

Rounds	Shelby	Toomey
Rubio	Sullivan	Wicker
Sasse	Thune	Young
Scott	Tillis	

## NAYS—49

Baldwin	Hassan	Peters
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Jones	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Casey	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Manchin	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Duckworth	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murray	
Harris	Nelson	

## NOT VOTING—1

Inhofe

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 49. The motion is agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Kathleen Laura Kraninger, of Ohio, to be Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection for a term of five years.

The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I rise to speak out in opposition to the nomination of Kathy Kraninger to serve as the Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The CFPB is a consumer's watchdog on Wall Street and the big banks. It was created in the aftermath of the financial crisis to protect Americans from predatory and abusive practices and ensure that financial institutions play by the rules.

Since 2010, the CFPB has investigated and held accountable abusive student loan companies, predatory payday lenders, and fraudulent multinational corporations—just to name a few. It has also protected our Nation's veterans and Active-Duty servicemembers from targeted scams and illegal debt collection practices.

The CFPB has secured over \$12 billion in relief for Americans. Just this past April, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau sued Wells Fargo for creating millions of fake accounts, destroying credit scores, and forcing millions of customers to pay phony penalties and fees.

The people at the CFPB work every single day to make the financial system safe and fair for hard-working families. We can't go back to the way things were before the CFPB was created. We can't go back to a time when there was no strong consumer advocates at the Federal level.

I remember this time all too well. I was Nevada's attorney general when the markets crashed in 2008. The subprime mortgage crisis hit Nevada harder than any State in the country. We had the highest foreclosure rate in the Nation for 62 months straight.

I worked to hold the big banks accountable for the damage they did to our State and to help people stay in their homes. Meanwhile, the Federal regulators were asleep at the wheel. They were letting the big banks write their own rules and defraud consumers until the markets came crashing down.

The CFPB was designed to close the leadership gap at the Federal level, to stand up to predators like Wells Fargo, and protect the rights of American people. To ensure the CFPB continues its mission of looking out for consumers' best interests, we need strong leadership at the Agency. We need someone with the right experience, the right qualifications, and the right mindset. We need someone willing to stand up not only to bad actors in the financial industry but also to President Trump.

The administration has already stripped critical enforcement powers away from the CFPB. It has repealed rules that govern predatory payday lenders and shut down an office that focuses on protecting students from abusive student loans. We can't afford to go any further down this path.

President Trump's nominee for CFPB Director, Kathy Kraninger, is unqualified to lead this Agency. In her testimony before the Senate Banking Committee, on which I sit, she failed to demonstrate an understanding of the CFPB's core functions or even a willingness to uphold its central mission.

Like many of President Trump's nominees, Kraninger seems handpicked to undermine the Agency's mission. She testified to this, and it appeared at the hearing that her main goal was to be a faithful disciple to Mick Mulvaney—the architect behind this administration's plan to destroy the CFPB from the inside out, and she will continue crippling its power that is essential to protecting American consumers.

The next Director of the CFPB will be called upon to make a choice, to stand aside and allow powerful special interests to call the shots in our country's financial system or to fight for families who want a fair and affordable loan to buy a car, a home, or college education for their children or a bank account and credit card without costly fees or who are simply trying to make ends meet.

Kathy Kraninger can't be relied upon to make the right choice, and she does not have my vote. I encourage my colleagues to vote against this nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

## FARM BILL

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I first wanted to comment on the impor-

tance of an agreement on the farm bill. This is something that has been long in coming. I want to thank Chairman ROBERTS and Ranking Member STABENOW for their work, as well as the Members in the House, including my colleague from Minnesota, Republican leader COLLIN PETERSON. He will be taking over the Ag Committee in the House next year. This is a bill that is so important to rural America and in my State.

We have seen low commodity prices for too long. As a member of the Ag Committee, I know the last farm bill—the one we are operating under currently—has some things for a strong safety net, but this farm bill—the new tentative agreement—will allow us to make some changes to the way the data is collected, which will be helpful for our farmers with crop insurance. We have some improvements in dairy. We have some good work that is going on with regard to conservation and some changes there.

As you know, our Senate bill got 86 votes. We don't even get that for a volleyball resolution around here. It was a bipartisan bill, and much of that bill, I know, will be contained in this tentative agreement. "Tentative" is with a small "t," and the only reason we are saying that is because we have to get the printed version out, and my hope is, we can get this done in the next week. We do not want to go into next year without a farm bill, with what we are seeing with the tailwinds from these tariffs, with what we are seeing with diseases lurking out there. In Minnesota and in other States in the Midwest, we just got through avian flu a few years back, and every so often we have seen some outbreaks of that. We lived through H1N1. We have a really good provision in here that I authored with Senator CORNYN for a vaccine bank.

So there is a lot of important, steady policy in the farm bill to show rural America we have their backs and really to show the world that at a time of great global competitiveness and with issues for our farmers with everything from weather to prices, to global competition, we want to make sure America stands by our farmers, and this farm bill is a sure way to do it.

I am very excited, as a member of the Ag Committee, that we are close to releasing some language here and look forward to getting this done immediately.

We have all litigated these issues over the last year. It is not like some new idea had been airlifted into this bill. Literally, every single issue—from the nutrition discussions to the conservation issues, to what we have seen on the farm programs, to rural economic development, to rural broadband—has been discussed at length, and we are ready to go. Let's get this bill done.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, the second reason I am here is to talk about the urgency of

addressing climate change. This does fit into the farm bill because I am glad the farm bill is a source of so many of our conservation programs for our country. Also, the farm bill is part of economic development across our country.

Climate change is going to be a challenge for everyone. Certainly, from the last report we just received on the Friday of the holiday weekend—and I have a feeling some people thought that was a good day to bury it. Well, it didn't exactly work. Given that it was a slow news day, and it ended up on the front page of every major newspaper and leading every major newscast, people noticed. They noticed because this report wasn't just about numbers and percentages and all those kinds of things that our scientists have long agreed on when it comes to global warming; this was about the impact.

The reason it is good to talk about the farm bill and then this is, one of the major impacts contained in that report was the impact on farmers in the Midwest where—as predicted in this report, issued by this administration with Agencies across the board—you would see acres and acres and acres of land, with billions of dollars in losses, that wouldn't be able to be farmed for corn and for other important crops in America unless we act.

This was yet another dire warning about the cost of inaction on climate change, and it was in the form, of course, of the fourth National Climate Assessment. This report is simply the latest in a line of recent studies, including the U.N. report—what was released last October. The administration released this new report, as I noted, the day after Thanksgiving, just hoping Americans were too busy with their families out shopping, but no one could not notice this report—1,700 pages produced by 13 Federal Agencies. It was the product of 1,000 people, including 300 leading scientists, including officials from Federal, State, and local government, Tribes, national laboratories, universities, and the private sector.

These 300 scientists concluded that, consistent with previous reports—and by the way, I remember hearing NASA telling us what would happen. I remember our military leaders telling us what would happen—predicting to us that we would see rampant wildfires in the West. That is what we are seeing. Predicting to us 10 years ago that we would see a warming of the ocean that would result in tougher and bigger and more damaging hurricanes—exactly what we are seeing.

These scientists concluded that, consistent with all of these predictions over the last decades, that we must drastically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions to ensure the health of the American public, the livelihood of our farmers and ranchers, and the strength of our economy.

The report states that climate change will have serious health consequences for the American people.

Remember, this report is not something that came out of some think tank. It is not a report that came out of some congressional committee. It is not a report that came out of some university. No, no. This is a report that came out of the Trump administration. All 11 Agencies were involved in this report.

The Midwest alone in this report by the Trump administration is predicted to have the largest increase in extreme temperature, will see an additional 2,000 premature deaths per year by the year 2090, mosquito and tickborne diseases—which was already seen in my State—will spread, and food and water safety will be affected.

As I noted, we should also be expecting worsening disasters. Anyone who watched that horrific tape of those parents trying to get their kids out of that wildfire in Northern California, when it suddenly came up faster than could be expected, trying to calm—a dad trying to calm his child down as he drove through a raging fire—watch that tape. Go home and watch that tape because that tape will remind you of what we are dealing with: wildfires, flooding, hurricanes.

Wildfire seasons, already longer and more destructive than before, could burn up to six times more forest area annually by 2050 in parts of the United States. These wildfires will have a drastic effect on air quality and health, particularly on the elderly, pregnant women, children, and those already suffering from heart and lung diseases.

The report also makes it clear that our farmers will face extremely tough times. Crops will decline across the country due to higher temperatures, drought, and flooding. Agricultural yields could fall to 1980 levels within a few decades. That is despite all the science and work we have done to increase those yields.

In parts of the Midwest, farms will be able to produce less than 75 percent of the corn they produce today, and the southern part of the Midwestern region could lose more than 25 percent of its soybean yield.

This is not a report that came out of my looking at some books. No, no, no. This is a report that came out of 1,000 people who work for the Trump administration. This is an administration report.

The report also emphasizes that our economy could lose hundreds of billions of dollars—or more than 10 percent of our GDP—by the turn of the next century. That is more than double the loss of the great recession a decade ago.

Everyone knows someone who lost their job during that recession. Everyone knows someone who lost their house or went into debt, right? Well, think about that doubled—more than 10 percent of our GDP. Again, not a report by a liberal think tank, not a report by a congressional subcommittee; this is the report and prediction of the Trump administration.

We cannot ignore the dire warnings of the report, and I appreciate that the administration put out this report. I wish they had not done it on a Friday afternoon, but it kind of backfired on them.

We cannot ignore the climate changes already happening around us or that devastating consequences for our country exist, and we are going to see more of them in the years ahead. We must seize this opportunity to ensure the health of the American public, to support our businesses and farmers, and to make our economy more resilient.

We must act. The American people know that. I hear about climate wherever I go in my State, from hunters who are concerned about tickborne illnesses, who are concerned with what we are seeing with things we have never seen go into our deer population, to business leaders at the Port of Duluth, to students at the University of Minnesota.

Increasingly warmer temperatures are having effects in Minnesota. Lyme disease has spread farther north. I bet everyone in my State knows someone who got Lyme disease. Sometimes they catch it right away, and it goes away; sometimes it causes a lifetime of troubles. Lyme disease has been spreading farther north. Aspen forests are shrinking. Moose range in my State is declining. Thirty-seven percent more rain falls as a result of mega-rainstorms than we had ever seen just 50 years ago. The ragweed pollen season has extended 3 weeks in the Twin Cities in just the past 20 years, making people who suffer from allergies notice it first.

This is in stark contrast to comments made by some who still have suggested that climate change should be debated.

Well, even in this Chamber, 98 to 1 or 97 to 1, we voted a few years ago that, in fact, climate change is occurring. We even acknowledged it finally, but guess what. We are a little behind the people who already notice it happening.

Over the past week, unfortunately, the President has repeatedly cast doubt on his own administration's report on climate change. These are people who work for him. These are Agencies headed up by his own Commissioners who issued this report.

I am a former prosecutor, and I believe in evidence. As this report shows us, the facts and the science can't be more clear. This report, put out by the President's Agencies, notes that the United States is already 1.8 degrees warmer than it was 100 years ago and that the seas—the oceans that surround the country—are an average 9 inches higher and climbing. The recent U.N. report warned that the atmosphere will warm up by as much as 2.7 degrees by 2040 and describes a world we already see of worsening wildfires and natural disasters.

As the NASA website has said, most of the warming occurred in the past 35

years, with the 5 warmest years on record taking place since 2010.

Every week brings fresh evidence of the damage. My State of Minnesota may be miles away from rising oceans, but the impacts in my State and in the Midwest are not less of a real threat. Climate change isn't just about melting glaciers and rising ocean levels, and we have certainly seen that with the hurricanes, but we have also seen flooding like we have never seen before in Duluth and places across Minnesota.

So we know it is happening. The question is, What do we do about it? Now that the President's own Agencies have said it is happening, what do we do about it?

Well, what I would like to hear, acknowledging this new report about the impacts of climate change, not just the nerdy numbers of climate change—now that we know the impacts, let's do something about it.

No. 1, the clean power rules. When those were first put out a few years ago, I think the business community at first thought they were going to be worse than they were. They were a reasonable path forward, giving some exceptions and more time to small power companies. I know in my State, Minnesota Power, Xcel Energy—in our State, our major power companies were ready to work with those rules. While our small power companies were concerned, we were working with them to make sure there were exceptions and that they had a path forward to make sure they could meet the goals by working with the big power companies.

We already had businesses in my State, like Cargill, that were out front on this, that saw the risk to their consumers and their business if we do nothing about climate change internationally. So we were ready to roll with those clean power rules, but they got reversed by this administration. I call on them to go back at it and put those rules out again. Let's get them done.

Secondly, gas mileage standards. That is something else we should be going back to. We had an agreement with the auto companies just a few years ago to get that done, but instead, once again, they went backward.

Third, the international climate change agreement. Every other country in the world has pledged to be in that agreement. We had pledged to be in the agreement, and then the administration said we were going out of that agreement. At the time they did that, the only two countries that weren't in the agreement were Nicaragua and Syria, and now they have joined the agreement.

I remember a time when the United States was a leader in innovation and a leader in responding to the challenges, not just in our country but our world. We should be leading because otherwise other countries are going to get ahead of us when it gets to innovative technology to meet these climate change and energy challenges of our time.

That is what this is about, and that is what we need to do to move forward.

My State has been a leader on this. With a Republican Governor, a few years back, and a Democratic legislature, we were able to pass a renewable electricity standard that was ahead of its time. Already today, 7 years ahead of schedule, 25 percent of Minnesota's electricity generation comes from renewable sources. That is clearly part of our way forward but not the only way forward.

Guess what. We did it in conjunction with our farming communities with an agreement, as well, on biofuel, and we did it across the aisle on a bipartisan basis. We can do that in this Chamber right now if we have the will to get it done.

As last week's report makes clear, inaction is not an option—not for our economy, not for our farmers, not for our environment and our country, and certainly not for the American people. Military and security experts have reminded us that climate change is a threat to our national security, increasing the risk of conflict, humanitarian crisis, and damage to critical infrastructure.

As you look at some of the refugees that have been moving in places such as Europe and the people coming up from Africa, a lot of that is because they used to engage in subsistence farming and they can't do it anymore.

Yes, we need to adapt with science, and we need to adapt with cutting-edge speeds in farming, but we also need to adapt by putting into place policies that bring down our greenhouse gas numbers so we have a fighting chance of leaving this Earth to our kids and our grandkids in a way that they can live a life like we have enjoyed.

Despite more severe weather, heat waves that can reduce our water supply, and extreme rainfall that can damage critical infrastructure, this country has always gotten ahead of challenges. I ask my friends on the other side of the aisle to remember the Republican Party of Teddy Roosevelt, the Republican Party of conservation, the Republican Party that sought to conserve our resources and not use them all ourselves so that they can leave something to other people. That is what we have to find to get this done.

I will end by quoting Pope Francis. His visit to this Congress and to Washington was something that I will never forget. One of the things he said is this: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?"

That is a pretty good standard. Think in your life of those kids whom you love or your neighbor's kids or your grandkids, and ask yourself what kind of world you want to leave them. This is no longer just some hypothetical thing. It is right there in the report by the Trump administration. It is right before our eyes in the videos we see online of that dad driving his kid through a wildfire in Northern

California. It is right there as we see the damage the hurricanes are doing to the east coast. It is right there in the Midwest, when we see rampant flooding, ticks, Lyme disease, and things that we never used to see in Minnesota. The evidence is right before our eyes. Let's believe it and do something about it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

#### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs and this Department's continued challenges with properly implementing the letter of the law.

As we know, the VA has faced significant difficulties and change over the past 5 years—issues that have spurred Congress to act. In this Congress we have passed multiple pieces of legislation designed to reform numerous policies, from accountability to education under the GI bill to transforming healthcare.

Recent news has put a spotlight on the VA struggles to implement the Forever GI Bill Act, which has resulted in delays or improper accounting of veterans' earned educational benefits. Financial problems with their earned benefits is unacceptable and causes an unnecessary strain on veterans as they pursue higher education. It is critical that the VA fix this problem. This should not be a matter of "if" but "when" the VA fixes this issue and provides accurate earned benefits to deserving veterans. Based upon these struggles of implementing the Forever GI Bill Act, I have concerns that similar challenges will occur in the implementation of the VA MISSION Act, which was signed into law in June of this year and is the most transformative legislation for the VA healthcare system in over 30 years.

We are closing in on a 6-month mark before the VA MISSION Act must be implemented. June 6, 2019, will be when the new community care program under this act takes effect. This law requires several major critical reforms to the VA healthcare system. I want to quickly outline some of the biggest changes that the VA is required by law to implement.

First, the VA must establish new eligibility criteria for veterans to receive care in the community, and that criteria must be based on clearly defined, easy-to-understand access standards. The VA must establish and apply quality standards to make certain that all VA and community care facilities are providing our veterans with the highest level of care—the care they deserve.

The VA must create thorough and reliable processes for the VA and community care partners to coordinate care for a veteran who is receiving care in the community to make certain that the burden is no longer on the veteran and accountability is instead on those

who are charged with providing the care.

The VA must start to plan and properly project their healthcare expenses. This requires the VA to establish a well-vetted strategic planning document that better forecasts healthcare demands and what the VA and the community can supply to our Nation's veterans.

I certainly understand how large of an undertaking this is. Implementation of the MISSION Act, while it is important, is also a challenge. There are many within the VA who share our desire to transform the VA's healthcare system so it can continue to provide care for veterans for generations to come. There are many at the VA who want to see this done well and done right, but I do know it will take time. Change is not something that occurs in a day or a month or even a year, and the changes required here are fraught with difficulty if not done the correct way.

The key to making certain that change is taking place is how you respond to those difficulties. The VA leadership can learn from the past and change the culture and complacency and excuses. We no longer should be asking why but why not.

The VA will be testifying next week on the status of the VA MISSION Act implementation before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, and I will be there. I urge them to hold nothing back, to tell us clearly where they anticipate struggles, and that they in no way sweep anything under the rug so they make certain we know the challenges they are facing and so that we then can help them in the solutions.

Without real change within the VA, we cannot hope for real change for our veterans. We cannot afford to fail them any longer or in any additional circumstance.

The American people, Congress, and the President have charged the VA with a daunting mission, but it is a mission that is so worthy—to provide our veterans, those who have served our Nation, with a VA that is worthy of those veterans' service.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPORAL MATT HENDERSON

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to continue my tributes to the current generation of Nebraska men and women who have lost their lives defending our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of these Nebraskans has a special story to tell.

Today I will recall the life and service of Cpl Matt Henderson of Lincoln, NE.

Matt was born on May 15, 1979, in Columbia, MO, to Owen and Rebecca Henderson. At the time Matt came into the world, his dad, Owen, was attending veterinary school. After Owen finished veterinary school, the Henderson fam-

ily moved to "The Good Life" to raise both Matt and his newly born sister Kellie.

As Matt grew, he made many friends, loved to play outside, and enjoyed hunting and fishing. Many times Matt could be found by his dad's side on his equine veterinary visits.

His favorite furry companion was his curly-haired golden retriever Rocket, with which he spent a lot of time and which he taught to play fetch.

Matt loved sports and participated in many sports growing up, including baseball, basketball, wrestling, track, and football, but his favorite of all was football. He was a devout Nebraska Husker and Chicago Bears fan.

Matt and his wife Jaimie began dating while they attended Palmyra Junior-Senior High School in Otoe County. Jaimie remembers Matt wearing his football jersey on game days and their dates at the movies, the mall, and homecoming dances before they were even old enough to drive.

After graduating high school in 1998, Matt attended Nebraska Wesleyan University where he studied athletic training and criminal justice. He also played on the football team and was an avid weightlifter.

In 2000, Matt joined the U.S. Marine Corps because he was attracted to the discipline and direction that it offered. He completed boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego before attending and completing infantry training at Camp Pendleton. Due to his strong interest in the construction field, Matt also finished combat engineer school at Camp Lejeune.

After engineer school, he was assigned to the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion at Camp Pendleton.

On August 4, 2001, Matt proposed to Jaimie on Mission Beach in San Diego, just after sunset. They were so excited to finally get married and begin planning their wedding in Nebraska, which was scheduled for April 12, 2003.

In January of 2003, however, Matt's unit was informed that they would be among the first forces to invade Iraq. Jaimie postponed the wedding, which was supposed to take place in just a few months, and instead she and Matt were married in a civil ceremony in San Diego. The two of them couldn't imagine something happening during Matt's deployment and never being able to marry one another.

In February of 2003, Matt deployed to Iraq. He joined other U.S.-led forces in the invasion of Iraq and Kuwait in order to oust Saddam Hussein. During his deployment, Matt was chosen to be a squad leader due to his leadership abilities, technical skills, and the respect of other marines. Matt's family had no communication with him during this time and were glued to the TV, watching the news every evening with the hopes of catching a glimpse of Matt.

Upon Matt's return home in May of 2003, he and Jaimie finally had their big church wedding in Lincoln, NE,

where they renewed their vows in front of their family and friends. Following the wedding, Jaimie moved to California to live at Camp Pendleton with Matt. Without the distance, she and Matt had more time to spend together, and they enjoyed socializing with their other friends in the Marine Corps.

In February of 2004, Matt deployed to Iraq for the second time and Jaimie moved back to Nebraska to be closer to their families.

As a squad leader, Matt was very aware of and concerned about the dangers of his second deployment. On May 26, 2004, Matt was leading his squad of several other marines and sweeping an area in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq for explosive devices and repairing major roads. This particular area had seen a dramatic increase in violence and demonstrations at the time, and the Province was in full-scale revolt. During the sweep, Matt and two of his men, including Shelton, NE, native Kyle Codner, were killed when an IED was detonated.

Matt warned his squad to get back and take cover but was unable to get out of range himself. The remainder of his squad survived, with one person suffering shrapnel wounds.

Cpl Matt Henderson's memorial service was held at the First Plymouth Church in Lincoln on June 3, 2004. Hundreds of family, friends, and fellow soldiers attended the ceremony to honor Matt and pay their respects. In what seems an impossible task, Matt's father gave the eulogy that day. Matt was laid to rest at the Lincoln Memorial Park Cemetery.

For his ultimate sacrifice, Cpl Matt Henderson received the Naval Achievement Medal with cluster, a Purple Heart, and numerous unit citations and campaign ribbons. He was the first to receive the prestigious Noncommissioned Officer Combat Engineer of the Year Award posthumously.

Matt was a consistent source of inspiration for his fellow marines. He was the kind of young man people were just drawn to. He was a tough, yet selfless marine.

Cpl Matt Henderson lived life to the fullest, and he is missed dearly by his family and friends. I join all Nebraskans and Americans across the country in saluting Matt's bravery and his sacrifice.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I say to the Senator from Nebraska, this Senator has had too many opportunities to give the same kind of speech in remembrance of fallen Floridians just like her constituent who gave the ultimate sacrifice in protection of his country, and I thank the Senator from Nebraska.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, 30 years ago, a gentleman by the name of Dr. James Hansen was the Director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space

Studies. He testified to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee that he was 99 percent certain that the year's record temperatures were not the result of natural variation. That was 30 years ago. It was the first time a lead scientist drew a connection between human activities, the growing concentration of atmosphere pollutants, and a warming climate.

This Senator was a young congressman at the time representing East Central Florida and Florida's Space Coast. Just 2 years prior, I had flown for 6 days on the 24th mission of the space shuttle. In this case, our orbiter was the Space Shuttle *Columbia*.

Growing up on the Indian River on Florida's Atlantic coast, it is easy to think that nature's bounty is endless, that the sand beaches, the crystal clear water, the blue sky, and the warm Sun will continue forever. It would be like Camelot. But peering out the window back at the planet from the window of a spacecraft, when I looked, all of the Earth suddenly took on a new meaning. I realized how thin the line was between our protected shared home—the planet—and uninhabitable space.

When Dr. Hansen testified about the greenhouse effect and how that thin layer of atmosphere was becoming polluted, it got my attention because I remembered looking at the rim of the Earth and seeing that thin film as we orbited the Earth every 90 minutes. Since his 1988 warning, the evidence has unfortunately confirmed Dr. Hansen's 1988 prediction.

Extreme events in 2017 and 2018 alone included back-to-back, record Atlantic and gulf hurricanes and unprecedented and devastating wildfires. Global temperatures are rising, and so are the seas. Why? The extra heat is absorbed by the oceans, which cover two-thirds of the Earth. That extra heat, when absorbed in water, causes water to expand. Also, 2016 and 2017 had two of the highest global temperatures ever recorded since we began measuring in 1880, and 2018 is on track to be the fourth hottest year on record.

Warmer air and water make the environment more hospitable to toxic algae blooms, mosquitos that carry deadly diseases, and things like poison ivy. These are three things that I think we can all agree that we need less of, not more.

The oceans are warming, and they are fueling the intensification of hurricanes—as we saw recently with Irma and Michael—and that warming water is creating the conditions that bleach coral reefs and feed toxic algae blooms.

My beautiful home State of Florida, which I have had the great privilege of serving, is ground zero for these impacts. According to the fourth National Climate Assessment report released by the administration just last week—the day after Thanksgiving—climate change is expected to make South Florida more vulnerable to diseases like the Zika virus. Florida could see more than \$346 billion in lost property

value over the course of this century. But this stretches beyond property values. A Florida Department of Health assessment determined that almost 600,000 people in South Florida are going to face extreme or high risk from sea level rise. Warming water, nutrient enrichment, overfishing, and coastal development are all contributing to the dire situation of one of our Nation's crown jewels—the coral reefs of the Florida Keys.

The real question is, What are we going to do about it? I think there are three things we ought to consider.

First, we truly cannot afford to politicize the air we breathe. The science is not up for debate. The greenhouse gas emissions are heating the atmosphere, which in turn heat our oceans, supercharging the hurricanes, leaving us vulnerable to drought and threatening the water we drink and the food we eat. Reports of political censorship or political interference with science—that is unacceptable and foolish. If we ignore the science, we do so at our peril.

Second, I think we are going to have to stop putting so many greenhouse gases into the atmosphere so fast. This is called climate mitigation. It means that we must invest in new technology, in the economy of the future, things like wind and solar, electric vehicles, and more efficient buildings. Each one of them would have a huge impact in lessening the amount of derivatives of carbon that we put into the atmosphere.

Third, I think we should consider that we are going to have to make our communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change—climate change that is already upon us and climate change that, in the future, we are not going to be able to avoid. You can't just cut off the greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere and the warming that results therefrom that is already in the system.

You talk to the scientists. There is something just beyond about 4 degrees Fahrenheit more than the average annual global temperature—that if it rises beyond that, there is no return.

We have a chance, but time is of the essence. We ought to consider climate change adaptation. You don't have to agree with climate science to know that it makes sense to do that.

I want to urge our colleagues on both sides of this aisle that separates Republicans from Democrats. You need to take this seriously. For the sake of your States and mine, for the good of our planet, for the good of our children, for the good of future generations, take climate change seriously. Listen to the experts, and come together to work on solutions. Instead of saying "I am not a scientist," listen to the scientists. Don't try to censor their warnings or hide from the truth. Instead of saying that making changes could cost money, think about the cost to our economy and our society if we don't act.

Coastal communities inundated with catastrophic flooding, midwestern droughts that raise food prices, and soaring health costs—these are some of the costs that are coming to our country—indeed, to our society—indeed, to the civilization of planet Earth. We must act, and we must do it now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, first, I am going to commend the senior Senator from Florida for what he said. Throughout my career, I have been so impressed and so grateful for his strong voice on the environment. He is the only Member of this body who has seen Earth from space.

#### FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Mr. President, I thank my dear friend, the senior Senator from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY, who is going to speak but said I could go ahead, and I will. I will be brief.

In the 44 years I have served in the Senate, I have never been so concerned about the state of press freedom around the world, including, I deeply regret to say, in our own country.

I was brought up in a family that owned a weekly newspaper and owned a printing business. The First Amendment was the most important part of our Constitution because it promised the freedom of speech and it promised the diversity of religion, and that Amendment was the foundation of our democracy.

Yet the premeditated murder and dismemberment of Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi authorities and then their ridiculous, transparent attempt to cover it up have shocked the consciences of people everywhere. Yesterday, by voting to discharge S.J. Res. 54, the Senate demonstrated that the Saudi royal family needs to hold accountable all those who are responsible for that horrific crime if it wants to salvage relations with the United States.

Look at what happens if we don't speak out in defense of a free press. Just a few days after Mr. Khashoggi's murder, the body of Bulgarian journalist Viktoria Marinova was discovered. The investigation suggests that she was raped, beaten, and strangled. I think the motive is undeniable. She had spent the previous year reporting on corruption.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, so far, in 2018, at least 43 journalists have been killed for their work while 15 other journalists have also been killed, although their deaths have not yet, at least, been officially linked to their work. According to data compiled by Freedom House, the muzzling of journalists and independent news media is at its worst point in over a decade. Similarly, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, the number of reporters who have been jailed for their work—who have been jailed for being reporters doing their

job—is at a level that has not been seen since the 1990s. Strongmen around the world are cracking down with impunity. Frankly, this son of a printer, this son of a newspaper owner, is not surprised.

At home, President Trump regularly demonizes the news media. He calls the news media the enemy of the people and hopes that his acidic outbursts and threats will dissuade journalists from accurately reporting on his administration. With the eyes of the world upon him, he makes a mockery of the entire notion of an independent press. It is something that has been guaranteed in our Constitution since the beginning of our country, yet the President makes a mockery of it.

He brands anybody who challenges him as either a liar or worse, while he holds hands with those who are willing to sing his praises. He even went so far as to rescind the credentials of one reporter who persisted in asking questions the President didn't like. I have been here with eight different Presidents, and I have never seen that done before, not even with Watergate.

A few days ago, he publicly denigrated the decorated, retired U.S. admiral who led the raid that killed Osama bin Laden and who had dared to criticize the President's attacks against the press as being a grave threat to our democracy, which it is. So this President who avoided the draft five times demeans the Admiral who was in charge of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden.

As Americans who cherish the First Amendment and who rely on a free press for sustaining our democratic form of government, we should be appalled. The words of a President matter. They always have. Yet this President's rhetoric gives comfort to autocrats the world over who are emboldened to clamp down on dissent, as they are confident they have a powerful defender in the United States as they censor and jail journalists.

We have seen despots quote our President. Can you imagine? We Americans see autocrats in other countries quote our President about this. We see them pass laws outlawing so-called fake news, which their leaders use to justify dismissing and castigating reporting with whom they disagree in order to persecute their political opponents.

We should fear the day when a free press is seen as unimportant or as a luxury—as something no longer synonymous with our country and its values. We must always recommit ourselves to defending press freedom and to elevating and celebrating a free press as one of the cornerstones of our democracy.

Americans should not be silenced just because our President, for the first time in history, demeans and tries to intimidate the press. We must stand up, as the Founders of this country and as every leader in this country up to now has done, and defend a free press.

In this challenging time for press freedom around the world, the Committee to Protect Journalists honored four exceptional journalists at the 2018 International Press Freedom Awards in New York City.

One is Amal Khalifa, who is the co-founder of the Sudanese Journalists Network, which has covered protests of official wrongdoing in Sudan, whose leader, President al-Bashir, has been indicted by the International Criminal Court. Because of her reporting, she has been harassed, detained, and physically abused by Sudanese authorities, but she still does her job at great personal peril.

Anastasiya Stanko is an independent broadcast journalist who was taken hostage by an armed group while she reported on the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Since her release, she has continued to risk her safety and her life by reporting on the war and on other human rights violations in conflict-torn areas by Ukraine's Security Service.

Luz Mely Reyes is an investigative reporter who founded an independent news website to bring attention to the political situation in her country of Venezuela. In 2017, while she covered protests against Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro, members of her team were attacked and threatened, but she courageously continued her work. She has since emerged as one of Venezuela's most recognized champions of independent journalism.

Lastly, Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh, one of Vietnam's most prominent independent bloggers, has devoted her life to calling attention to human rights violations in Vietnam. In October 2016, she was sentenced to 10 years in prison on charges of propagandizing against the state. After her health began to deteriorate she was released from prison, but only on the condition of exile.

We often speak about the abuses of repressive governments around the world. We must also speak out against the increasing attempts to demean and intimidate the press here at home. The President may continue to do that as the leaders of some other countries do, but we should not stand for it.

Our democracy depends on a free press. The lives of these four brave individuals remind us of what is at stake. We must stand up for what is right even when our President does not.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

#### APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, next Friday, appropriations expire for 7 of the 12 appropriations bills for fiscal year 2019, and we are in good faith negotiations with our Republican counterparts here in the Congress to get them enacted. The good news is that because of the bipartisan work in the Senate, approximately 75 percent of the Federal Government is funded for 2019. The bad news is that the 7 bipartisan appropriations bills are hanging

in the balance for one reason and one reason only—President Trump.

President Trump has said that he wants to shut down the government unless he gets \$5 billion from the American taxpayers for an unnecessary border wall. The President hasn't even tried to get Mexico to pay for it, as he promised in his campaign over and over and over. He hasn't outlined a plan to deal with eminent domain concerns or even a plan as to how it would be built. He hasn't even spent the \$1.3 billion Congress allocated last year in the fiscal year 2018 budget for border security—fences, drones, technology—which actually makes sense. Now he is asking, having not spent that money, for more. So this isn't actually about border security. This is the President's way of trying to manufacture a shutdown to fire up his base.

Make no mistake. The President is the only person who holds the ultimate responsibility for a government shutdown. He can decide if we are going to have one or not have one. He, certainly, has the power to shut down the government, but he has two very reasonable ways to avoid one.

First, he could agree to sign the bipartisan DHS appropriations bill that the Senate Democrats and Republicans have already agreed to, which includes \$1.6 billion for border security on top of the \$1.3 billion that President Trump still hasn't spent from last year. It is just what we have done in previous years—funding for fencing on the border where the experts say it makes the most sense. It would protect our border far more effectively and far more quickly than any wall.

Leader MCCONNELL voted for that bill. Chairman SHELBY voted for it, as did Senator RUBIO. Even Senator GRAHAM, the President's strongest supporter and closest ally in the Senate, voted for that bill. Now, all of a sudden, it seems that the Republicans, afraid to buck the President even when they know he is wrong, want to renege on that agreement to go along with the President's shutdown plan. But it doesn't have to be that way. This bipartisan negotiated deal remains on the table and would, certainly, receive more than 60 votes in the Senate.

Second, if the President doesn't want to agree to that bipartisan bill, we could avoid a shutdown by passing a continuing resolution for the Department of Homeland Security. We think it should be for a whole year. It would keep the government open and still provide another \$1.3 billion for border security on top of the \$1.3 billion the President has not yet spent. Again, this option would, certainly, receive more than 60 votes in the Senate.

So President Trump has a simple choice of two good bipartisan options. If he decides to support either the bipartisan DHS bill or a continuing resolution, I am confident that both would pass by comfortable margins. The only position that cannot garner 60 votes is the President's position. He is adamant



about having a partial shutdown. He keeps repeating over and over that he wants a shutdown. Make no mistake about it. He is the only reason there would be a shutdown.

If President Trump wants to throw a temper tantrum and shut down some Departments and Agencies over Christmas, that is, certainly, within his power, but he has two more sensible options available to him. It would be a shame if the country suffered because of a Trump temper tantrum. It is the President's choice.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### LOWERING DRUG PRICES

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, millions of Americans woke up this morning and started the day with their doses of prescription medications. Their daily regimens are prescribed by their healthcare providers to treat illnesses and to improve the quality of their lives, and for many Americans, prescription medicine extends and saves their lives. Without their prescription medication, millions of Americans would not survive.

For so many of our loved ones who have diabetes, high blood pressure, cystic fibrosis, epilepsy, or other chronic healthcare conditions, prescription drugs are a basic necessity for their living. Without pharmaceutical treatment or cures, too many family gatherings at Thanksgiving, which has just passed, arguably, would have had fewer plates at the table this holiday season.

As a nation, we are incredibly blessed to live in a country where investment and innovation unlocks cures and treatments. Yet the escalating price of prescription drugs are a consuming concern for too many millions of Americans, even including Iowans who bring up this subject regularly at my county meetings.

I have come to the floor of the Senate to address the sticker shock that greets consumers when they pick up their medicine at the pharmacy or open their medical bills after a hospital visit. Rising drug prices that Americans pay out of pocket are gobbling up a bigger share of income.

For some people on a fixed income, sky-high drug prices are eating up every spare penny they can scrape together to pay for their prescriptions. It is time we talk turkey to our friends at Big Pharma. I don't make fun of our friends at Big Pharma. I use the word "friends" because we all enjoy a longer life and better quality of life because of miracle drugs.

As a fiscal conservative who wholeheartedly believes in free enterprise, I don't want the government intruding unnecessarily in the marketplace. The reason millions of Americans benefit from lifesaving drugs in the first place is due largely to capitalism and the entrepreneurial spirit that drives innovation and opens new frontiers of modern medicine.

I also believe strong intellectual property rights help incentivize compa-

nies to invest in research and development so new cures are found for our loved ones. However, government does have a responsibility to keep a check on unfair business practices and to actually rein in anti-competitive behavior that harms consumers and fleeces taxpayers.

There is a general agreement that these are constitutional as well as legitimate roles for government. Of course, if you are going to protect the consumers and not fleece taxpayers, this can happen in a number of ways.

It happens when brand-name and generic drugmakers game the system to pad their profits at the expense of taxpayers and consumers. It happens when hospitals, middlemen, and providers determine which drugs to prescribe based on its reimbursement and markup from insurers, including public health programs for the military and veterans or the big ones like Medicare and Medicaid.

Throughout my public service in the U.S. Senate, I have established a fundamental commitment to transparency. Remember that transparency, particularly in government, brings accountability, but transparency in the private sector will also bring accountability.

From whistleblower protections to the public's right to know, sunlight sweeps away wrongdoing, strengthens good government, and helps consumers and taxpayers get the most bang for the buck. I have worked across the aisle to apply this standard to help lower drug prices. It is an issue that resonates loudly and very clearly in every household of America.

In fact, Iowans contacted my office a couple of years ago regarding real sticker shock for their EpiPens. The escalating price they were paying for lifesaving anti-allergy medication jumped \$600 for a two-pack. On their behalf, I started digging for answers.

It turned out that Mylan, the EpiPen distributor, had jacked up the price for over a decade during the Obama administration. In fact, from 2006 through 2016, it rose more than 400 percent.

EpiPen is the most widely prescribed epinephrine autoinjector in the United States. Parents, grandparents, daycare providers, and teachers across the country keep their homes, their cars, and their classrooms stocked in case of an emergency.

A 400-percent increase—how was Mylan able to accomplish this? It classified EpiPen as a generic drug instead of a brand-name drug in the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program. Simply, that incorrect classification cost the U.S. Treasury and States big time by allowing Mylan to pay lower rebates.

The watchdog at the Department of Health and Human Services, at my request, found the misclassification may have resulted in the taxpayers and the States overpaying for the drug by as much as \$1.3 billion.

What is more, a competing pharmaceutical company sued Mylan using the False Claims Act—a whistleblower law

I have updated over the years. This anti-fraud tool encourages people to report and expose wrongdoing against the government. In this specific case, this whistleblower exposed fraud against the taxpayers for misusing the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program to the tune of \$456 million.

I would like to share a time-tested lesson I have learned throughout my 30 years of oversight work in the U.S. Senate: When you smell smoke, there is a fire.

The EpiPen misclassification may be the tip of the iceberg. As part of my EpiPen oversight, I requested additional misclassification data from the Office of Inspector General at HHS.

As of early 2018, the Office of Inspector General identified the names of 10 drugs that accounted for 68 percent of Medicaid reimbursements for potentially misclassified drugs just in the year 2016. The EpiPen and some of its variants are included within the group of 10 drugs, as well as a commonly prescribed antibiotic and a commonly prescribed drug for an underactive thyroid condition.

In a nutshell, it appears the same drug companies may be undermining the rebate program by misclassifying commonly prescribed drugs that can be found in medicine cabinets in households all across the United States. That is simply wrong, and I am going to do whatever I can to fix that issue.

Recently, the FDA approved the first EpiPen generic. Of course, that is a good step in the right direction.

As a senior member of the Senate Finance Committee and also the last 4 years as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my sights are set squarely on lowering drug prices without compromising access for innovative cures and treatments delivered by the American pharmaceutical industry.

Through oversight and even legislation, I am working to set things right. That includes putting a stop to the shenanigans that manipulate regulatory loopholes and unfairly extend monopolies over certain drugs. This happens when a brand name and a generic drugmaker work in cahoots to delay the lower priced generic's entry into the market.

For starters, a bipartisan bill I have with Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota would inject a healthy dose of Midwestern commonsense medicine into Big Pharma with a bill we have that would do away with what we call the pay-for-delay shenanigans. This bill, called Preserve Access to Affordable Generics Act, would end sweetheart deals between brand-name and generic drugmakers that end up costing the American consumer and at the same time the U.S. taxpayers an arm and a leg. It would increase access to more affordable generic drugs sooner rather than later because of the pay-for-delay scheme.

Specifically, our bill would crack down on anti-competitive payoff schemes that effectively rip off taxpayers and consumers. These so-called

reverse agreements delay consumer access to the cheaper generic drug.

I am 100 percent certain that our pay-for-delay bill would help lower drug prices for our consumers and save the taxpayers money through Medicare and Medicaid. That is because generic drugs can be up to 90 percent cheaper than brand-name drugs, and that happens to be a tremendous savings.

Ending these payoff agreements would gut artificially inflated prices consumers are paying for some prescription drugs. Putting an end to these payoff schemes will end the choke hold they put on the market. By doing so, we can restore timely access for affordable generics to reach the market, boost competition, expand consumer choice, and at the same time lower drug prices.

In addition to the pay-for-delay bill that Senator KLOBUCHAR and I have, I am also cosponsor of a bill led by my friend Senator PAT LEAHY that would inject another dose of bipartisan common sense into the pharmaceutical industry. We use the acronym CREATES for this legislation, the Creating and Restoring Equal Access to Equivalent Samples Act. It seeks to stop anti-competitive practices that block lower cost generic drugs from the pharmacy store's shelves. It would help generic companies get the samples they need to manufacture equivalent products.

Right now, a common practice by bad actors in the industry prevents potential generic competitors from obtaining the samples they need to test their drugs or blocks them from participating in shared safety protocols. This practice of deny and delay is fueling deficit spending. That is because the tax-paying public shells out a whole lot more money to fill brand name prescriptions for veterans, the elderly, and the disabled, when the cheaper generic drugs would do the same thing. This would save a tremendous amount of money. We have the scoring by the Congressional Budget Office saying that our bill—the CREATES bill—would result in a \$3.8 billion net decrease in the Federal deficit.

Improving access to lower cost generic drugs while preserving the incentives for innovation and intellectual property rights ought to be seen by my colleagues as a win-win solution.

I hope you will not just take my word for it. More than 80 organizations supported the final passage of the CREATES Act. They would go all the way from the AARP over to the Consumers Union, which tend to be liberal organizations, all the way over to Taxpayers for Common Sense, which I think generally tends to be more conservative.

Our CREATES bill was approved in June by the Senate Judiciary Committee, which I chair, and has 30 Senate cosponsors. In addition to this legislation, I am also keeping tabs on proposed buyouts and mergers in the pharmaceutical supply chain. Without a doubt, increased market integration will impact consumers and taxpayers.

For example, the mergers of Cigna Corporation with Express Scripts Holding Company and the CVS Health Corporation with Aetna may negatively impact consumer choice. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, once completed, these two mergers would result in just four entities controlling 71 percent of all of Medicare Part D enrollees and 86 percent of stand-alone drug plan enrollees.

Notwithstanding the consumer benefits of business integration that can include more innovation and cost-saving efficiencies, we can't afford to turn a blind eye to potential negative consequences that consolidation in the U.S. pharmaceutical supply chain may have in the marketplace.

I will wrap up my remarks today with this message for the American people: President Trump made a promise to the people to lower drug prices. His administration is working to deliver on that promise. Most of the stuff that has gone on so far has been within what the law allows the President, through the Secretary of HHS, to do so that Congress doesn't have to be involved in everything. But Congress can surely give support to this program.

The President's blueprint for bringing down prescription drug prices lays out four principles: Boost competition, enhance negotiation, create incentives for lowering list prices, and, lastly, bring down out-of-pocket costs.

Last month, he signed the Patient Right to Know Act into law, so he has the help of some new legislation now. I cosponsored this bill by Senator SUSAN COLLINS to ban what are called "gag clauses," which keep pricing information from consumers every time they visit the pharmacy counter.

The new law prevents health insurance companies from prohibiting pharmacy providers from sharing pricing information with consumers. So now, under the Collins legislation, a pharmacist can alert a customer if their copayment would cost more than paying out-of-pocket, as just an example.

This puts a little bit of transparency into the whole process and lets your pharmacist help you as much as he can to save money. But there are rules that some companies have that you can't share that information.

So along the lines of also hoping to save the consumer some money—or at least to educate the consumer on pharmacy practices and to have more transparency—Senator DURBIN and I pushed for Senate passage of an amendment that supports existing Health and Human Services authority requiring drugmakers to disclose the list price of prescription drugs in direct-to-consumer advertising.

It happens that the House of Representatives rejected our amendment. Nonetheless, the Secretary of HHS is moving forward with our concept to improve transparency by requiring companies to include these same drug prices in their direct-to-consumer advertising.

Another example of where the President, through the Secretary of HHS, has, under present law, authority to move ahead—we wanted to let the Secretary know, through the Durbin-Grassley amendment, that we wanted to back him up in his efforts. Drug companies are already required to include possible side effects in their TV ads. So isn't it commonsense to add to that list price information to further improve consumer decision making? The more information patients and healthcare providers have to make decisions on costs and outcomes, it seems to me, the better off they are.

Finally, I would like to say a word about another commonsense solution to high drug prices. For over 20 years, I have advocated for the safe reimportation of drugs from countries such as Canada. The late Senator McCain, along with Senator KLOBUCHAR, introduced S. 92, the Safe and Affordable Drugs from Canada Act. I am a cosponsor of this bill, and I plan to work to get it enacted into law.

In today's marketplace, there is a giant disconnect between consumers and the prices they pay for their prescription medicines. To many of my constituents in Iowa, it is just plain baffling why this can't be done. Americans have come to expect the best medicine when they need it most. We need to improve the marketplace so that it functions properly to lower drug prices and raise the bar on outcomes.

Looking ahead, our Republican majority here in the U.S. Senate will keep up the momentum to deliver cost savings to the American people. On my watch, I will continue working across the aisle to lower drug prices, restore competition, and increase transparency in the pharmaceutical industry. I welcome the incoming Democratic House majority to join our efforts in behalf of the American taxpayers and consumers.

As Americans count our blessings during this season of Thanksgiving and going into Christmas, we give thanks for the gifts of friends and family who gather together around these celebration tables. I am thankful for good health and the opportunity to serve Iowans. Along these lines, I will do my best to restore competition in the pharmaceutical market and to stop the gravy train that is taking taxpayers for a ride.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.