

U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander

Accomplishments 2016



Alexander was chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, and chief Senate sponsor of the 21st Century Cures Act, called the most important legislation of 2016 by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. The Cures Act, which will help virtually every American family, passed the Senate 94-5 and was signed into law on December 13.

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Press Highlights

THE TENNESSEAN

Alexander, Corker score big bipartisan victories

*“Sens. **Lamar Alexander** and Bob Corker each scored big bipartisan victories last week as Congress wrapped up its work for the year.*

“A sweeping health policy bill that Alexander championed to speed up the approval of drugs and medical devices and boost funding for research into treatments and cures for diseases such as cancer cleared the Senate and the House with large bipartisan majorities. President Barack Obama will sign it into law on Tuesday.

“Both senators leveraged their influence as chairmen of two key Senate committees to build the bipartisan support needed to get their initiatives through Congress.

*“‘This legislation holds the promise of improving the life and health of virtually every family in the country,’ **Alexander**, chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, said of the health policy bill known as the 21st Century Cures Act....*

“Children undergoing treatment at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis could benefit because the bill provides new incentives for drug companies to produce medicines for rare diseases.

“East Tennessee has been hit especially hard by the opioid addiction crisis, so the state likely will be given priority for receiving some of the \$1 billion that will be distributed to the states in the form of grants for prevention and treatment programs.”

<http://www.tennessean.com/story/news/government/2016/12/10/alexander-corker-score-big-bipartisan-victories/95205600/>

THE TENNESSEAN

Alexander, Corker score wins, play key roles in Trump era

“Tennessee’s two United States senators scored major legislative victories over the last week that will have an effect on people’s health care and human rights...”

“Alexander shepherded the 21st Century Cures Act through the Senate for approval on Wednesday. The measure invests in innovative, experimental and precision medicine; hastens the development of new drugs; creates a \$1 billion opioid addiction treatment fund for states; and reforms the federal mental health system...”

“The two senators play powerful roles in their chamber and have brought to Washington, D.C., Tennessee politicians’ gifts for thoughtfulness, compromise and collaboration, at a time when gridlock has often prevailed.”

<http://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/columnists/david-plazas/2016/12/11/alexander-corker-score-wins-play-key-roles-trump-era/95215428/>

Johnson City Press

Editorial: 21st Century Cures Act offers hope for the future

“... Congress has done something very special before taking its end-of-the-year holiday break. Both the House and Senate approved the far-reaching 21st Century Cures Act, which includes key funding for alzheimer’s research, mental health treatment and to battle the scourge of opioid addiction.

*Tennessee’s own **Lamar Alexander** was the lead sponsor of the bill in the Senate.”*

<http://www.johnsoncitypress.com/Editorial/2016/12/11/Cures-legislation-offers-hope-for-the.html>

Times Free Press

Cooper: Cures Act a strong dose of hope

“In a day when approval of Congress barely exceeds 10 percent of poll respondents and few believe the body ever gets anything meaningful done, the 21st Century Cures Act is, if you will, a remedy of sorts.

*“The \$6.3 billion bipartisan legislation, shepherded through the Senate by Tennessee Republican Sen. **Lamar Alexander**, chairman of the body’s Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, overwhelmingly passed both houses of Congress and was expected to be signed by President Barack Obama.*

“As with last year’s Every Student Succeeds Act, the Tennessee senator worked with members of the Democratic Party to achieve a bill that, in his words, ‘will help virtually every American family.’...

“This freshly minted package will, among other things, help bring safe drugs and medical devices into the market more quickly and at less cost than before; provide more funding for cancer research, genetic, lifestyle and environmental variations of disease, and brain diseases such as Alzheimer’s; provide funding to states for the opioid crisis; provide funding for the Food and Drug Administration; improve the electronic health records system; and address the country’s mental health crisis.”

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/opinion/freepress/story/2016/dec/09/cooper-cures-act-strong-does-hope/402104/>

Action During 2016

21st Century Cures

“For the second consecutive year, the Senate is sending the President another Christmas miracle for his signature. Last year, it was the Every Student Succeeds Act, and this time, it’s the 21st Century Cures Act—a bill that will help virtually every American family.” – *Lamar Alexander*

21st Century Cures will:

- Help bring safe drugs and devices to market more quickly and at less cost by making needed reforms to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), including: expedited review for breakthrough devices, increased patient involvement in the drug approval process, a streamlined review process for combination products that are both a drug and device, and freedom from red tape for fitness trackers or calorie counting apps.
- Provide \$4.8 billion to National Institutes of Health, including: \$1.8 billion for Vice President Biden’s “Cancer Moonshot” to speed cancer research; \$1.4 billion for President Obama’s Precision Medicine Initiative to drive research into the genetic, lifestyle and environmental variations of disease; and \$1.6 billion for the BRAIN Initiative to improve our understanding of diseases like Alzheimer’s and speed diagnosis and treatment.
- Provide \$500 million to the FDA.
- Provide \$1 billion in grants to states to address the opioid crisis.
- Address the country’s mental health crisis and help the one out of five adult Americans suffering from mental illness receive the care they need.
- Improve electronic health records for doctors and their patients.

Federal Help to address the Opioid Crisis & Prescription Drug Abuse

“Each year, more than 1,000 Tennesseans die from opioid abuse or overdose—this is an epidemic taking more Tennessee lives than car accidents or gunshots do. The way to fight this epidemic is not to wage a distant battle from Washington but for Washington to support those who are fighting on the front lines. That battle is being fought state by state, county by county, doctor’s office by doctor’s office. This

legislation should provide a substantial help in this ongoing battle.” – *Lamar Alexander*

Alexander was one of seven Senate conferees who worked with the House of Representatives on the legislation signed into law by the president. The legislation will:

- Support education, prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts to address the opioid abuse crisis and help individuals with an opioid use disorder get and stay well;
- Provide grants to expand access to life-saving opioid overdose reversal medications and support veterans and law enforcement; and
- Provide grants to states to carry out a comprehensive response to the opioid abuse crisis, including education, prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.

Promoting Mental Health Reform

“This bill will help address this crisis by ensuring our federal programs and policies incorporate proven, scientific approaches to improve care for patients. States like Tennessee and local governments are on the forefront in treating mental illness and substance use disorder, and this legislation will support their efforts so people can get the help they need.” – *Lamar Alexander*

Alexander worked with his colleagues to draft and pass legislation to help address the country’s mental health crisis and help ensure Americans suffering from mental illness and substance use disorders receive the care they need. The bill improves coordination between federal agencies and departments that provide grants, and improves access to care for individuals including veterans and service members, homeless individuals, women, and children.

Helping Older Americans

In April, the president signed the Older Americans Act into law. The Older Americans Act, which had been due for reauthorization since 2011, was passed with bipartisan support by Chairman Alexander’s Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. The bill supports social and nutrition services, from home-delivered meals to senior centers – for nearly 12 million older Americans.

Helping Tennesseans Impacted by Wildfires

The severe wildfires that swept through Sevier County, Tennessee beginning November 28, required the evacuation of over 14,000 residents and visitors and led to 14 fatalities and 134 reported injuries. The wildfires damaged or destroyed over 2,200 homes, businesses and other structures. Alexander visited Gatlinburg on December 2, and with the support of the Tennessee Congressional delegation, Sevier County was declared a federal disaster area making the community eligible for federal assistance.

Supporting Efforts to Develop a Vaccine for the Zika Virus

In April the president signed legislation supported by Chairman Alexander and approved by the Senate health committee to spur treatments and cures for the Zika virus. Alexander also repeatedly voted to provide \$1.1 billion to the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of State, and the United States Agency for International Development to help save babies from being born with birth defects related to the Zika virus and to combat the spread of the Zika virus.

Fighting the Obama “Time Card” Rule

Alexander led 44 senators in an effort to Stop President Obama’s backward "Time Card" Overtime Rule. The rule raises college tuition, cuts non-profit services, and sends nation's workers backwards—demoting millions of workers back to punching the clock, unable to negotiate flexible work arrangements.

Commending TVA on its 80th Anniversary

“TVA was created to provide low-cost electricity, promote economic development, and invest in environmental stewardship, and that is exactly what TVA has done. I congratulate TVA for its work to control flooding and improve navigation of the Tennessee River system over the past 80 years, which started at Norris Dam.” –
Lamar Alexander

Alexander worked throughout 2016 to continue to:

➤ **Speak Out Against Obamacare**

Alexander continued to warn of the dangerous impacts of Obamacare, with Tennessee health insurance premiums skyrocketing by as much as 62 percent next year. Due to Obamacare’s expensive mandates and regulations, tens of thousands of Tennesseans who buy individual Obamacare policies could continue to see their health care premiums go up by double digits. Alexander

said the president and Congress must go step-by-step to repeal Obamacare and replace it with common sense, market-based reforms that provide states and families with access to the health care plans that meet their needs and their budgets.

➤ **Ensure the law Fixing No Child Left Behind is Implemented as Intended**

At 2016's first hearing of the Senate education committee, which Alexander chairs, he said his top priority is to aggressively oversee implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which fixes No Child Left Behind and was signed into law last year. A law, no matter how well written, isn't worth the paper it's written on unless it's implemented properly.

➤ **Support Energy Innovation and Basic Research**

In January, Alexander supported the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2016, which is a broad, bipartisan energy bill that would fuel innovation in the free enterprise system to help lower energy costs and provide an abundance of clean, cheap, reliable energy. The legislation included two of Alexander's bills – the Energy Title of America COMPETES Reauthorization Act, which puts us on a path to double basic energy research, and the ExaSCALE Computing Leadership Act that moves forward with plans to build the world's fastest supercomputers.

➤ **Lead the Fight Against Efforts to Spoil Tennessee's Mountain Beauty and Extend Federal Wind Subsidies**

Alexander opposed the Department of Energy's decision to use federal law to override a state's objections to using eminent domain for siting electric transmission lines to support a proposal by Clean Line Energy Partners to bring wind power from Oklahoma to the Southeast. In May in a speech on the Senate floor, Alexander warned that projects such as Apex Clean Energy's proposed Crab Orchard Wind Project in Cumberland County could make some of the best parts of Tennessee look more like Palm Springs, Calif.

➤ **Promote Nuclear Power and Solve the Nuclear Waste Stalemate**

Nuclear power is our nation's best source of low-cost, reliable, safe and pollution-free electricity that can power your home or business when the wind doesn't blow or the sun isn't shining.

Alexander applauded the Tennessee Valley Authority's completion of Watts Bar Unit 2 nuclear reactor saying, "This is the country's first new nuclear reactor completed in the 21st Century, and it will provide cheap, carbon-free and reliable electricity to the Tennessee Valley for decades to come.

Congress, states, federal agencies, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

should work more closely with utilities to maintain our existing reactors when it is safe to do so and build more reactors, because without nuclear power – it will be much harder to reduce carbon emissions that contribute to climate change.”

➤ **Modernizing Our Nation’s Inland Waterways System**

In February, Alexander announced funding to continue construction of Chickamauga Lock in fiscal year 2016, and in May the Senate passed the Fiscal Year 2017 Energy and Water Appropriations bill which Alexander drafted. The legislation passed in May makes full use of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund revenues for water infrastructure projects and up to \$37 million to replace Chickamauga Lock in Chattanooga.

Legislation

Bills Supported by Chairman Alexander that were Signed into Law as Part of 21st Century Cures:

1. **The Advancing Targeted Therapies for Rare Diseases Act of 2015 – (S. 2030):** Advances therapies to patients with serious or life-threatening rare genetic diseases by allowing innovators to rely on their own data used for a previously approved targeted therapies to develop subsequent targeted therapies.
2. **Next Generation Researchers Act – (S. 2014):** Helps attract talented young scientists to the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
3. **The Enhancing the Stature and Visibility of Medical Rehabilitation Research at NIH Act – (S. 800):** Requires the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR) to develop and periodically update a comprehensive research plan for rehabilitation research.
4. **Advancing Research for Neurological Diseases Act of 2015 – (S. 849):** Helps advance our understanding of neurological diseases and helps researchers access data on these diseases in order to discover new therapies and cures.
5. **Preventing Superbugs and Protecting Patients Act – (S. 2503):** Further encourages and clarifies that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires cleaning and validation data for reusable medical devices and to direct the FDA to clarify when device changes require regulatory clearance.
6. **The Improving Health Information Technology Act – (S. 2511):** Improves health information technology for doctors and their patients.
7. **The Advancing Hope Act – (S. 1878):** Continues a program that gives drug companies an incentive to develop a drug to treat or cure rare pediatric diseases – if a company develops a drug like that, and it's approved, they get a voucher they can keep or sell that will speed up the review of another drug.
8. **The Advancing Breakthrough Medical Devices for Patients Act of 2015 – (S. 1077):** Focuses more of FDA attention and resources and put more senior people at FDA in charge of the review of breakthrough devices so that they

will move more efficiently through the review process and get to the patients whose health could be improved by a truly breakthrough device.

9. **The Medical Electronic Data Technology Enhancement for Consumers Health Act – (S. 1101):** Encourages companies to develop tools like the Weight Watchers application on your iPhone to count calories or a Fitbit watch to log steps, free from unnecessary FDA oversight and red tape.
10. **The Medical Countermeasures Innovation Act of 2015 – (S. 2055):** Ensures the government is planning ahead by increasing the likelihood there will be a drug to help in the event of bioterror attack with a substance such as anthrax or smallpox. If a company develops such a drug and it's approved, they get a voucher they can keep or sell that will speed up the review of another drug.
11. **The Combination Products Innovation Act of 2015 – (S. 1767):** Helps prevent combination products, such as bandaids with Neosporin built in or heart stents that can be implanted to also deliver blood thinners to prevent clots, from being caught in regulatory red tape between various departments at FDA.
12. **Patient Focused Impact Assessment Act of 2015 – (S. 1597):** Gives patients and their families a voice in the drug approval process, and requires FDA to hear their opinion.
13. **Plan of Safe Care Improvement Act – (S. 2687):** Improves plans for safe care for infants affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms.
14. **The FDA Device Accountability Act of 2015 – (S. 1622):** Reduces unnecessary burdens in device evaluation and streamlines the review process for clinical trials for new medical devices to ensure Americans benefit from these devices more quickly.
15. **FDA and NIH Workforce Authorities Modernization Act – (S. 2700):** Helps the FDA and NIH attract and retain the talent they need to handle all the exciting developments headed their way for research and review.
16. **Promise for Antibiotics and Therapeutics for Health Act – (S. 185):** Shortens the development of new treatments to help those infected with life-threatening superbugs.

17. **Advancing Precision Medicine Act of 2016 – (S. 2713):** Supports the president’s Precision Medicine Initiative to map 1 million genomes and make the information available to researchers who in turn will be required to share their research data – all to help find treatments for diseases sooner.
18. **Advancing NIH Strategic Planning and Representation in Medical Research Act – (S. 2745):** Requires NIH to come up with a strategic plan at least every six years, and helps ensure that scientists are including women and minorities in their research and reports on the differences they find.
19. **Promoting Biomedical Research and Public Health for Patients Act – (S. 2742):** Allows researchers at the NIH to spend more time finding life-saving treatments and cures and less time on paperwork.
20. **Mental Health Reform Act of 2016 – (S. 2680):** Ensures that mental health programs are effectively serving those with mental illnesses and improves access to mental health care.

Bills Supported by Chairman Alexander that were Signed into Law as Part of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA), which supports education, prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts to address the opioid abuse crisis and help individuals with an opioid use disorder get and stay well.

1. **The Recovery Enhancement for Addiction Treatment Act – (S. 1455):** Increases the number of patients that a qualifying physician can dispense narcotic drugs for maintenance or detoxification treatment from 30 to 100 patients a year.
2. **Co-Prescribing Saves Lives Act of 2015 – (S. 2256):** Requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide information on best practices for prescribing a drug used to rapidly reverse an overdose of opioids for patients receiving chronic opioid therapy or being treated for opioid use disorders.

Bills Supported by Chairman Alexander that were Signed into Law

1. **Adding Zika Virus to the FDA Priority Review Voucher Program Act (S. 2512) –** Gives drug companies an incentive to develop a drug or vaccine for the Zika virus, to spur a faster treatment, cure or vaccine.
2. **Expanding Capacity for Health Outcomes – ECHO Act (S. 2873) –** Connects the medical brain power of institutions like Vanderbilt University Medical Center to doctors in rural areas of the country to better treat patients with complex diseases.

Was the principal sponsor (or author) of 10 other pieces of legislation, including:

- **State Flexibility to Provide Affordable Health Options Act (S.3326)** – A bill to give states the ability to allow citizens to buy individual insurance policies not offered on Obamacare exchanges, with no penalty on Americans who can't find a plan that suits their needs.
- **Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the “fiduciary” rule (H.J. Res. 88)** – Would have invalidated the Department of Labor’s so-called “fiduciary” rule, which will likely cripple low- and middle-income Americans’ access to affordable retirement advice—forcing Americans to work longer and retire with less.
- **Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the overtime rule (S.J. Res. 34)** – Would have invalidated the Department of Labor’s “time card rule” which would force even mid-level managers to punch a clock as they come and go from work.
- **EEOC Reform Act (S. 2693)** – A bill to subject the Obama administration to its own proposal to increase by 20 times the employment data it currently collects from each of the 61,000 private employers on their 63 million employees.
- **Elimination of the Wind Production Tax Credit to Support Basic Energy Research (S. 3169)** – A bill that would increase authorized funding levels for basic energy research at the Department of Energy’s Office of Science and end the “wasteful” wind production tax credit sooner, instead of Dec. 31, 2019.
- **Overtime Reform and Review Act (S. 3464)** – A bill to delay the timeline for implementation of the Obama Administration’s “time card” overtime rule – set to take effect on Dec.1, 2016.
- **Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the EEOC “wellness” rule (S.J. Res. 38)** – A resolution to block the administration’s attack on workplace wellness programs, which allow employees to save money on their health care premiums by making healthy lifestyle choices.
- **A resolution commending the Tennessee Valley Authority on the 80th anniversary of the unified development of the Tennessee River system (S. Res. 528).**

- **A resolution honoring Pat Summitt, head coach emeritus of the University of Tennessee women’s basketball team (S. Res. 516).**
- **A resolution designating June 20, 2016 as “American Eagle Day” and celebrating the recovery and restoration of the bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States (S. Res. 483).**

Cosponsored nearly 20 other pieces of legislation, including:

- **Affordable Retirement Advice Protection Act (S. 2502)** – A bill to block the so-called “fiduciary” rule and improve the laws governing financial advice without hurting families.
- **Protecting Workplace Advancement and Opportunity Act (S. 2707)** – A bill to would block the overtime rule from taking effect and require the Department of Labor to perform a deeper analysis of the impact changes to overtime regulations will have on small businesses, nonprofits, academic institutions, as well as employee flexibility and career advancement before proceeding with a rule.
- **Retail Investor Protection Act of 2016 (S.2497)** – A bill to delay the Department of Labor’s “fiduciary” rule - that could limit access to investment advice for low & middle income Americans - until the Securities and Exchange Commission issues a rule governing standards of conduct for brokers and dealers.
- **Fair Medicare Hospital Payments Act of 2016 (S. 2832)** – A bill to change area wage adjustment factors for hospital inpatient and outpatient services covered under Medicare.
- **Pension and Budget Integrity Act of 2016 (S.3240)** – A bill to prohibit increases in Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) premiums from being used as budget gimmick to offset other federal spending.
- **Regulatory Relief for Small Businesses, Schools, and Nonprofits Act (S.3462)** – A bill to delay the Department of Labor’s overtime rule that raises college tuition, cuts non-profit services, sends nation's workers backwards— demoting millions of workers back to punching the clock, unable to negotiate flexible work arrangements.

- **A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to require a balanced budget (S.J.Res 6)**

For a complete list of legislation sponsored and cosponsored by Senator Alexander, please visit: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

Energy & Water Appropriations

- In 2016, Senator Alexander served as the Senate's top Republican on energy appropriations.
- The Energy and Water Appropriations subcommittee is responsible for providing funding for the Department of Energy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and several other independent agencies including the Appalachian Regional Commission.
- Working with his colleagues to get a result, Senator Alexander's subcommittee approved an appropriations bill that set funding priorities for the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Nuclear Security Administration, and the Appalachian Regional Commission.
- Oak Ridge receives nearly \$3 billion each year from the Department of Energy. This year, Alexander oversaw funding for the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, cleanup activities, and continued construction of the Uranium Processing Facility, which processes enriched uranium for nuclear weapons systems. Alexander has pushed to keep costs under control, in part through the Red Team review led by Oak Ridge National Laboratory director Thom Mason.
- Alexander has continued to support investing in our nation's inland waterways and completing construction of Chickamauga Lock in Tennessee.

Awards & Recognition

For supporting federalism and Fixing No Child Left Behind:

- **“James Madison Award”** – From the National Governor’s Association, their first-ever James Madison Award, for his efforts to preserve federalism and strengthen state-federal collaboration with the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- **“Friend of Education Award”** – From the National Education Association, the organization’s highest honor, for his long-time commitment to benefit public education, education employees, and students on a national level.

In addition Alexander received:

- **“Community Health Champion”** – From the Tennessee Primary Care Association for his works as HELP Chairman and commitment to fight for rural Tennesseans who do not have access to health care at hospitals or doctor’s offices.
- **“Distinguished Service Award”** – From the Council of Chief State School Officers, the organization’s highest honor, for his efforts to pass the Every Student Succeeds Act and his steadfast commitment to strengthening K-12 education in America.
- **“Congressional Champion Award”** – From the National Association for Secondary School Principals for his leadership in passing Every Student Succeeds Act, which will significantly improve the quality of education for our Nation’s youth for years to come.
- **“Scenic Byway Trailblazer” Award** – From the National Scenic Byway Foundation, at an event celebrating the 25th anniversary of the National Scenic Byways Program, for supporting conservation and highway beautification.

Major Addresses

- [Remarks to the National Governors Association](#) – Feb. 22 speech, Washington, D.C. – “The best job in America is being governor of your home state. The second best job is being able to represent your home state in the United States Senate and reminding all the other senators that being best job in America is being governor. And indeed remember that when you’re trying to be governor of the United States, to leave that responsibility to the governors and focus on the purely federal issues that the congress and president are supposed to deal with.”
- **Remarks to the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems – March 16 speech, Washington, D.C.** – “Last year we focused on education and fixed No Child Left Behind which was a big deal especially when you consider our committee has 22 members which range from let’s say from Rand Paul and Tim Scott to Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. That’s a range of views that you have to accommodate in order to get a consensus. But we do pretty well on that by respecting each other and looking of the 70 to 80 percent we may agree on and leaving the other 20 or 30 percent to argue about another day. One thing that we agree on is the sixty percent of adults and half of adolescents with a mental illness aren’t receiving services, which many of us think that adds up to a mental health crisis, and so we’ve been looking for a variety of ways to address it.
- [Remarks to the Kingsport Chamber of Commerce](#) – May 4 in Kingsport, Tenn. – “The election of a president is important and this luncheon today reminds us of how important it is. I think giving a United States senator from Tennessee an award for having 100% score on keeping a good business environment is kind of like giving a boy scout an award for telling the truth – that’s what we’re supposed to do. And I try hard to do it.”
- [Remarks at the 100th Anniversary Celebration of the National Parks Service at Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Gatlinburg, Tenn.](#) – August 25, 2016 – “We hear a lot these days about what’s wrong with our country, but it’s not that hard to celebrate what’s right with it, and one of the very best ways is to do what we’re doing today: celebrating our country’s best idea, the National Park System, in the place that must be the very best idea, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, because so many people come to see us every year. Thanks to the employees and the volunteers who make it such a special place.”

- **Remarks to the American Association of Blacks in Energy – October 24, 2016 in Memphis, Tenn.** – “If you want a form of energy that is low-cost enough so that people can afford it, that is reliable enough so that you can attract and keep jobs, and that is clean enough so that it helps deal with climate change – nuclear power is the best source.
- **Remarks to the Cumberland Region Tomorrow’s Power of Ten Regional Summit – November 9, 2016 in Nashville, Tenn.** – “Nashville is becoming the biggest city in Tennessee, and one of the fastest growing in the country. Nashville has said, you need a 21st century transportation plan. The suggestion has been a 25-year plan, 6 billion dollars, maybe \$300 million plus a year to operate. From my experience, I recommend: One, that you think big if you’re trying to fix national traffic jams, which you are. Number two, that you think long-term, and number three, that you don’t expect Washington, D.C., to pay for too much of it.”

Op-eds

- [**Tribute to Dean Stone**](#) – **Op-Ed in the *Maryville Daily Times***– “No one tells the story of Blount County better than Dean Stone. He has lived through more than a third of the county’s history, and I believe he must have memorized the rest of it. For most of his 91 years, he has been our historian-in-chief, storyteller-in-chief, and editor-in-chief. Many Blount Countians have their own stories about Dean's impact on their lives, and I have mine. Dean gave me my first real job other than lawn mowing and paper routes.”
- [**Saving Our Mountaintops from Giant Wind Turbines**](#) – **Op-Ed in the *Tennessean*** – “I still can recall walking into Grassy Cove in Cumberland County one spectacular spring day in 1978 during my campaign for governor. I had not seen a prettier sight. Over the last few decades, pleasant weather and natural beauty have attracted thousands of retirees from Tennessee and across America to the Cumberland Plateau. Apex’s proposed Crab Orchard Wind Project would be built less than 10 miles from Cumberland Mountain State Park, where for a half century Tennesseans and tourists have camped, fished and canoed alongside herons and belted kingfishers around Byrd Lake. It will be fewer than five miles from Ozone Falls Scenic State Natural Area, where the 110-foot water fall is so picturesque that it was filmed as scenery in the movie ‘Jungle Book.’”
- [**Overtime rule will increase tuition**](#) – **Op-Ed in the *Knoxville News Sentinel*** – “One of the most radical, out-of-touch aspects of the Obama administration’s agenda has been its labor agenda, and this new overtime rule is a glaring example of why I say that. It more than doubles the salary threshold under which employees qualify for overtime pay—from \$23,660 to \$47,476. This is a sudden and dramatic increase that Tennessee colleges tell me may not only impact tuition, but may force them to reduce employees’ hours and even lay off employees they would like to keep but can no longer afford.”
- [**Passing ‘Cures’ bill means better health possible for virtually every American**](#) – **Op-Ed in *The Hill*** – “Last August, Douglas Oliver, 52, of Nashville, was legally blind. Today, he can see. His story is just one of many stunning breakthroughs in biomedical research that Congress is seeking to accelerate in a 21st Century Cures Act. ...In this year of political turmoil, the 21st Century Cures Act offers a welcome opportunity for consensus. We will succeed because we know that there never has been a moment when our actions might so profoundly improve the health of virtually every American.”

- **[Increase Energy Research by Ending the Wind Subsidy](#)** – **Op-Ed in the *Tennessean*** – “The U.S. does many things well, but one thing we do better than any other country is innovation through basic research. Matter of fact, it’s hard to think of an important technological advancement since World War II that has not involved at least some form of government-sponsored research. To solve our energy and climate challenges, the federal government should double funding for basic energy research, and the way to pay for it is by ending the wasteful Big Wind subsidy on Jan. 1, 2017.”
- **[The GOP-Led Senate is Working](#)** – **Op-Ed in the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*** – “While the presidential race is filling headlines, the Senate Republican majority that Americans elected in 2014 has been busy working to solve problems, like fixing No Child Left Behind, fighting the nationwide opioid crisis, setting our nation’s funding priorities responsibly and ensuring our future involves plenty of clean, cheap, reliable energy. So far, the Republican-led Senate has debated and passed more than 244 bills this Congress – and more than 146 of those have been signed into law by the president. In fact, The Washington Times reported on July 11 that the Senate ‘is off to its best year since 1990.’ As of Aug. 1, Tennessee is finally free to determine its own academic standards, without any mandates from Washington. It can choose Common Core, or uncommon core, or whatever high standards it likes.”
- **[Alexander discusses ETP demolition, development; Oak Ridge cleanup work](#)** – **Op-Ed in *Oak Ridge Today***– “This week marked the end of an era. The last of the five uranium enrichment buildings in Oak Ridge has been cleaned up, making land available for new companies and new jobs coming to East Tennessee. Tennessee should be extremely proud of the men and women who have worked for more than a decade to complete the demolition and cleanup at the East Tennessee Technology Park.”
- **[U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander: Park has continued to make progress](#)** – **Op-Ed in the *Knoxville News Sentinel*** – “One hundred years ago, in 1916, Congress established the National Park Service. The documentarian Ken Burns has called it ‘America’s best idea.’ If Burns is right, then the Great Smoky Mountains National Park must be ‘America’s very best idea,’ because each year it attracts nearly twice as many visitors than any other national park.”

- **[Nuclear Power: A Bipartisan Answer for Our Energy Future](#)** – **Op-Ed in the *New York Times* with Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse** – “If 20 fire marshals came around and told us our houses were about to burn down, we’d buy some fire insurance. So when the leading science academies in 20 developed countries, along with several of our major corporations, and the national security community all tell us that burning fossil fuels is causing dangerous changes to the climate, we think it’s time for the U.S. to get serious about clean energy. That includes supporting safely operating nuclear power plants that produce carbon-free electricity. Sixty percent of our carbon-free electricity comes from the 99 nuclear reactors that dot the nation’s map from Avila Beach, Calif., to Seabrook, N.H.”
- **[‘21st Century Cures’ a Christmas miracle](#)** – **Op-Ed in *Tennessean*** – “Last week Congress and President Obama delivered a Christmas miracle called ‘21st Century Cures’ that will help improve the health of virtually every Tennessean. This \$6.3 billion bipartisan law will help us find cures for cancer, fight opioid addiction, treat mental illness, and better understand the brain to prevent diseases like Alzheimer’s. I’ve worked on this bill for two years as chair of the Senate health committee. Working with the senior Democrat Patty Murray (D-Wash.), we held 12 hearings, led 5 working groups, and passed 19 pieces of bipartisan legislation that formed much of the policies in this bill.”

For more information about Senator Alexander, please visit his website:

<http://alexander.senate.gov>