

Speaker Ryan: Gives floor speech on landmark legislation to address the opioid crisis

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WASHINGTON—Today, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) came to the House floor to speak about the opioid crisis our communities are facing, and the landmark legislation Congress is set to pass to expand treatment and support. His remarks, as prepared for delivery, are as follows:

"Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about something close to all of our hearts.

"We've reached a point where opioid overdoses claim more than 100 lives a day.

"I really want us to think about that. One hundred lives each day.

"Mothers and fathers, burying sons and daughters. Or, in some cases, sons and daughters, burying mothers and fathers.

"I say this to impart the gravity of the situation, which makes our response all the more urgent.

"But while the situation is certainly grave, that does not mean we should ever lose hope.

"As we have worked on the legislation we'll soon send to the president, we all had to gain an understanding of the facts of the issue.

"But I think, in the process, we all gained something far greater.

"Many of us have heard stories from the incredible souls who have known the unspeakable loneliness and struggle of drug addiction, and made it through to the other side.

"We met family members and friends who have known the pain and fear that accompanies loving someone wrestling with addiction.

"And we met those who will never again have the chance to see the ones they loved so much.

"Amid the overwhelming darkness, we've gotten to see their spark, their strength.

"From this pain has come something more powerful: Resolve, and a passion to make sure others have a safe place to turn.

"Witnessing such strength, such resilience, that's what helped produce this legislation.

"Through these bills, we're trying to ensure that anyone who needs help is not too isolated to receive it.

"We're giving our communities the resources they need to provide stronger treatment networks and support systems.

"That is where the healing happens. That is where Americans are at our best.

"If this legislation can save one life, bring help to one person—that is what matters.

"So I want to thank all of those who were brave enough to share your stories with us.

"And for all those continuing to struggle in silence, I want you to know there is no shame in your trials. In our own ways, we all fall.

"In Catholic tradition, we look to St. Jude as the patron of "lost causes"—a keeper of those who some in society may have written off.

"To me, his guardianship is written into this legislation: There are no lost causes.

"It's about offering a helping hand, and opening our hearts.

"I am very proud of this legislation. I am so thankful to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who came together to put these families and communities first.

"I yield back."