going to make the progress that we must. The Drug Enforcement Agency tells us that this is not getting better, this is getting worse. They tell us that from 2010 until the most recent data we have, which is 2014, there has been a tripling of heroin overdoses.

In my own State of Ohio, we have seen a dramatic increase. Since March 10, when 94 Senators voted for CARA, we have lost more than 14,000 Americans. Think about that. Since March 10, more than 14,000 Americans have succumbed. In other words, they have overdosed and died from heroin and

prescription drugs, opioid overdoses. Unfortunately, this is just the tip of the iceberg.

As horrible as those numbers are—the 14,000 overdose deaths—think of all the casualties. Think of the 16,000 people in Ohio who have been saved from overdoses by Narcan. But many of them have not gotten into treatment, have not gone into recovery, and they continue to be broken apart from their families. The drugs are everything—not their kids, not their parents. They continue to be unable or unwilling to work. They continue to commit crimes. In most communities in my home State of Ohio, law enforcement will tell us that the No. 1 cause of crime is this issue. They continue to be unable to pursue their God-given abilities. Those are the casualties of this.

No one suffers alone. In Ohio, we are told that 200,000 people are now struggling with addiction. That is the size of a major city in Ohio. Many of those addicted are parents. We are told that 30 percent—think about this—30 percent of all kids in Ohio who are in the custody of the State are there because their parents are opioid users. Among infants, that number is 70 percent. Seventy percent of the infants who are in the custody of the State of Ohio are there because their parents are opioid users. I call that an epidemic.

It is driving up crime, as I said. In Marion, OH, Police Chief Bill Collins put it this way: “All of the property crimes we have—the shoplifting, the theft, the robberies—all go back to one thing, and that’s heroin.” That is a quote from him. He says that this epidemic makes him and other law enforcement officials feel like they are “in the ocean without a life jacket.” That is what we are trying to do with CARA, is to provide that life jacket.

It is not just the silver bullet. It won’t solve all the problems. Washington is not going to solve this problem—it is going to be solved in our communities and in our hearts—but this will help. It will help make the Federal Government a much better partner with State and local government, with the wonderful nonprofits that are doing the good work, and with the families and the communities.

Last week, in just one 36-hour period in Akron, OH, 20 people overdosed on opioids, 3 of them fatally. That is not even 2 days in one city. When the first responders arrived at one of the overdoses, by the way, there were two small children present.

In Central Ohio, in Columbus, nine people overdosed, two of them fatally, on Sunday. That is in one city in 1 day. Two of those occurred at McDonald’s, by the way, with families around. It was in broad daylight.

A few months ago, we lost seven-time Grammy Award winner Prince to a fentanyl overdose. We all know about Prince. You might not know that this week, 10-time Grammy Award-winning singer Chaka Khan checked into a rehabilitation center for fentanyl addic-

tion. I want to commend her for having the courage to admit she needed help and for taking the steps—very publicly—necessary to get her life back on track. This will help others to do the same thing. God bless you for doing it. I think this is, sadly, an instructive case because, much like Prince, she has fame, she has fortune, 10 No. 1 hit songs, and all of the talent you could ever ask for. Most people would say those aren’t the kinds of people who get addicted. Addiction knows no ZIP Code. Addiction spares no one. It affects people of every single background.

If you talk to people in Ohio, they get it. Ohioans understand the scope of this epidemic now, and they are taking action. They expect us to help and to take action too. That is what this legislation is about. They couldn’t believe how slow we have moved on this. They couldn’t believe these ideas that we might try to delay this further for reasons that had nothing to do with the substance.

The Talawanda School District outside of my hometown of Cincinnati, OH, announced last week that they are now adding to their health and wellness curriculum key information about opiates. I talked to a couple of superintendents today who are doing the same thing in their schools. I believe this is critical to preventing overdoses from beginning in the first place, by using better prevention and identification, keeping people from getting into that funnel of addiction, and that is what is happening. CARA supports this.

In Trumbull County, OH, more than 200 Ohioans participated in a Walk Against Heroin over the Fourth of July weekend. Again, people are starting to take action.

I know it can be very discouraging. The scope of this problem is overwhelming, but there is hope. Treatment can work. Recovery does work. If we can get this legislation to the President, I am confident he will sign it into law, and in many more of our communities we will have better treatment and better recovery and more hope for the people we represent.

I thank Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE for his work with me on this issue. He has been the coauthor of this. We started more than 3 years ago, going to conferences here in Washington, DC. We had five conferences. We brought in experts from all over the country—people whom I have talked about earlier included—from Ohio but every State. We talked about how to actually make a difference in communities around the country. We didn’t care where the idea came from—Republican, Democrat, Independent. That didn’t matter. What mattered was whether the idea made sense. Senator WHITEHOUSE and his staff have done a terrific job in keeping this bill moving and making sure we didn’t get off track.

I also thank other colleagues who have been helpful, especially Senator

KELLY AYOTTE and Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR for their passion and for their help in crafting this legislation.

The American people are tired of the partisanship. We all hear that. We all know that. It is time for us to act.

I also thank some of the staff who have been so helpful on this legislation and who have put their heart and soul into this effort, including Megan Harrington, Pam Thiessen, Mark Isakowitz, Teri Geiger, Brian Riedl, Allen Ernst, and Sarah Schmidt on my staff. I am proud of their work throughout this process.

I thank all the advocates we have worked with all across Ohio and all across the country. They have been here in Washington. They helped us to get the great vote in the House last week, and they are working today on the vote tonight or tomorrow. I want to point out in particular that Jessica Nickel has helped to keep us all moving in the same direction. The outside advocates have been terrific.

Last, I thank those who have shared their stories, and most importantly, I thank them for their willingness to allow us to hear from them. These are people who are in recovery. These are people who are in the trenches, dealing every day with this issue, who are providing the love and the attention and the support to help people get their treatment and into recovery. These are our first responders who are out there on the frontlines dealing with this issue every single day. These are our doctors and nurses who find our waiting rooms and our emergency rooms are filled with people who have addiction problems and overdoses. These are the people who work in the neonatal units with these babies who are born dependent, a 750-percent increase in my home State just in the last 12 years, and they take these babies through a recovery and treatment program so that they can be healthy and get back on track. I thank all of them.

I want to finish with a story. About a year ago I visited a treatment center in Ohio. I have been to more than a dozen treatment centers in my home State to talk about this issue and to get ideas. It was the Zeph Center, which is a center in Toledo, OH. I had asked if we could have a discussion, a roundtable discussion, and sure enough, we did. At this roundtable discussion, some people came forward who are in recovery. There were about a dozen people there. Again, I congratulate them for coming forward and for being willing to talk to me and to be public. There were people there from the community who heard their stories for the first time, and they did share their stories, but also they came ready to talk. They had reviewed the draft legislation. They had it in front of them. They had ideas. They had input. They had looked at every single section of the bill. They knew what programs were funded. They talked about what they thought worked and what didn't work in their lives. It was an ex-

ample of the process we went through with this legislation. It wasn't just a bunch of people in Washington saying we know what is best; it was people back home saying: We need this help, and we want to be sure you do it right. And by the way, keep it nonpartisan. Make sure we get this done. Don't let anything get in the way.

That is what we have done. That is what we will do tonight or tomorrow morning when we vote on this bill. That is why it is so important that we get it passed, because it is those recovering addicts at the Zeph Center and others around the State of Ohio who have patiently waited for this legislation. It is now our duty to deliver that legislation and help turn the tide in this epidemic.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

OUR AMERICAN FAMILY

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I rise today to give my second speech this week discussing the issues we are facing as a nation following last week's tragedies in Dallas, Minnesota, and Baton Rouge. This speech is perhaps the most difficult because it is the most personal.

On Monday, I talked about how the vast majority of our law enforcement officers have only two things in mind: protect and serve. But, as I noted then, we do have serious issues that must be resolved.

In many cities and towns across the Nation, there is a deep divide between the Black community and law enforcement. There is a trust gap, a tension that has been growing for decades. And as a family, one American family, we cannot ignore these issues because while so many officers do good—and as I said on Monday, we should be very thankful and supportive of all of those officers who do good—some simply do not. I have experienced it myself.

So today I want to speak about some of those issues—not with anger, although I have been angry. I tell my story not out of frustration, although at times I have been frustrated. I stand here before you today because I am seeking for all of us, the entire American family, to work together so we all experience the lyrics of a song that we can hear but not see: peace, love, and understanding. Because I shuddered when I heard Eric Garner say, "I can't breathe." I wept when I watched Walter Scott turn and run away and get shot in the back and killed. And I broke when I heard the 4-year-old daughter of Philando Castile's girlfriend tell her mother, "It's OK, I'm right here with you." These are people. Lost forever. Fathers, brothers, sons.

Some will say and maybe even scream: But they have criminal records. They were criminals. They had spent time in jail.

And while having a record should not sentence you to death, I say, OK, then, I will share with you some of my own

experiences or the experiences of good friends and other professionals.

I can certainly remember the very first time I was pulled over by a police officer as just a youngster. I was driving a car that had an improper headlight. It didn't work right. And the cop came up to my car, hand on his gun, and said: Boy, don't you know your headlights are not working properly? I felt embarrassed, ashamed, and scared—very scared.

But instead of sharing experience after experience, I want to go to a time in my life as an elected official to share just a couple of stories as an elected official. But please remember that in the course of 1 year, I have been stopped seven times by law enforcement officers—not four, not five, not six, but seven times in 1 year as an elected official. Was I speeding sometimes? Sure. But the vast majority of the time I was pulled over for nothing more than driving a new car in the wrong neighborhood or some other reason just as trivial.

One of the times I remember I was leaving the mall. I took a left out of the mall, and as soon as I took a left, a police officer pulled in right behind me. That was my first time. I got to another traffic light, and I took another left into a neighborhood. The police followed behind me. I took a third left onto the street that at the time led to my apartment complex and then finally I took a fourth left coming into my apartment complex, and then the blue lights went on. The officer approached the car and said that I did not use my turn signal on the fourth turn. Keep in mind, as my colleagues might imagine, I was paying very close attention to the law enforcement officer who followed me on four turns. Do you really think that somehow I forgot to use my turn signal on the fourth turn? Well, according to him, I did.

Another time, I was following a friend of mine. We had just left working out and we were heading out to grab a bite to eat at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. He pulls out, and I pull out right behind him. We are driving down the road, and the blue lights come on. The officer pulls me into the median, and he starts telling me that he thinks perhaps the car is stolen. Well, I started asking myself—because I was smart enough not to ask him but was asking myself—is the license plate coming in as stolen? Does the license plate match the car? I was looking for some rational reason that may have prompted him to stop me on the side of the road.

I also think about the experiences of my brother, who became a command sergeant major in the U.S. Army, the highest rank for an enlisted soldier. He was driving from Texas to Charleston and was pulled over by a law enforcement officer who wanted to know if he had stolen the car he was driving because it was a Volvo.

I do not know many African-American men who do not have a very similar story to tell, no matter the profession, no matter their income, no matter their position in life.

I also recall the story of one of my former staffers—a great guy, about 30 years old—who drove a Chrysler 300, which is a nice car, without question, but not a Ferrari, not a super nice car. He was pulled over so many times here in DC for absolutely no reason other than that he was driving a nice car. He sold that car and bought a more obscure form of transportation. He was tired of being targeted. Imagine the frustration, the irritation, the sense of a loss of dignity that accompanies each of those stops.

Even here on Capitol Hill, where I have had the great privilege of serving the people of South Carolina as a U.S. Congress Member and as a U.S. Senator for the last 6 years—for those who don't know, there are a few ways to identify a Member of Congress or Senate. Well, typically, when you have been here for a couple of years, the law enforcement officers get to know your face and they identify you by face, but if that doesn't happen, then you have an ID badge, a license you can show them, or this really cool pin. I often-times said the House pin was larger because our egos are bigger. So we have a smaller pin in the Senate. It is easy to identify a U.S. Senator by our pin.

I recall walking into an office building just last year after being here for 5 years in the capital, and the officer looked at me, full of attitude, and said, "The pin I know, and you I don't. Show me your ID." I will tell you, I was thinking to myself, either he thinks I am committing a crime, impersonating a Member of Congress, or—or what? Well, I will tell you that later that evening I received a phone call from his supervisor apologizing for the behavior. That is at least the third phone call I have received from a supervisor or the Chief of Police since I have been in the Senate.

So while I thank God I have not endured bodily harm, I have felt the pressure applied by the scales of justice when they are slanted. I have felt the anger, the frustration, the sadness, and the humiliation that comes with feeling like you are being targeted for nothing more than being just yourself.

As the former staffer I mentioned earlier told me yesterday, there is absolutely nothing more frustrating, more damaging to your soul than when you know you are following the rules and you are being treated like you are not.

But make no mistake—no matter this turmoil, these issues should not lead anyone to any conclusion other than to abide by the laws. I think the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., said it so well. Returning violence with violence only leads to more violence and to even darker nights, nights, to paraphrase, without stars. There is never ever an acceptable reason to harm a

member of our law enforcement community—ever. I don't want anybody to misinterpret the words I am saying.

Even in the times of great darkness, there is light. As I shared Monday, there are hundreds—thousands of stories of officers who go beyond the call of duty. Ms. Taylor—whom I spoke about on Monday night—at the Dallas incident was covered completely by at least three officers who were willing to lose their lives to save hers. We have a real opportunity to be grateful and thankful for our men and women in uniform.

I shared another story on Monday night as well, and while the one I want to tell you today does not involve a tragic loss of life, it does show support that meant a lot to me at the time it occurred. Prior to serving in the U.S. Senate, I was an elected official on the county level, State level, and a Member of the U.S. Congress. I believe it is my responsibility to hang out and be with my constituents as often as possible and to hear their concerns. At some point during my time as a public servant, I traveled to an event I was invited to along with two staffers and two law enforcement officers—all four were White, and me. When we arrived at the event, the organizer seemed to have a particular issue with me coming to the event. They allowed my two staffers to go into the event and seemed fine with allowing the two officers to go into the event, who both said they weren't going in unless I was going in. So in order to avoid a tense situation, I opted to leave because there is no winning that kind of debate ever. But I was so proud and thankful for those two law enforcement officers who were enraged by this treatment. It was such a moment that I will never forget and a situation that I would love to forget.

This situation happens all across the country. This situation happens all across the country whether or not we want to recognize it. It may not happen a thousand times a day, but it happens too many times a day, and to see it as I have had the chance to see it helps me understand why this issue has wounds that have not healed in a generation. It helps me to appreciate and to understand and helps me communicate why it is time for this American family to have a serious conversation about where we are, where we are going, and how to get there. We must find a way to fill these cracks in the very foundation of our country.

Tomorrow I will return with my final speech in this three-part series on solutions and how to get to where we need to go by talking about the policies that get us there and the people solutions because I, like you, Mr. President, don't believe that all answers are in government. I don't believe all the solutions we need start in government, but we need people doing things that only individuals can do.

Today, however, I simply ask you this: Recognize that just because you

do not feel the pain, the anguish of another, does not mean it does not exist. To ignore their struggles—our struggles—does not make them disappear; it simply leaves you blind and the American family very vulnerable. Some search so hard to explain away justice that they are slowly wiping away who we are as a nation. We must come together to fulfill what we all know is possible here in America—peace, love and understanding. Fairness.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE).
The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, before Senator SCOTT leaves the floor, let me say to my colleague how much I appreciate his frank discussion today. We are so blessed to have you and CORY BOOKER here. We don't have enough diversity here—let me just be clear. As much as all of us want to walk in each other's shoes because we each have different experiences in our lives, it really matters who is in the room, who is at the microphone, who is sharing the truth.

Senator SCOTT has shared a truth with us today, and I want to say Senator BOOKER shared similar stories with us in our caucus, and it is life-changing for us. I so appreciate everything you said, and it makes us better to have you and CORY BOOKER here.

RACE RELATIONS

Having said that, Mr. President, I think it is important to discuss a very similar topic, which is the status of race relations today, because I don't think Senator SCOTT and Senator BOOKER should have to be the ones to have to carry this forward.

Mr. President, when I was a little girl—I was 10—I came face-to-face with ugly, vile, stupid, and dangerous discrimination. I cheered on Jackie Robinson with all my girl power to counteract what my dad said was hatred aimed at Jackie because of the color of his skin. And how blessed was I when I worked hard with a Republican colleague to make sure Jackie Robinson got the Congressional Medal of Honor.

When I was with my mother in Florida—the same age, 10 years old, 1950—I saw African Americans forced to sit in the back of the bus. I got up to offer my seat to an elderly woman. She must have been 55 at the time—I was 10—she looked old to me. I stood up and she refused me. She said no, no. I was hurt.

I said to my mother: What is happening here? Why won't the woman take my seat?

And my mother said: Segregation.

Well, growing up in Brooklyn, this made no sense to me. My mother could have let it go; instead, she told me to follow her to the back of the bus—not that anyone noticed, but we knew exactly what we were doing. And I felt like a part of her team—part of a team against this craziness where people had to go to the back of the bus simply because of the color of their skin.

The civil rights movement has made enormous progress in our laws, but the

trouble remains in our hearts. There is too much hatred in our communities. But let's be clear. Whether you are a police officer—regardless of the color of your skin—kissing your family good-bye in the morning or the parents of a young African-American teenager, no one should ever have to fear that they will not see their loved ones at night. Yet that is a truth in America—a truth that has been witnessed by a couple of our Senators. No one should have to fear that they won't see their loved ones at night because of this type of hatred.

Now is not the time to paint whole groups of people with a broad brush because when you do that, that is the exact definition of prejudice. You can't broad-brush a whole community because of the color of their skin or their religion or whom they love, and you can't broad-brush all the police in the police department.

What we need is a de-escalation of suspicion and an escalation of trust—a de-escalation of suspicion and an escalation of trust. It is long past time that we stood together united. It is long past time that we look inside our own hearts, look inside our own souls, and banish the hatred. We must instead embrace each other and God's creation, because we—each of us—are God's creation. Dr. Martin Luther King wrote: "Men often hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they cannot communicate; they cannot communicate because they are separated."

That is what Martin Luther King said—a man who taught us love, a man who taught us compassion, a man who taught us nonviolence, a man who taught us to listen to each other, a man who taught us to walk in each other's shoes. So we need that conversation. We start it by breaking down barriers that separate us, bridging the gap between communities and law enforcement and establishing trust. Healing will begin in the streets. It should.

Policing should be for the community, by the community, and with the community. When I was a county supervisor in the 1970s, there were police-versus-community issues. So I recommended, and my colleagues concurred, in a new system of community policing. What does it mean? It means you get the police out of a central precinct and you move them into the community. Relationships develop. It seems so right. It works so well that I was shocked when I got out of local government and I realized that not enough communities were following that same community policing method.

Where it exists, there is cooperation and true protection of the community. It is an obvious step that should be implemented widely. Well, what can we do? We can't force people to love. We can suggest it. We can't force people to be tolerant. We can suggest it. But I

think there are certain things we can do.

I have introduced legislation with Senator CORY BOOKER. It is called the PRIDE Act. It would start us off by getting statistics that we need. How many shootings are there in our communities by the police toward the community? How many shootings by the community toward the police are there? Believe it or not, we don't really collect those numbers. We would provide funding for States for the use-of-force training for law enforcement agencies and personnel, including de-escalation and violence training and funding for tip lines and hotlines and public awareness announcements to gain information regarding the use of force against the police. So it is a very balanced piece of legislation that looks at the problems on both sides.

Secondly, we need to better support law enforcement agencies who work to advance the practice of community policing. Now, we can do that by increasing funding federally for the Justice Department's Community Policing Development Program, which provides law enforcement agencies with funding to implement innovative community policing practices. But guess what; the funding for this critical program, which may well be one of our most important programs, is \$8 million a year. That is it for the whole country. It is not enough. We need to do better.

Number three, we should provide dedicated funding for Justice Department programs to initiate formal gatherings or summits to bring community members and police into one conversation. Anyone who looked at Dallas understands how hard they are trying, how much they have done. When I saw President Obama with Mrs. Obama and President George W. Bush with Laura Bush, I was so happy.

They are starting that conversation, the building of that trust, the tearing down of that suspicion. One of the founders of Black Lives Matter, Alicia Garza, said:

"We have so many different experiences that are rich and complex. We need to bring all those experiences to the table in order to achieve the solutions we desire."

To anyone listening to Senator SCOTT or anyone who has heard the stories or read some of the words of Senator BOOKER, we have a lot to learn. A U.S. Senator was stopped—he said seven times; this is what I heard Senator SCOTT say—in one year because of the color of his skin. What? It is just too much for these people to bear. We need to help them change policies that lead to this suspicion.

Yes, we have so many different experiences that are rich and complex. We need to bring those experiences to the table. My friend the Senator from Alaska is here. We are only 20 women out of 100 Senators. I think our colleagues understand that we have brought something to the body. We have brought our experiences to the body. It transcends partisanship. When we are in the room,

it is a little bit of a different conversation. Not that we are any better, but we have had different experiences. When our African-American colleagues tell us: Look at our lives. Look at what we have been through. We have the same job as you. Why are we pulled over seven times in a year? Why have we been scared? Something is wrong. We can't turn our back on it. We can't leave it up to just those two colleagues to lead us. We need to help them, work together, and have this conversation that Alicia Garza says we should have.

Number four, we must formally recognize and encourage police departments that epitomize what it means to be a keeper of the peace—a keeper of the peace. That is what they want to be—those officers who attend community meetings after work, who spend their Saturdays playing basketball with the neighborhood kids, who attend church services so they can connect with the congregants, who take lower income children shopping for toys and gifts at Christmas, who stop to check in on residents just because they care. That is happening all over the country. That is why we can't paint people with a broad brush. It is wrong.

In my State, in the community of Vallejo, in the San Francisco Bay Area, you should see what some of these officers do. They had a growing divide between the community and the police. The police department knew something had to change. So they invited the public to participate in those changes. They held open-door community meetings. They created a citizen advisory board to ensure residents' voices were heard. They invited residents to experience their training simulator and give them a new perspective on that police experience.

See it through our eyes, they said, and we will see it through your eyes, and let's deescalate the tension and escalate the trust. They put a high importance on the hiring of officers who had a connection to Vallejo and wanted to serve the public. They even started a late-night youth program at the local high school. They started change from within that community.

So I think we should have a community policing innovation fund at the Justice Department which would reward law enforcement agencies and localities that are doing the right thing.

Lastly, I want to bring up that issue where everyone goes into their corners. I beg colleagues not to go into their corners. We have to address gun violence. Now, we know we can't prevent every tragedy. But we can do some smart things while protecting the Second Amendment.

We don't need military weapons on the streets. They are weapons of war. The family of the gentleman who developed these weapons said to his family: I didn't develop them for people on the streets; I developed them for the military and law enforcement. We can't have the people who are protecting us outgunned. We don't need

these weapons on the streets. There is only one reason—to kill as many people as you can as fast as you can without reloading.

Don't tell me hunters need this. That is a bunch of baloney. The people who want to keep these weapons on the street are the ones who sell them. Let's be clear. The vast majority of people support this. We can expand background checks—90 percent of the people support that, even a majority of NRA members—so we can keep guns out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill.

We should prohibit the sale or possession of high-capacity magazines and end the ban preventing the Centers for Disease Control from researching gun violence. Have you talked to doctors who work in big city hospitals? I have. They say: We are prepared to go to any war zone. Those are the kinds of wounds they see. They tremble at what they see. They mourn about what they see.

Somebody goes out to a nightclub. They hide in the bathroom. They call their mother. They never see their family again.

My State of California has created a new research center on gun violence to understand the impact of firearm fatalities and injuries and, hopefully, reduce them in the future. It should happen at the Federal level.

There are 30,000 of our people killed a year by gun violence. We lost 55,000 to 60,000 in the Vietnam War—a 10-year period. It tore the country apart. This is 300,000 of our people over 10 years.

So I am going to close with this. There will always be bad people. I have lived long enough to know that. There will always be bad people. There will always be lost people. There will also be mean people. But we cannot and must not allow them to poison this Nation wherever they are. Good people—and that is most of America—must join hands across every line that divides us—race, religion, color, creed, and, yes, politics.

We must call out the racists, the prejudiced, and the haters—whoever they are, wherever they are—even if they are in elected office. We have to support those who believe in community, who believe in community policing and not support those who refuse to admit that there is a problem with profiling. Just read what Senator SCOTT said about his life, about his fears, about what happened to him. Ask CORY BOOKER, a Rhodes Scholar, what it is like.

We have to support those activists who bring us together, support steps to improve our institutions, and reject those who inflame fears on any side in which they are found.

We must speak out and support those who believe this is the United States of America, not the “Divided States of America,” and we will not allow this Nation to be divided by race, color, creed, religion, or whom you love. I know America. I believe we will over-

come. I want to quote JOHN LEWIS as I close. He was beaten, bloodied, and jailed, fighting for civil rights. He tells this story, and I quote:

“I saw those signs that said ‘white men,’ ‘colored men,’ ‘white women,’ ‘colored women,’ ‘white waiting,’ ‘colored waiting.’

I would come home and ask my mother, my father, my grandparents, my great grand-parents, ‘Why?’

They would say: ‘That’s the way it is. Don’t get in the way. Don’t get in trouble.’”

He goes on:

“In 1957, I met Rosa Parks at the age of 17.

In 1958, at the age of 18, I met Martin Luther King, Jr., and these two individuals inspired me to get in the way, to get in trouble.

So, I encourage you to find a way to get in the way. You must find a way to get in trouble—good trouble, necessary trouble.”

That is JOHN LEWIS. We are blessed to have this hero, JOHN LEWIS, among us in the Congress. We must listen to him because he is right. It is our job to get in the way of prejudice and hate. We may do it each in his or her own way. My way may not be your way, but our way is to fight against prejudice and hate wherever we see it. Our job is to move forward with respect and understanding, with tolerance and love.

Our Founders knew we were not a perfect union. They told us we had to make a more perfect union. That is our job. I know we can do it, and we must do it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COLA ACT OF 2016

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5588, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5588) to increase, effective as of December 1, 2016, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 5588) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, there is a great deal of discussion this week on very difficult and hard issues.

The comments of the Senator from California, which were preceded by the comments of our colleague from South Carolina, remind us that as lawmakers, as policymakers, our jobs are indeed difficult, as we do try to make good on that pledge for a more perfect union because we are clearly not there today.

I am on the floor to speak to another type of killer that we face in this country, and that is the killer that comes with drugs, substance abuse, illegal drugs, opioids, heroin—this insidious scourge that has afflicted us as a nation. We are fortunate in that we have an opportunity—hopefully soon—to be voting for the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, CARA.

I thank all of my colleagues who have been involved in this effort, very aggressively pushing this bill. Senator PORTMAN from Ohio, Senator AYOTTE from New Hampshire are among the many who have stepped forward to really shine a light on an area where we know that we need to work to develop a comprehensive solution, a community-focused solution to so much of what we are dealing with.

The CARA act touches on all areas of this issue, from education to awareness, from access to treatment to preventing and treating overdose, from families to veterans to infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome, and even teens who may suffer a sports injury. Opioid and heroin addiction is a serious threat to our Nation's prosperity, and the legislative initiative that we have in front of us is one way to fight back.

The rates of opioid abuse have skyrocketed. Drug overdose-related deaths have more than quadrupled since 1999. When an addict can no longer afford to get access to opioids, we find, unfortunately, that they oftentimes turn to heroin, a cheaper alternative with similar effects.

The rates of heroin overdose have tripled between 2010 and 2014. In my State of Alaska, we like to think that sometimes we are far enough away geographically that we are isolated or insulated from some of what happens in the lower 48. But in fact we have seen instances of heroin use, opioid abuse, that have resulted in statistics that are shattering. Efforts to prevent those deaths by overdose have resulted in many States, like the State of Alaska, passing legislation which has removed the liability for a family member to administer the lifesaving drug naloxone. CARA does this, as well, through grants that improve access to medically assisted treatment, opening access treatment to overdose treatment, and it provides for first responder training.

Over the course of these many months, there have been so many personal horror stories about the impact of opioid and heroin addiction in our respective States. We have witnessed the sense of urgency and desperation as we hear those stories from families who are truly desperately seeking help.