

almost 18 million people in Yemen are food insecure with more than 8 million facing starvation.

The war and Saudi Arabia's impediments to the delivery of food, fuel, and medicine are the primary causes for this crisis. Saudi Arabia's impediments to humanitarian assistance in Yemen violate international law, humanitarian principles, and U.S. law. They also undermine U.S. national security interests.

Since March, I have taken a number of steps to demand an end to the Saudi impediments to humanitarian assistance and to encourage the administration to use its significant leverage with Riyadh.

On December 6, the President said, "I have directed officials in my Administration to call the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to request that they completely allow food, fuel, water, and medicine to reach the Yemeni people who desperately need it. This must be done for humanitarian reasons immediately."

In my view, we now need to see action from the Saudis, not just assurances.

The Saudis must finally and completely end all impediments to the delivery and transport of humanitarian aid in Yemen. Each day costs many lives and protection is running out in Washington.

If Saudi Arabia continues to be unresponsive to the President's demands and demands from Congress, failing to permit the delivery of the U.S. taxpayer funded cranes to Yemen's most important humanitarian port and continuing to block the delivery of commercial fuel shipments, I stand ready to take legislative action.

I was proud to support Ms. Newstead's confirmation today, and I look forward to working closely with her.

Thank you.

#### CONFIRMATION OF OWEN WEST

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, equality of opportunity is one of our Nation's greatest pursuits and greatest struggles. Though the path has not been easy, our society has slowly and steadily become more just, more decent, and more powerful. President Obama's Defense Secretary Carter reaffirmed this principle when he stated that every qualified woman who met the high physical standards required of her would be allowed to serve our country in combat.

Owen West soundly rejected this policy and the ethic undergirding it in an inflammatory opinion editorial authored with his father in March of 2016. He asserted that integrating women into infantry platoons, including those who "could run circles around the average Marine grunt" with their "physical prowess," would "swiftly reduce combat effectiveness." He discounted the ability of women to contribute to mission effectiveness, equating them

only with "intimate scandals." He contended that women would "introduce sex, affection, favoritism, protectiveness, jealousy, anxiety and all the other co-ed dynamics to an infantry platoon."

These chauvinistic views have no place in the Department of Defense, particularly in positions of leadership. As Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, Mr. West will be responsible for the integration of women into our Special Operations Forces. I appreciate that Mr. West offered a retraction of his views on women in the military during his Senate confirmation hearing, at the behest of Democratic members of the Armed Services Committee, and it is my hope that Mr. West will do his utmost to support and recruit qualified women into the military in the future. However, many of President Trump's nominees have reneged on commitments made during their confirmation hearings. Given Mr. West's public record on women in combat, I cannot take that risk by supporting his confirmation.

#### KEVIN AND AVONTE'S LAW

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, in the 114th Congress, we came very close to passing Kevin and Avonte's Law, a bill named in honor of two boys with autism who wandered away from their caregivers and drowned.

I reintroduced this legislation last month with Senators KLOBUCHAR, TILLIS, SCHUMER, and others to equip communities with important tools to help locate individuals who wander away from their families or caregivers due to dementia or a developmental disability. The bill we crafted adds new protections for children with developmental disabilities, like autism, which are linked to wandering.

The original version of this bill, which I authored with Senator SCHUMER, passed both Chambers of Congress late last year. It passed this Chamber by voice vote over a year ago, while a similar House companion garnered over 90 cosponsors before passing the other Chamber, 346-66, last December. Unfortunately, we ran out of time to resolve the differences between the two Chamber's versions before the 114th Congress adjourned.

This year, the Judiciary Committee approved Kevin and Avonte's Law by voice vote, and, before reporting the bill to the full Senate last month, we reached bipartisan consensus on an offset. Our offset consists of the Federal Register Printing Savings Act, which Senator PORTMAN introduced earlier this year. Senator PORTMAN's office agreed to work with us and incorporate S. 1195 into Kevin and Avonte's Law. We currently are seeking unanimous consent to pass both bills in one legislative package.

Meanwhile, the House has passed its own version of the Federal Register Printing Savings Act, introduced by

Congressman RUSSELL of Oklahoma. The House-passed version of that bill won the approval of the Homeland Security Committee earlier this year, and that panel is seeking unanimous consent to pass it. I support this legislation, which is virtually identical to Senator PORTMAN's bill, but I placed a temporary hold on the House companion yesterday, so that we can find a way to pass that legislation and Kevin and Avonte's Law simultaneously.

By ensuring that both measures pass as one package, we can make additional resources available to equip first responders, law enforcement officials, and other community leaders with the training and tools necessary to better prevent and respond to missing person cases. By doing so, we also can make grants available to educate and train caregivers as well as other members of the community on how to prevent wandering by those with dementia or developmental disabilities.

#### HEALTHCARE

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I wish to call attention to several urgent and bipartisan health programs that Congress must renew without further delay.

The Republican majority has spent much of this year trying to pass partisan healthcare and tax legislation. As a result, they have neglected to extend numerous uncontroversial healthcare programs, threatening these programs' very existence and causing needless chaos and uncertainty.

It is past time that the Republican-controlled Congress extend these programs to provide healthcare access and certainty to millions of Americans.

First, I would like to address the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP. CHIP is a bipartisan healthcare success story. Enacted 20 years ago, thanks to the leadership of Senate Finance Committee Chairman ORRIN HATCH and the late Senator Ted Kennedy, CHIP brings affordable health coverage to children in families who are not eligible for Medicaid but struggle to afford private insurance.

Washington's successful CHIP program, Apple Health for Kids, covers about 60,000 children. Through CHIP, parents get peace of mind, and States and the Federal Government pitch in to share the cost.

CHIP means affordable healthcare for 9 million children. On average, a family of four pays \$158 per year in premiums and deductibles for each CHIP-enrolled child. The same family would likely pay more than \$1,000 in annual out-of-pocket costs on a commercial insurance plan, even after counting available financial help. That is a difference of more than \$800 per year for millions of families across the country and represents real affordability.

Because of CHIP, children have a medical home. In fact, more than 90 percent of Washington children with CHIP coverage visited a primary care