

ready, willing, and able to do our best to protect the American people from any more harm caused by the President's flawed law. That is why we have been working hard for the last several months to provide the American people with a much needed off-ramp from ObamaCare, should the Court rule against the administration once again. But we really need to hit the reset button and start over again.

First and foremost, we are prepared to help the more than 6 million Americans, including nearly 1 million people in my home State of Texas, whose costs would suddenly skyrocket as yet another consequence of this disastrous piece of legislation. In doing so, we will empower the States to opt out of ObamaCare, allowing them the flexibility to more effectively lower costs and increase choices.

We will not promote command-and-control solutions emanating from here in Washington, under the philosophy that Washington knows best. We will promote market-based options without the threat of harmful, onerous, expensive mandates. Repealing these mandates will help the American people finally get the coverage they need at a price they can afford.

In short, we will do everything in our power to protect the people affected by this flawed piece of legislation, but we will not protect the President's failed law. It is time to scrap it and do better. It is my hope, if the Court rules against the administration once again, that Congress will find it within themselves to work together to protect the almost 1 million Texans and millions more Americans from yet another painful consequence of ObamaCare. I know Republicans stand ready to protect the American people from this failed law while providing a path forward for better health care for our country. That health care includes more freedom, more flexibility, and more choices.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRAGEDY IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I wish to take this opportunity to send my condolences to the families of those who were murdered in Charleston, SC, on Wednesday evening and to the entire city of Charleston.

It is hard to understand how someone could walk into a church, be welcomed into a prayer meeting, and then take out a gun and slaughter nine people who were in the process of discussing the Bible. That is hard to believe, but that is what happened.

In the last 60 years, this country has made significant progress in civil rights and in trying to become a less discriminatory society. Sixty years ago, parts of our country were part of an apartheid-type system, segregated housing, segregated schools, segregated restaurants, segregated transportation, segregated water fountains, and, in fact, an entirely segregated way of life. Perhaps most significantly, African Americans in a number of Southern States were denied the basic right to vote and were unable to participate in the democratic process.

Today, as a nation, we have a right to be proud of the significant changes that have taken place in our country over the last 60 years and the many advances that have been made in civil rights and in the creation of a less discriminatory society.

We should be proud that in 2008, this country surprised the world by overcoming our racist history and electing our first African-American President and then reelecting him 4 years later with a strong majority. You may like Barrack Obama, and I do, or you may dislike Barrack Obama, and many Americans have that view, but it is no small thing that this country was able to judge a candidate by his ideas and character and not the color of his skin. But clearly, while we have made significant progress, the events of last week remind us how far we yet have to go in order to create a nonracist society.

I am not the Governor of South Carolina, I am not in the South Carolina legislature, and I do not live in South Carolina, but I do believe the time is long overdue for the people of South Carolina to remove the Confederate flag from the statehouse grounds in Columbia. That flag is a relic of our Nation's stained racial history. It should come down. If any good can come of the terrible tragedy in Charleston, it is that the people of South Carolina now have the opportunity to finally turn a page on our past. Frankly, the Confederate flag does not belong on statehouse grounds, it belongs in a museum.

I wish to also express my deep concern about the growth of extremist groups in this country, groups that are motivated by hatred—by hatred of African Americans, by hatred of immigrants, by hatred of Jews, by hatred of Muslims, and anyone else who is not exactly like them. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, sadly, there are some 784 active hate groups in the United States and the number of those groups is growing. Let me express my agreement with NAACP President Cornell Williams Brooks that “we need vigorous prosecution and vigorous investigation of these hate groups and the resources to do so.” I call upon the FBI to do just that.

About 50 years ago, as a student at the University of Chicago, I was arrested in a civil rights demonstration to end segregated schools. I was also involved in helping to end segregated

housing in Chicago. It is clear to me that over that period of time this Nation has come a very long way, but it is also clear to me—and I think to the majority of our people—that we still have a long way to go.

I will conclude by reminding my fellow Americans about those great words that appeared in the Declaration of Independence, that moment in history when the Colonies broke off from the British: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men”—and we would add women—“are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” That is the dream of America, that is our vision, and that is a goal we must obtain. The tragedy in Charleston reminds us how far we yet have to go.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SALTS ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I come to the floor today to speak about a major problem across my State—the Presiding Officer has seen it in Iowa—and across the country, and that is the scourge of synthetic drugs.

We have all seen reports of people who have hurt themselves or others or who have died under the influence of dangerous drugs. This issue hit home in my State after Trevor Robinson, a 19-year-old from Blaine, MN, died after overdosing on a drug called 2C-E in 2010. I introduced a bill to outlaw 2C-E and other similar substances, and with the help of Senator GRASSLEY, as well as Senator SCHUMER, we were able to get that bill signed into law. But there is so much more that needs to be done, as we have learned since we passed that bill.

Here is one recent example. Law enforcement officials in Florida and throughout the country are dealing with a synthetic drug called Flakka. This extremely dangerous drug has been linked to hallucinations and other bizarre behavior. We are always trying to stay one step ahead of these new and dangerous compounds because the way the law works now, we have to keep adding new compounds. So what happens is that the crooks who are manufacturing these drugs—the drug leaders, the people who are running these drug rings—are actually just changing the compounds up so they are different, and they are staying one step ahead of the law in that way.

Before I was elected to the Senate, I spent 8 years serving as chief prosecutor in Minnesota's largest county.