

old fights. We need to focus on building on the work we have done and strengthening and improving the Affordable Care Act.

I have always said that the Affordable Care Act was the beginning and not an end, and we all have heard from those on the frontlines; doctors, patients, seniors, and those working to combat the opioid epidemic say that repeal is not the way forward. We should now be governing from opportunity and not from chaos.

It means passing reinsurance programs, like the bipartisan legislation, which I am proud to cosponsor, that Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY put forth, and using ideas that have worked in Minnesota and taking them out on a national basis.

It means doing something about skyrocketing pharmaceutical prices and passing my bill that has over 30 cosponsors to allow Medicare to negotiate for less expensive drugs under their Medicare part D—literally lifting the ban that says that the 41 million seniors of this country shouldn't be allowed to get a better deal.

It means passing my bill with Senator GRASSLEY, which we just improved upon today, to limit anti-competitive pay-for-delay deals, which delay more affordable generic drugs from getting out on the market.

It means allowing less expensive, safe drugs to come in from other countries so that we can have true competition. We could even put it to a trigger so that if there were not competition, then you could allow the safe drugs to be purchased from other countries, and I think that it would create a major incentive for drug prices to go down.

What we need to do is work together on the many bipartisan proposals that have been put forward to actually improve the Affordable Care Act, not throw it out and not throw people who have preexisting conditions off their insurance.

TRIBUTE TO DEPARTING SENATORS

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I have already given speeches in this Chamber about my four friends, departing Democratic colleagues, Senators HEITKAMP, McCASKILL, NELSON, and DONNELLY. Now I rise to recognize my Republican colleagues who are leaving the Senate.

Let me start with ORRIN HATCH, who is truly one of a kind.

Out of 100 Senators, none of us can say that our great-grandfather founded the town of Vernal, UT, home of the Dinosaur Roundup Rodeo. None of us can say that we served as a Mormon bishop or that we started off working as a janitor to pay for school and then went on to become the most senior Republican in the U.S. Senate.

None of us can say that we moonlight as a singer, songwriter, and famed lyricist, whose catalogue includes the classics: "Heal Our Land," "Eight Days

of Hanukkah," and his ode to Manhattan, "Skatin' with My Baby." ORRIN HATCH's songs have been featured in the movies "Oceans 12" and "Stuart Little 2."

While Senator HATCH takes pride in all of his accomplishments, I know that he is proudest of his family: his wife, Elaine; their six children; 23 grandchildren; and 24 great-grandchildren.

Senator HATCH and I have worked together for a long period of time. He was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 1976, and I also got my start in elected life that year as the secretary-treasurer of my 10th grade high school class. Washingtonian Magazine once named us the two Senators least likely to get into a scandal, which I assume includes with each other.

We are both members of the Senate prayer group. One time I will never forget was when he was speaking at the National Prayer Breakfast and his phone started ringing and he had to improvise in front of the entire National Prayer Breakfast. He said that God was calling him with prayer advice as he answered the cell phone.

Most of all, we have teamed up on many issues that matter to the American people. We are coauthors of the Rare Disease Caucus.

We have helped to make our schools safer just this spring by adding \$1 million to improve school security. We led a bipartisan bill that was passed unanimously in this Chamber, and it was signed into law.

We worked together to restore the integrity to our patent system.

He also has been a supporter of comprehensive immigration reform, something we need more of in this Chamber.

I will always be grateful for the opportunity I have had to work with Senator HATCH, someone who has dedicated his life to serving his State and country for more than 40 years.

I also want to honor the service of my colleague from Arizona, Senator JEFF FLAKE, whom I have truly enjoyed working with during our time together in the Senate.

JEFF has never invited me to travel with him to a deserted island, as he did with Senator HEINRICH, but we did once stay with JEFF and his wife, Cheryl, at John and Cindy McCain's ranch, and let's just say it had a few more amenities than he had on the island with Senator HEINRICH.

During that memorable visit to Sedona, I saw firsthand how dedicated JEFF is to his family. I remember how early he got up one morning to travel to his son Tanner's track meet. That afternoon he actually sent me a photo of Tanner taken after he had won the event.

I also have seen how much he loves his home State. At heart, he is a fifth-generation Arizonan, one of 11 kids who grew up on a cattle ranch in the town of Snowflake. That land had first been owned by his great-great-grandfather, who had come to Arizona in

1878, and then it was passed down generation to generation.

I learned a lot about the Flake family history through JEFF's book, which I once read in its entirety on Christmas Day. What I most remember from that book was that growing up, JEFF's family had a card on the refrigerator, and this is what it said: "Assume the best. Look for the good."

It is that unshakeable sense of optimism and faith in the decency of other people that Senator FLAKE has brought to the U.S. Senate. He has been willing to work across the aisle to do what he thinks is right, even when it has sometimes meant breaking with his own party.

JEFF knows what is at stake, for instance, with immigration reform. He wrote in his book: "From a very young age in ranch country, you get to know immigrants intimately and honestly" and you know "how indispensable they are to making things work in America."

It is clear that those lessons have stayed with him. I have seen it as JEFF has worked to build bipartisan consensus on immigration issues, reaching across the aisle to find a solution to try to protect our Dreamers.

I have seen it when we joined together to introduce a resolution, the two of us, recognizing the contributions of Muslim Americans. That resolution passed the Senate because JEFF FLAKE was willing to cosponsor it with me.

I have seen these values as Senator FLAKE has worked with a bipartisan group of us to normalize relations with Cuba. This commitment dates back decades to his earlier experience in building democracy in Namibia. So when President Obama took up the cause of Cuba, JEFF did not hesitate to lend his support, and together Senator FLAKE and I led the bill to lift the embargo on Cuba, along with Senators ENZI, LEAHY, and many others.

JEFF's voice has been particularly needed lately in the face of grave threats to our democracy and the rule of law. He has been a strong advocate for this bipartisan legislation that the Senate Judiciary Committee passed to simply protect the work of the special counsel, and he has taken a stand to try to ensure that the bill gets a vote on the Senate floor.

As a daughter of a journalist, I also deeply appreciate Senator FLAKE's leadership on behalf of a free press, which is essential to our democracy.

At a time when journalists are under attack, when reporters are risking and losing their lives and the President is calling them "the enemy of the people," it has never been more important for us to speak out for the First Amendment. So when JEFF FLAKE took to the Senate floor in support of freedom of the press earlier this year, I was proud to speak after him.

While JEFF will be so missed in the Senate, I have no doubt that he will

continue to use his strong voice on behalf of the issues he cares about, on behalf of his State and our country, which he has served so well.

Also, Senator CORKER. Senator CORKER and I were elected to the Senate at the same time in 2006. He was the only Republican Senator in our incoming class. I see Senator CARDIN here in the Chamber; he was also a Member of that class. We all have remained friends with Senator CORKER over the years. I will tell you that Senator CORKER never misses Senator MCCASKILL's annual chili party. He has been very good to us, and we have worked together for years.

Before becoming a Senator, BOB CORKER had two previous experiences as an elected official. He was the mayor of Chattanooga and the president of a high school class. He claims that he did not even have to campaign for that job. Here is what he said: "I just woke up one day and was president." That is not how it usually works in politics.

It turns out that BOB's roots were actually, of course, in business. He saved up \$8,000 to start his own construction company at age 25 and then expanded it to 17 other States, and he has brought this commonsense business background to tackle difficult problems head-on, while always calling it as he sees it.

We have seen that in his chairmanship of the Foreign Relations Committee, where BOB has spoken up to defend the values that define America, including strongly stating that he felt this Chamber and the administration had to do more in response to the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

We have seen it as Senator CORKER has worked to strengthen our alliances. I can tell you, when I was having trouble getting the nominees to be Ambassadors to Sweden and Norway through the Congress last Congress, which is very important in my State with its Scandinavian roots, I knew that I could count on his support.

We have seen it in his efforts to combat human trafficking, an issue I also care deeply about.

BOB has so much to be proud of at the end of his chapter of public service and begins another back home in Tennessee.

Finally, I want to recognize my friend and colleague, Senator DEAN HELLER of Nevada.

DEAN has dedicated so much of his life to public service on behalf of his State—in Nevada's legislature, as secretary of state, in Congress, and in the U.S. Senate.

His family moved to Nevada when he was only 9 months old. As the son of an auto mechanic and a school cook, he has often said that he is likely one of the only Senators who can change your oil and fix your transmission.

Nevada is obviously a State with no shortage of tourism, and DEAN has worked with me as cochair of the tourism caucus to promote tourism

across our entire country. He understands that when we increase tourism, we not only create jobs and strengthen our economy, we also strengthen our alliances and export our values.

It is that same philosophy that is behind his efforts, along with Senator FLAKE who is here in this Chamber, to normalize relations with Cuba. DEAN and I traveled to Cuba, along with Senator FLAKE, with President Obama, and I deeply appreciated his commitment, as well as Senator FLAKE's and others, to improving the relationship between our countries and opening up new opportunities for American businesses.

I have valued our time together on the Commerce Committee, where we led bills that passed and were signed into law regarding more women getting into science, technology, engineering, and math at NASA. We are proud that both bills were signed into law.

I have enjoyed serving with DEAN HELLER in the U.S. Senate, and I thank him for his service.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to talk about the recent court decision concerning the Affordable Care Act.

I see that Senator FLAKE is on the floor. I was listening to my colleague, Senator KLOBUCHAR, talk about the four colleagues on the Republican side who will be leaving. I have already had a chance in the Foreign Relations Committee to talk about Senator FLAKE, but I want him to know, and I want the American people to know, that there is no finer Senator than Senator FLAKE. He has shown great integrity on foreign policy issues, on decency issues, and on his principles.

I will never forget our visit to the southern part of Africa, where Senator FLAKE was a missionary when he was a little bit younger, and his passion for the people and their needs has never stopped. That is just one example. I can name many more examples of how Senator FLAKE has inspired all of us. The courage that he has shown has been an inspiration. I wish him the best as he moves on to the next chapter in his life.

I rise today to discuss America's access to healthcare and the patient protections that are currently being threatened by President Trump and his administration; specifically, his decision to not uphold the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the law of the land.

Last week, Judge Reed O'Connor of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas ruled that the Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional and that the law is not severable from and cannot stand without the individual mandate penalty, which Republicans eliminated in their December

2017 tax bill. While this ruling is being appealed, President Trump has the opportunity to stand up for the American people.

Over and over again, we have heard President Trump promise to lower prescription drug prices for seniors, end the opioid epidemic, and improve the availability and affordability of health insurance. Yet, for any of his proposed policies to succeed, President Trump needs the Affordable Care Act, even though he will not admit it.

Without the Affordable Care Act, which closed the doughnut hole for seniors, many older Americans would likely spend around \$2,000 more in out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs each year. Rather than helping our seniors lower costs, with the loss of the protection under the Affordable Care Act—the benefits—they will end up paying more.

Furthermore, the Affordable Care Act created the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, which is the basic infrastructure for the Trump administration to test the recently released drug-pricing proposals. Without the ACA, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation would not exist, and President Trump would need congressional approval to implement such a sweeping national test on drug prices.

We all should be committed to reducing the cost of prescription drugs in this country. The President ran on that when he was Candidate Trump.

We know that as Americans we pay so much more than people from other industrialized nations for the same drugs, many of which are manufactured right here in America. The ACA—the Affordable Care Act—helped us move in the right direction. We need to build on that. Let us work together to preserve the progress we have made under the Affordable Care Act and to pass additional legislation allowing us to use the collective bargaining power of our consumers so that we can pay lower prices than our friends from Canada because we have a bigger market. We should be paying lower—not twice as much.

President Trump says that he wants to end the opioid epidemic. By getting rid of the Affordable Care Act, he will cause millions of Americans to lose their current health insurance. This is because any rollback in Medicaid coverage, the biggest payer for behavioral healthcare, would result in roughly 1.2 million people with addiction and mental health issues losing access to affordable treatment.

If you don't have insurance protection for behavioral health or addiction, you are going to be much less likely to be able to get access to that needed treatment in order to deal with your addiction.

We know we need a comprehensive approach to deal with the opioid crisis. Yes, we want to stop the dangerous drug fentanyl from coming into this country. Yes, we want to stop the distribution of illegal drugs. But we also