

the very best of public service, the very best of America, and the things we aspire to in this country. One story from his biography stands out. As a second-year law student, DOUG JONES skipped class to attend the trial of the Klansman ringleader of the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church, an event that shook the conscience of our country and helped launch a mighty movement for civil rights. That day a young DOUG JONES was moved by the disposition of justice, but he was left with the impression that other members of the conspiracy had escaped the reach of the law. So 24 years later, when DOUG JONES became the U.S. attorney for the State of Alabama, he pursued charges against two more Klan members involved in the bombing, winning their conviction and delivering a long-delayed but righteous justice. With his work, justice rolled down like a mighty stream. He will continue to fight for civil rights and many other issues here in the Senate. I know he cares deeply about the CHIP program, which covers 150,000 young Alabamians. I hope we can get that done for his State and this country very soon.

DOUG JONES was an excellent candidate. Like Senator SMITH, he will make an outstanding Senator—she for the State of Minnesota and he for the State of Alabama. The voices of JONES and SMITH will add to the diversity of energy of our caucus. I predict that both will become influential voices in this historic Chamber.

Each of their States had great football victories this weekend, I might add. I watched Alabama win over Clemson—sorry, LINDSEY and TIM. I watched Minnesota, my favorite team outside of the three New York teams, come in second in the whole NFC, and it got a bye week as we moved to the playoffs. So it is a great day for these two States in a whole lot of ways this weekend, and it is very good so far in 2018 with the swearing in of these two Senators.

#### A NEW DIRECTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, in the second half of the 115th Congress now, let's talk a little bit about a new direction. Let the induction of these two Senators this afternoon be the beginning of a new direction for the Senate in the second half of this Congress.

The first half of the 115th Congress was not a year to be proud of. Partisan legislation emerged from the majority leader's office and was dropped on the floor of the Senate, sometimes merely hours before we were asked to vote on its final passage. Procedural gimmicks were used to avoid the Senate's long history of debate and bipartisanship. An economy wracked by unfairness and inequality was made even more unfair and more unequal by the Republican majority, which almost delighted in revoking consumer protections to help big business, installed a pro-corporate Supreme Court, drove up healthcare

premiums, and passed a tax bill dramatically skewed to the benefit of big corporations and the very wealthy. All in all, 2017 was a great year for wealthy Republican donors but a lost year for the middle class and the working men and women of this country.

We Democrats hope this year is different—focused on the middle class rather than the rich and powerful, focused on helping them in the ways we have done in the last decades, with both Democratic and Republican Presidents, rather than this trickle down that benefits the few at the top and does not benefit the very many in the middle.

In these first few weeks, we have a chance to start off on the right foot. We have 2 weeks to negotiate a budget deal that also must address a host of other issues, including CHIP, community health centers, disaster aid and, of course, the Dreamers.

Democrats would also like our country to make a downpayment on urgent domestic priorities like combating the opioid epidemic, a scourge that for the first time helped cause our life expectancy to decline because of the higher death rate from opioids.

We want to improve veterans' healthcare. They served us, and we must serve them. We must shore up pension plans for millions of hard-working, middle-class Americans who put money in every month and, because of the stock market crash and sometimes corporate misdeeds, aren't getting what they put in for. These items are crucial to the middle class.

Take opioids, for example. In 2016, a record 63,000 Americans died of drug overdoses, and two-thirds or more were opioid-related. It is a full-fledged epidemic that strikes the rich, the middle class, and the poor alike. It strikes urban America, suburban America, and rural America alike.

I had a father cry in my arms because his son a had decided to turn himself around and signed up for a treatment program, but the line was so long because the funding is so scarce that the young man died of an overdose before he could enter treatment. The opioid crisis is stealing our youth. We have known about it for years. It is not new. It is heartbreaking how much we know about it, but how little we have done about it.

The American people sent us here to do the Nation's business. That means addressing its greatest challenges. So let's make a real investment in this budget deal and how we treat this scourge. The budget is the right place to start.

A few years ago, we made a promise to hundreds of thousands of children who were brought to the United States through no fault of their own that if they registered with the government, we wouldn't deport them. We said: We want you to be Americans, learn in our schools, work in our companies, serve in our military. So 800,000 Dreamers came forward and did that because,

above all else, they wanted to be Americans. They don't know another country.

Now we are faced with a deadline. In a few months, protections for Dreamers will evaporate. A thousand Dreamers are losing protected status each week. It is time that Congress passed DACA protections into law and fixed this once and for all.

Democrats, including myself, led by our great Senator from Illinois, a member of our leadership team, Mr. DURBIN, have said over and over again: We are ready to negotiate a reasonable package of border security to pass alongside DACA. We believe in border security. We want to make it work. We want to make it real, not just be symbolic; we believe in it. If our Republican colleagues and the President engage in good-faith negotiations without unreasonable demands like an absurdly expensive, ineffective border wall that many Republicans publicly oppose—and privately many more do—I don't doubt we can reach an agreement on DACA that is acceptable to both sides. I would like to thank our Acting President pro tempore for his active involvement in this regard as well.

In contrast to a year of chaos and ineffectiveness—a year in which little was accomplished, and what was done was done for the wealthy and the narrow special interests—I hope this year can be one of bipartisanship, focused on improving the stock of the middle class. They are the ones hurting in America. They are the ones who need help. They are the ones who worry about the future of this grand, wonderful country.

We can start on the budget with opioids, veterans' healthcare, pensions, children's health insurance, and disaster aid. We can resolve the fate of the Dreamers and say to these hard-working kids that America has a place for them too.

Later today, the four congressional leaders will meet with Budget Director Mick Mulvaney and representatives of the White House to begin these negotiations in earnest—I hope—and will work for their success.

#### FOREIGN POLICY AND PRESIDENTIAL MORAL AUTHORITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, a word on national security. The Senate has a role in conducting the Nation's foreign policy, but as head of state, the President of the United States represents our country to the world. That is a very serious and very sober responsibility that requires restraint, intelligence, sound judgment, and a respect for the moral authority that comes with the awesome responsibility of being the world's sole remaining superpower.

Over the course of the past year, President Trump, unfortunately, has progressively squandered the moral authority that comes with the Presidency