United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2017 *No. 207*

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

TAX CUT NIGHTMARE

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it has come to this: Republicans are poised to pass the largest transfer of wealth in our Nation's history, financed by mortgaging our children's future with a mountain of increased debt.

What is wrong with this picture?

Well, first of all, nobody really knows everything that is in this bill. It has been written over the last few days to satisfy donors and win the final few votes necessary for Senate passage. It is not tax reform. It is not even a policy, but a collection of special interest provisions being sold on a false set of promises.

It is, decidedly, not middle class tax relief. It is permanent, massive tax reductions for the largest corporations and wealthy individuals. Every independent expert agrees and the American public understand that the benefits of this bill flow not primarily to the middle class, but to people like Donald Trump.

The vast majority of Americans get little and temporary tax reduction, only to see the bottom 80 percent of our taxpayers, on average, actually facing a tax increase when the bill is fully phased in.

The permanent, massive tax reduction for the privileged few comes at a very high cost for the rest of America. Despite false promises, it will not remotely pay for itself through economic growth.

We start with a massive increase in national debt; increased interest costs; a total increase of $2.3 trillion, and likely very higher as the accountants and lawyers discover how to fully exploit the many new loopholes created by lobbyists.

This bill is not tax simplification. It greatly complicates the Tax Code. Look at trying to understand just the passthrough provisions.

Also, we have an IRS that is struggling right now because my Republican friends have cut its budget 17 percent since 2010. They have 23,000 fewer employees, an outmoded data processing system, and more taxpayers—10 million more returns. It is not clear the IRS can even administer this bill.

Middle America will pay with increased economic insecurity, as it will increase insurance premiums an average of 10 percent a year. It will destabilize the health insurance market and increase the ranks of the uninsured by 13 million people over the next 10 years.

Most Americans will pay the price with the massive increase in debt, making it harder for everyone who wants to borrow money to start a business, finance a college education, or buy a home. It increases the likelihood of sending even more American money overseas to pay for the foreign holders of American debt that has increased.

It does not address the problem of offshoring our economic activities and the resulting revenue loss. It provides more incentives for this to continue and even get worse. The increased debt will make it even harder to rebuild and renew America and to meet the needs of our aging and growing population.

After the wreckage of the Amtrak train in the Pacific Northwest, Trump pointed out the need for infrastructure investment to rebuild and renew the country. That is not going to happen.

It is already triggering an automatic $25 billion cut in Medicare. Republicans are scrambling to figure out how to avoid that. We are hearing from Republican leadership that this increased debt illustrates the need to cut back on programs that meet the needs of average Americans and low-income citizens while we are showering increased tax benefits on the wealthy.

It has been a bonanza for all the attorneys, accountants, and lobbyists finding ways to further enrich the most privileged. In the weeks to come, we will find out more special gifts used to nail down the last few votes. I don't know whether the Corker kickback is true or not, but it leaves the public wondering why the immediate about-face from the Senator from Tennessee when nothing has changed except there have been a few provisions added.

No wonder the American public is opposed. They are right, and the Republicans are wrong.

MORNING AGAIN IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I opposed the House version of the tax reform bill because the loss of broad-based deductions like State and local taxes would have caused significant tax increases on many of my middle class constituents in the high-tax, high-cost State of California. It actually increased the marginal tax rate on high-

Printed on recycled paper.

income earners and abolished lifeline deductions such as casualty loss, medical expenses, and student interest. I urge that we should leave no taxpayer behind.

I thank Chairman BRADY, the Republican leadership, and the conference committee for heeding these concerns. Their final product exceeds my expectations and, on behalf of California taxpayers, I can now offer my enthusiastic support.

The new version leaves the casualty loss, medical expense, and student interest deductions intact. No family needs to fear being ruined by taxes after a major disaster or illness, and graduates can continue to plan their lives knowing that interest on their student loans will not be taxed.

The new bill eases the proposed limit on mortgage interest deductions and allows up to $10,000 of State and local taxes to be deducted, all important changes for California. But most importantly, the lower tax rates in this bill now more than compensate in almost every case for the remaining limits on State and local tax and mortgage interest deductions. Even taxpayers who lose tens of thousand of dollars of deductions will still end up paying lower taxes than they do today.

For example, a couple earning $60,000 with a $300,000 home and three adult dependents would have paid $200 more in taxes under the old bill. But under this new version, they will save $340.

A couple earning $150,000 with a $750,000 home—that is a high-end tract home in California—and one child would have paid $1,200 more in taxes under the old House bill. But under the new bill, that same family will save $720.

The business tax provisions are especially important because they will restore American workers to an internationally competitive position. According to economists ranging from Martin Feldstein to Arthur Laffer, these provisions alone will produce $5 trillion of new economic activity over the next decade. That is $40,000 per household, including $2 trillion of new tax revenues to all levels of government.

Last Friday, I toured AMPAC, a local company making the active ingredient in several cancer and epilepsy drugs. Their product is then shipped to Ireland to make the actual medicine solely because the corporate tax in the United States is 35 percent, and in Ireland it is just 12.5 percent.

Their CEO, Aslam Malik, told me that, if they gave their product away for free, the final medicine could still not be competitively manufactured in the United States solely because of our taxes. He expects their local company will grow dramatically because of this tax reform, employing hundreds more families both directly and indirectly as they expand everything from payroll to infrastructure.

You see, that is what the Marxists just don't understand. Businesses don't pay business taxes. Businesses collect them from just three sources: from consumers through higher prices, from employees through lower wages, and from investors through lower earnings, usually pension plans and IRAs.

We have the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world, and commerce and capital simply move around it, leaving our workers behind. That is one of the reasons we averaged just 1.5 percent economic growth under Obama—worse than any President since Herbert Hoover—and lost an entire decade of prosperity.

The Marxists tell us that this is just trickle-down economics and it has never worked. Well, in fact, it has always worked. It worked when Warren Harding did it in the 1920s, when John F. Kennedy did it in the 1960s, when Ronald Reagan did it in the 1980s, and, lest we forget, when Bill Clinton approved the biggest capital gains tax cut in American history.

Concerns over the deficit are legitimate and must be addressed by spending reforms in the coming year. We must always remember that taxes and debt are driven by just one thing: spending.

The proof of these policies will manifest itself over the coming year, and every American will be able to decide for themselves if this has made them better off. I think that is why the left has pulled out all the stops to defeat it. Their arguments are exactly the same economically illiterate attacks filled with class envy that they made against Reagan.

When the American people awakened one day to find it was morning again in America, the left was discredited for a generation. Let history repeat itself, beginning today, with this vote.

HOW THE GRINCH STOLE MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, with a little help from Dr. Seuss, I would like to share the story of how the Grinch stole middle class tax cuts:

Every middle class family wanted tax cuts a lot,
But the Grinch, who lived in a big white house, did not.
The Grinch hated middle class tax cuts, he wanted the whole Tax Code uneven,
Now, please, don't ask why, no one quite knows the reason.
It could be his head was screwed on a bit wrong,
It could be his ties were 2 inches too long,
But I think that the most likely reason of all,
Was his heart, or his hands, were two sizes too small.
Whatever the reason, his heart or his ties,
He stood on Christmas Eve, planning workers' demise,
Staring out from his office with a sour, Grinchy frown,
At the workers' warm, lighted windows below in their town.
''Tomorrow is Christmas, it is practically here,''
He said from his office with a terrible sneer.
''Why, for 71 years I have put up with it now,
I must stop these middle class tax cuts. But how?''
Then he got an idea, an awful idea,
The Grinch got a terrible, awful idea.
''I know just what to do,'' the Grinch thought with a pause,
''With this coat and this hat, I look just like Santa Claus.''
Then he loaded some empty bags on his plane,
And he took off to cause some mean Grinchy pain.
While working families dreamed of sweet tax cuts without care,
The Grinch came to the first little house on the square.
''This is stop number one,'' the old Grinch Claus hissed,
And he climbed to the roof, empty bags in his fist.
Then he slid down the chimney, Santa suit all in place,
And he stuck his head out of the small fireplace,
Where the tax deductions all hung in a row,
''These deductions,'' he grinned, ''are the first things to go.''
Personal exemptions, home equity interest, State and local taxes, too,
''I'll take almost every deduction away from you.''
Then he slunk to the tax brackets—the corporate tax cuts were huge,
Why, that Grinch even took the Arctic Wildlife Refuge.
''And now,'' grinned the Grinch, with his sacks in a net,
''I'll stack the deficit with $1 trillion in debt.''
Then he heard a small sound, a child's soft cry,
''Why are you taking our deductions, Grinch? Why?''
But, you know, that old Grinch was so smart and so slick,
That he thought up a fib, and he thought it up quick.
''Why, my sweet little tot,'' the Grinch said on the fly,
''I am here because corporate taxes are far too high.
''So I am taking most of your deductions away,
''To help corporations . . . and you get to pay.
''See, my dear child, there is no reason to frown,
''We will make them more wealthy, but it will all trickle down.''
His fib fooled the child, then he patted her head,
And he got her a tax postcard, and he sent her to bed.
The Grinch took one last look at her sad little pup,
And he went to the chimney and shoved the deficit up.
Healthcare for 13 million was the last thing he took,
Then he slithered away without another look.
In their homes he left nothing but debt and despair,
While giving out handouts to corporations—the Grinch didn't care.
And the one deduction that he extolled,
Was even too small for a single household.
He rode with his load of deductions for dumping,
''Pooh-pooh to the middle class,'' he said, gleefully jumping.
''They're just waking up, I know just what they'll do,

''Their mouths will hang open a minute or two, and they'll all cry, 'boo-hoo.'

□ 0915

''That's a noise,'' grinned the Grinch, ''that I simply must hear.''

So he paused. And the Grinch put his hand to his ear.

And he did hear a sound rising over the snow.

It started to low. Then it started to grow.

He stared down aghast. The Grinch popped his eyes.

Then he shook. What he saw was a shocking surprise.

Every American, the tall and the small, loudly demanding tax cuts for all.

We want our deductions and a better deal, not tax cuts for corporations while you cut Meals on Wheels.

And the Grinch, with his small hands ice-cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling:

''How could it be so?

''Am I a fool?

''Are my policies all wrong?

''Without those deductions, can the Nation be strong?''

And he puzzled 3 hours until his puzzler was sore.

Then the Grinch thought of something he had not tweeted before:

''Maybe tax cuts should help more than just corporations.

''Maybe this Christmas I can help the whole Nation.

''America's middle class is what made it thrive.

''They need these deductions if they're to survive.''

We all know how the real story ends.

The Grinch finds his heart and he makes amends.

Now we know this tax bill won't end with such glee, because the President and corporate lobbyists control the GOP.

This Christmas, families will get just coal in their stocking.

Thanks to President Trump, the final result will be shocking.

TAX REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, over the past 31 years, our Tax Code has become broken. As our Tax Code is currently written, I have been told by many that it fails to support families across the country with the resources they need in order to properly plan for their futures. Our Tax Code has left those behind who are struggling to make ends meet, and that is unacceptable.

Today is a historic day because that is all about to change. We have heard you. Today we will vote on comprehensive tax reform.

During consideration of H.R. 1, Andrew from Indianapolis contacted me, asking that we craft a tax plan that helps the middle class. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act bill does just that. Thanks to the reduced personal tax rates this bill provides, the average family of four, earning $73,000, will pay $2,000 less in Federal taxes.

We heard you, Andrew.

A single mother earning $40,000 will see $1,300 more in her paycheck. Those savings represent the ability for parents to save for opportunities, including future education costs for their kids, retirement savings; or for unexpected times when an emergency fund is needed to cover unplanned costs.

I heard loud and clear from a lot of people in the Fifth District—students and parents—about the importance of protecting graduate student tuition exemptions. To ensure we continue to support hardworking students pursuing their career goals, this bill continues those exemptions.

We heard you.

Deborah from Anderson called my office asking that we preserve the mortgage interest deduction. This bill does that. It makes no changes to deductions for current mortgages and it keeps the deduction in place for new mortgages of up to $750,000.

I heard you, Deborah.

I was also contacted by a young married couple from Zionsville, in my district, who said, thanks to this bill, they have done the calculations and they think they are going to receive a $5,000 tax cut. They will use that money to boost their savings so that they can buy their first home sooner than they expected.

I heard you.

Providing our friends, neighbors, colleagues, and loved ones the freedom to pursue their dreams—like buying a first home or saving for college—is what allows our society to improve and better itself.

I encourage my colleagues to also listen to the American people to show that we have heard them, and to support this bill. I believe it will help provide security for families across the Nation and it will help turn their dreams into their new reality.

OPPOSING THE GOP TAX SCAM CONFERENCE REPORT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this tax scam bill. Not only will it harm working families across the Nation, but it will visit another hurricane on Puerto Rico: an economic hurricane.

Today, Puerto Rico is in the grip of a humanitarian crisis. More than 235,000 of its people have already fled the island for the mainland.

After Maria, many of my colleagues—from Speaker RYAN to Leader MCCARTHY—went to Puerto Rico and promised they would assist the island and help them recover. Instead, what they are doing is finding a way to further drive Puerto Rico's economy into the ground.

Even though it is part of the United States—remember, since 1898, when military forces invaded Puerto Rico—this bill treats Puerto Rico as a foreign jurisdiction, levying new taxes on corporations operating there, creating incentives for them to leave the island and take jobs with them.

Let's be clear. Puerto Ricans are American citizens. They fight in our wars, many of them laying down their lives for our freedoms, yet this bill continues treating Puerto Rico differently than the rest of the United States.

For decades, decisions made right here in this body hollowed out, weakened, and undermined Puerto Rico's economy. This tax bill continues that awful tradition, undercutting Puerto Rico's economy once more.

All told, these tax provisions will cost Puerto Rico more than 200,000 jobs, at exactly the time when the island needs all the help it can get.

While this tax scam would hurt Puerto Rico, it also does nothing to help. While they had talked of it, there is nothing to expand the child tax credit for Puerto Rico. They eliminated the meager extensions of section 199 and rum cover-over provisions contained in the House version.

The Speaker of the House and the Republican leader went to Puerto Rico. They looked the people of Puerto Rico in the eye and made promises to help them.

That is how you help Puerto Rico?

What we are seeing is that their tax bill would serve simply to crush Puerto Rico's economy.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is morally bankrupt. It harms American citizens everywhere. It kicks Puerto Rico when it is down. It must be rejected. Vote ''no.''

CELEBRATING 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF JACKSON HEALTH SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Jackson Health System.

Jackson Memorial Hospital first opened its doors in south Florida a century ago as a 13-bed community hospital. In the years since, Jackson has grown to become one of the Nation's largest and most renowned public hospital systems.

But, throughout the many periods of growth and expansion, Jackson has remained true to its core mission: to build and improve the health of our community by providing the best possible care for Miami's residents.

Mr. Speaker, by caring for those most in need, Jackson Health System has created a solid foundation that has empowered our families to thrive.

Congratulations to their leader, Carlos Migoya, and all of the staff of Jackson Health System on a century of excellence and care to our community. I thank them for continuing to serve as stewards of Jackson's legacy and for continuing to use healthcare to improve people's lives and to help shape their bright futures.

RECOGNIZING DIANE WHITAKER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Diane L. Whitaker as she retires from the Clinton County Library System this year after serving 31 years and 31 days as executive director of the Ross Library in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania.

In the library's 107 years of existence, Ms. Whitaker is just the seventh director, but she is the longest serving in its history.

The Ross Library Board of Trustees recently hosted a celebration for Ms. Whitaker. They also revealed the newly named ''Diane L. Whitaker Genealogy Collection'' on a plaque in her honor.

Over the years, Ms. Whitaker has overseen numerous projects and has also authored grant applications that have helped local libraries with much-needed funding.

Ms. Whitaker was raised in Clearfield County and holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Lock Haven University. She earned a master's degree in library science from Clarion University.

She has been a career librarian for more than four decades, working as a school librarian, bookmobile librarian, children's coordinator, branch librarian, and administrator.

Ms. Whitaker and her husband, Lester, live in Beech Creek. They have three daughters and six grandchildren, all of whom reside in Clinton and Centre Counties.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. Whitaker for all her contributions to Ross Library and the entire Clinton County Library System. The community is a better place thanks to her efforts. She plans to visit State and national parks in her retirement, which I think is an outstanding plan.

RECOGNIZING MICHAEL COLBERT

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, for nearly 20 years, Michael Colbert has given his leadership to Oil Creek Township as supervisor chairman. Last week, he oversaw his final meeting as supervisor, and he will retire at the end of the year.

Mr. Colbert first served as a supervisor in 1993 to fill a vacancy, but he stepped down the next year. He would run again in 1999, win the seat, and officially be sworn in in January 2000.

Over nearly 20 years at the helm, Mr. Colbert oversaw numerous projects, but he told the Titusville Herald that his proudest achievement was helping pave the way for Walmart to open a store in the township.

In his well-deserved retirement, Mr. Colbert said he plans to vacation in Florida for a few weeks.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. Colbert for his dedication and leadership to Oil Creek Township as supervisor chairman. He has given nearly 20 years of his time and energy to his neighbors and his community. For that, we are grateful.

I wish him the best in retirement.

RECOGNIZING PEARL S. BUCK INTERNATIONAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important work that Pearl S. Buck International is doing in our community in Bucks County.

Pearl S. Buck was the first woman to receive both the Pulitzer and Nobel Prize for literature. Pearl Buck spent decades of her life in China, immersing herself in its culture and history, with her remaining time living in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

The foundation continues her work, providing opportunities to explore and appreciate other cultures and building better lives for children around the globe. Their work on projects—like the Backyard Gardening Project in the Philippines, Life Skills Education for Children Living in Vietnamese Orphanages, and Thailand Clean Drinking Water and Sanitation Project—has increased humanitarian aid for people across the world.

The organization's School Outreach Program and the High School Leadership Program, which equips students committed to making lifelong contributions within the community with effective leadership skills, have made positive and long-lasting impacts in our district. I am thankful for, and stand in full support of, the work that Pearl S. Buck International does in our community and around the globe.

RECOGNIZING BENJAMIN RUSH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, this December, over 50 students at Benjamin Rush Elementary School in Bucks County were recognized for their completion of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program. This training—more commonly known as D.A.R.E.—teaches young students basic skills for responsible decisionmaking.

I thank the officers of the Bensalem Township Police Department for their work with Benjamin Rush Elementary School and for their commitment to educating young citizens in our district.

□ 0930

In the face of a growing opioid crisis, it is vital that students learn about the consequences of drug abuse.

Mr. Speaker, as an EMT and vice chair of the Bipartisan Heroin Task Force, I applaud the efforts of educational programs like these and all those who seek to learn from them. Educating the young people in our communities about the potential dangers of drug abuse is absolutely crucial, and it is my hope that they will use the tools they have learned to lead safer and healthier lives and to become leaders in the lower Bucks County community.

CREATION OF A NEW GOLD STAR FAMILIES MEMORIAL MONUMENT

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, this December, ground was broken at the Washington Crossing National Cemetery for the creation of a new Gold Star Families Memorial Monument. These monuments are erected across this country to recognize U.S. military members who have laid down their lives and their family members who have suffered alongside of them.

Among those present for the groundbreaking was Hershel ''Woody'' Williams. Mr. Williams, a former marine, is the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient for honorable service during the Battle of Iwo Jima. It was with the help of his foundation that this monument was made possible.

These memorials include stories about homeland, family, patriot, and sacrifice. In the center is a cutout that represents the loved one who has sacrificed their life in defense of our great country.

Mr. Speaker, we can never forget those who have paid the ultimate price to secure our freedoms, nor can we forget the families who supported them in their noble endeavors. We are so proud to have a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument in our district.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 31 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

In the waning days of the first session of the 115th Congress, help the Members of the House, and those of the Senate, to act wisely and carefully in the important work they do.

And as our Nation passes through this holy season for millions of Americans, may there be good will in our communities and peace and reconciliation where those virtues are so sorely needed.

May all that is done within the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

SUPPORTING TAX REFORM

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

For the first time since 1986, there is a real opportunity to challenge the status quo and simplify the Tax Code. The final agreement lowers rates and significantly increases the standard deduction for both individuals and joint filers. American families will see the child tax credit expanded to help parents with the cost of raising children.

Importantly, the graduate tuition voucher exemption and student loan interest deduction have remained to ensure our commitment to opportunity through education. I, and many of my colleagues, urged the conference committee to keep these important provisions intact.

H.R. 1 also eliminates ObamaCare's individual mandate penalty tax to allow Americans the flexibility to buy healthcare that is right for them. Job creators will see the corporate tax rate lowered to 21 percent on January 1, 2018, which is the largest reduction in our Nation's history.

Mr. Speaker, this is just some of what this once-in-a-generation proposal does to help America keep more of their hard-earned paychecks. I encourage my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 1.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT THE MAJORITY SAYS AND WHAT THE MAJORITY DOES

(Ms. KELLY of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the majority is working to pass a tax scam that will raise taxes on my constituents.

For nearly a year, Republicans have promised tax reform that benefits middle class families. Once again, there is a big difference between what the majority says and what the majority does.

Instead of being a tax break for middle class Americans, it is a tax scam that will force hardworking Illinois moms and dads to pay the bill for tax giveaways to the rich and well connected. That is just wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the American people know it is a scam. A new poll from Monmouth University found that half of all Americans believe this GOP tax scam will raise their taxes. These folks are right. It will raise their taxes, especially for families in Illinois and in the Second District.

Mr. Speaker, I will never vote to raise my constituents' taxes just to pay for massive tax giveaways to major corporations and a handful of superwealthy families.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' and stand with America's middle class and working families, the backbone of our Nation.

WATER IS LIFE

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, nearly 700 million people across the globe lack access to water. This is a disturbing world crisis. In many countries, women and children walk for miles and face countless risks just to find some water.

Mr. Speaker, water is not just about drinking; it is about sanitation; it is about hygiene. It prevents diseases and drastically improves the quality of life. That is why I worked with my friend, Representative EARL BLUMENAUER, for the Water for the World Act.

This bill has made it U.S. policy to improve international access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene. I applaud the administration on issuing the Global Water Strategy required by that law, and I look forward to seeing its implementation.

The road ahead is long. Eighty percent of the countries receiving U.S. aid still suffer from water issues. With our God-given resources, we have an obligation to make sure people receive the basic element of life—clean water—because water is life.

And that is just the way it is.

PROTECT OUR DREAMERS

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stand with the DREAMers, both in the San Joaquin Valley and throughout our country. Protecting our DREAMers is the responsible, moral, and just thing to do.

The majority of Americans want legal protection for our DREAMers, and Congress must listen. I have been listening to those who have visited my offices, university presidents, religious organizations, my constituents, who simply want us to provide legalization for these individuals who have come to this country at an average age of 6 years of age. This is the only country they have ever known.

Passing the Dream Act is a priority for Democrats and has strong support for many Republicans. We just need to vote on the bill.

I am a cosponsor of the Dream Act, and I have joined nearly 200 of my colleagues signing a discharge petition to bring this legislation to the floor. I now call on my Republican colleagues to do the right thing and allow a vote on the Dream Act.

I will continue to advocate for policies that protect our DREAMers. I urge our DREAMers to continue to make their voices heard, as they have across this country, and to urge people in Congress to do the right thing.

We must stay vigilant in our efforts to protect these individuals, and we as Americans understand what these individuals mean to our country.

Pass the Dream Act now.

ENSURING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR FAMILIES

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, as I travel the Seventh District of Michigan, I have met with many hardworking families who are living paycheck to paycheck; moms and dads struggling to pay the mortgage, make ends meet; many businesses weighed down by a burdensome and outdated Tax Code. We developed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act with them in mind.

For families across my district, our plan means more jobs, more take-home pay, and more money in their pockets. At every income level, people will see meaningful tax relief.

On top of that, our plan will help small businesses thrive, boost job creation here at home, and make our

economy stronger and more competitive.

Mr. Speaker, the choice before us today is clear. We can prop up a broken Tax Code and maintain the status quo, or we can pass the most sweeping tax overhaul in three decades and deliver historic tax relief to those who need it most.

Let's pass the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and ensure a brighter future for the families we represent.

THE REPUBLICAN TAX SCAM

(Ms. JAYAPAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to say no to this outrageous tax bill and do what is right for the American people.

This bill gives more riches to the richest Republican donors, at the expense of middle class families and the poorest. This bill does what the American people already said no to, which is, it dismantles the Affordable Care Act. It throws 13 million Americans off of their healthcare and increases premiums for millions more.

This tax bill eliminates most of the State and local tax deduction and shortchanges so many communities across the Nation, slashing education funding by as much as $152 billion over the next decade.

This tax heist runs up the deficit by $1 trillion to $1.5 trillion and triggers automatic spending cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and services that children and seniors depend on.

This tax scam gives 80 percent of the benefits to the top 1 percent. That is a war on any idea of opportunity and income equality in this country. It is not tax reform, and I urge a ''no'' vote.

COPS AND KIDS

(Mr. BUDD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, our policemen and -women wake up every day and do a job that is dangerous and often thankless. They are truly servants of the public and protectors of those who cannot help themselves. If that weren't enough, I wanted to speak briefly today to highlight officers who have gone even further.

Mr. Speaker, the Iredell County Fraternal Order of Police recently held a Cops and Kids event in Mooresville, North Carolina. Through their generosity, more than two dozen families got around $100 worth of toys, clothes, and gifts for their loved ones. The stories of struggle for these families, brightened by a moment of generosity, are the stories we see around the country this Christmas.

I am awed and humbled by the efforts of these officers. I want to especially congratulate Tommy Chipman, president of the Iredell County Fraternal Order of Police; Duck Wyatt, the second vice president; and all those who participated to help make this Christmas a better one for families in the community.

WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, for those with silk stockings, it is a very Merry Christmas indeed. The billionaires get stuffed, but we get coal. It is like a White Elephant gift exchange. The billionaires grab the good gifts, and the leftovers go to working families, though they get the bill for everything.

How many millions of dollars the Trump family will personally stuff in their pockets cannot be precisely determined, only because of continuing Republican collusion to cover up Trump's personal tax returns.

Excluding the public, refusing to even permit Democrats to offer an amendment, Republicans dumped this proposal out this weekend and now demand an immediate vote. The dangers lurking in this bill for economic opportunity, for tax fairness, are very real, but they are overshadowed by the dangers to our democracy from these Trump tactics to impose his rule on America.

Republicans decided the only way to pass their program was to hide it. Let's reject it today.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF THOMAS PERSEO

(Mr. YOHO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a lifelong public servant, Mr. Thomas Perseo, who will be retiring on January 10, 2018, after 43 years of faithful service to north-central Florida's community in law enforcement.

Mr. Perseo began his career in Green Cove Springs, Florida, in the police department in September 1974. He served his hometown community until 1982, and then moved to Gainesville, Florida.

Upon his move, Officer Perseo started working for the Alachua County Sheriff's Office. He is currently a warrant investigator, and, after 35 years of dedicated law enforcement service with an exemplary record, Tom will be starting the next chapter of his life.

Tom is a shining example of what it means to be an American. He has dedicated his life to serving our community, and I have no doubt he will continue to do so in retirement. I am proud to represent such a hardworking individual and also to have the honor of being his friend.

For myself, and all of Florida's Third District, I wish him the very best in his well-deserved retirement.

□ 1015

HONORING CALVIN IRVIN

(Ms. ADAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Calvin Irvin, a native of New Jersey and a resident of Greensboro, North Carolina, who passed away November 25, 2017.

Cal, as he was fondly called, was an honorable man, dedicated to his community and to mentoring young student athletes. Over his career, he served as coach of Johnson C. Smith University's basketball team, and later as professor and head coach of North Carolina A&T's basketball team for 18 years.

Cal always emphasized the importance of education, ensuring the dedication and perseverance that his athletes learned on the court was also exhibited in the classroom.

A devoted citizen of the Greensboro community, he served in countless civic roles, including treasurer of the Convention and Tourism Bureau and a lifelong member of the NAACP.

He brought his generous spirit and his heart home with him, too. He was a loving husband to his beloved wife, Kathryn, and to his nephew who was like a brother.

As my longtime dear friend and supporter, Cal's golden heart shined a bright spot in my life, too. He will be sorely missed. His loss will be felt throughout our entire State and beyond.

My thoughts and prayers continue to be with his wife, Kathryn, his family, his friends, and his community.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING GEORGE C. SHEPPARD

(Mr. NORMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, Tuesday, January 2, 2018, is a great day for the mayor of Tega Cay, South Carolina.

Let me read the proclamation:

''Whereas, serving as an elected official in local government requires sacrifice, passion, and dedication; and

''Whereas, as George C. Sheppard was elected as the mayor of the city of Tega Cay on November 10, 2009, after serving 2 years as the city's mayor pro tempore; and

''Whereas, Mayor Sheppard faithfully and dutifully served as the city's mayor for 8 years; and

''Whereas, during his two terms as mayor, the city of Tega Cay prospered and solidified its place in the region.''

Mayor Sheppard, Godspeed in your retirement, and thank you for your service to the great city of Tega Cay, South Carolina.

EVIDENCE WHY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE REJECT THE TAX BILL

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, this morning I saw a dramatic bit of evidence as to why the American people overwhelmingly reject the Republican donor relief bill known as the tax reform bill.

Chairman BRADY of the Ways and Means Committee, the author of this bill, was asked why he didn't do anything in the bill to change the carried interest deduction, that provision which allows billionaire hedge fund managers to pay a lower income tax rate than tens of millions of regular Americans.

He said the middle class Americans don't care about that, working families don't. I understand why he didn't want to try to defend the protection of carried interest. There is no defense for it.

But here is why every American ought to care: Because every dollar of lost revenue that goes back to those billionaire hedge fund managers will result in cut services for the vast majority of Americans, for Medicare, for Medicaid, for Social Security, and for many others. It will add to the debt that their children and grandchildren will have to pay for.

Mr. Speaker, that is a good reason why everyone should care about this bill, why it is a scam on middle class Americans, and why it ought to be rejected.

SALUTING THE NAVY'S NEWEST SHIP

(Mr. HILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute the U.S. Navy's newest vessel, the USS *Little Rock*, and her brave crew.

Commissioned this past Saturday, the new USS *Little Rock* was built in Wisconsin and is a littoral combat ship that will operate in waters close to shore.

The vessel carries with it the namesake of Arkansas' State capital and the proud history of the former USS *Little Rock*.

Today, it is also fitting to honor the former USS *Little Rock*. Completed in World War II, she was one of six vessels to be converted to a guided missile cruiser. She was the first U.S. Navy ship to be named for Little Rock, Arkansas.

The only World War II cruiser on display in the United States, the former USS *Little Rock* is the sole survivor of the *Cleveland* class.

The USS *Little Rock* served with distinction as a flagship for both the second and the sixth fleets.

I thank all of those who served on the former USS *Little Rock*. I wish the new USS *Little Rock* the best as she carries out our Nation's critical maritime strategy and protects our interests across the globe.

WORK WITH US TO DELIVER A BETTER DEAL

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, since Donald Trump became the leader of the Republican Party, they said they would start standing up for America's workers. There were promises to stop outsourcing and bring millions of manufacturing jobs back home.

But the two big items on PAUL RYAN's agenda have been cutting healthcare and is a tax scam that is a direct attack on America's middle class. It raises taxes on 86 million middle class households. It hands 83 percent of its benefits to the wealthiest 1 percent. Perhaps worst of all, it is a job killer that will help big corporations move jobs overseas.

They claim it does just the opposite, but why are they trying to ram this thing through so fast?

Because they know that in the fine print are new loopholes that make it easier for companies to shift our work out of America and pay less taxes.

Sure, this bill will create jobs. It will create them over in China and Mexico and Malaysia.

Mr. Speaker, this tax scam is a huge broken promise. We can do better.

RECOGNIZING JUDGE JIM HENDERSON

(Mr. COMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my good friend, Simpson County Judge Executive Jim Henderson from the First Congressional District of Kentucky.

Judge Henderson has served his community since 1998, when he was elected as the youngest county judge executive in Kentucky, and has continually devoted himself to organizations which advance the development and prosperity of Simpson County.

Judge Henderson has decided to transition into a new role as deputy director of the Kentucky Association of Counties, where he will be overseeing their day-to-day operations and working with local government officials in all 120 counties throughout the Commonwealth to advocate for legislative solutions that best meet the needs of their constituencies.

His previous leadership within KACo, combined with his personal and professional networks, and his impeccable record of achievement have prepared him to serve Kentucky's local officials in a direct and expanded capacity.

Although he will be missed in his current role, I am grateful for his steadfast leadership and tireless contributions to Simpson County, as well as his friendship and guidance.

Mr. Speaker, I join his family, friends, and all those who have benefited from his efforts throughout the years in wishing him great success in his new role as deputy director of KACo.

THE REPUBLICAN TAX BILL IS BAD

(Mr. ELLISON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, in a few hours from now, the Republican Conference is going to bring forth a tax bill. This bill will redistribute wealth from working Americans up to the very richest people in our country. It will result in massive deficits. It will result in a starvation of the government to stop it from doing critical things that it needs to do to afford the expenses of our country and to help Americans lead better lives.

But after it is all said and done, after that is done, Mr. Speaker, it is going to do at least three more things that are very, very bad.

One of them is that the corporations that get all this money and the wealthy individuals will, one, do stock buybacks and promote their personal wealth. They will give each other bonuses to give each other greater personal wealth.

They will have more money to do more mergers to concentrate markets even more so that we have more monopoly and oligopoly around, and they will buy political influence to further corrupt our democratic government.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bad thing, and I am looking forward to a big, strong ''no.''

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1, TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3312, SYSTEMIC RISK DESIGNATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2017; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 667 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 667

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the conference report to its adoption without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate; and (2) one motion to recommit if applicable. Clause 5(b) of rule XXI shall not apply to the conference report.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 3312) to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to specify when bank holding companies may be subject to certain enhanced

supervision, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-49, modified by the amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. The requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII for a two-thirds vote to consider a report from the Committee on Rules on the same day it is presented to the House is waived with respect to any resolution reported through the remainder of the first session of the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress.

SEC. 4. It shall be in order at any time through the remainder of the first session of the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules as though under clause 1 of rule XV. The Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or her designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), my dear friend, who is the ranking member of the Rules Committee, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule and the underlying legislation.

This rule provides for consideration of H.R. 3312, the Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017; and the conference report accompanying H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and JOBS Act.

Mr. Speaker, this rule, and specifically the underlying conference report, is the reflection of a bicameral agreement between the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, whereby we took some of the best ideas from across not only our conference, but this country, and from our respective ideas to make a tax bill that would combine them for the best interests of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that what we are doing here today is that the Republican Party is relying upon the greatest system ever invented: the free enterprise system.

The free enterprise system has brought the United States of America not only the greatest economic opportunities in the world, but it is a system of rule of law. It is a system of a Tax Code. It is a system of ideas that has made America the envy of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I also get politically what is happening. We are taking what the Democratic Party and President Obama did to raise taxes by $1 trillion, the largest tax increase in the history of the United States, and we are trashing that today.

We are saying that the production that it made of 1.2 percent over 8 years is unacceptable to the United States of America. It was unacceptable then, and we will not allow that to be the gauge that we will measure our success in the future.

Secondly, we are also going to deal properly and fairly with the Affordable Care Act, a law that placed extensive burdens not only on people who did not want the healthcare bill that was placed forward, but placed a tremendous cost on the middle class of this country and the American people.

□ 1030

What we are doing today is bold. We are going to make the big deal the big deal the American people want and need: a stronger, brighter economic future.

It is a progrowth bill that will overhaul our Tax Code and unleash our free enterprise system. It lowers tax rates on businesses of every size so job creators can focus on hiring workers, increasing paychecks and growth.

Growth and competition are the keys to an expanding economy. More jobs and increased wages in my home of Dallas, Texas, have allowed Texas to lead the Nation not only in job creation, but to make us the envy of the world. We are now going to do that for the entire United States and help make back home for every Member of Congress competitive in the world market.

With the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world, the United States today has a broken Tax Code that has forced businesses to not only move their jobs and research overseas; it has forced us to be able to strand billions of dollars of economic advantage that should be in the United States.

That changes today. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will stop and reverse that trend. It will encourage American companies to bring their jobs and their operations back to the United States by lowering corporate tax rates to be competitive anywhere in the world at 21 percent and encourages U.S. businesses to bring their foreign earnings home, unleashing trillions of dollars in our economy. That is the future that the Republican Party wants for the United States of America and the free enterprise system.

The conference report also simplifies tax filing. It eliminates costly special interest tax breaks. It protects the abilities of small businesses to write off interest on loans and offers a first-ever 20 percent tax deduction to businesses organized as S corps, partnerships, LLCs, and sole proprietorships. This will be a boom not only for the stock market, which we have seen since the day after the election, but we have seen a boom on Main Street as job creators and new small businesses are seeking to reinvest not only in their business and in their community, but for the opportunity to benefit workers in the United States of America.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is a direct and immediate boost for middle-income Americans who have been struggling—struggling for 8, now, 9 years—to get a handle on not only their ability to work with a broken tax system, but the ability to work with their own local businesses to make sure that their city succeeds, also.

It reduces the tax rate for low-income and middle-income Americans. It increases and extends the child tax credit to more families and, roughly, doubles the standard deduction. With this piece of legislation today, legislation for middle-income families will allow them to be a part of an economic growth model for years to come.

We are proud of what we are doing and delighted that we offer this not only to the United States House of Representatives today, but to the American people to see the Republican answer for economic growth and development vitality for the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I think America is pretty apprehensive this morning, certainly those who know that two American Presidents and one Governor of Kansas have tried trickle-down fairly recently and found it did not work at all and, indeed, caused great economic harm. But we are walking into trickle-down once again.

I think there is a word that describes when you do the same thing over and over again expecting a different result—I won't use that word, but I suspect most of us know exactly what I am talking about—particularly at this time when this economy was really booming, really doing well.

I appreciate that there were pockets where people were not getting jobs, and this was pointed out by RICHARD NEAL frequently last evening. We have such a skills gap that jobs are going unfilled in America, and that is what we really should be working on today.

The fact is that corporations are awash with money. The stock market is booming, and we have the lowest unemployment rate in 17 years. Why in

the world would we trifle with that to try a failed trickle-down policy again?

Now, emergency procedures were used to bring the bill up before us today. Now, what is this urgent attention that nobody could have any amendments or anything, that it was an emergency?

We are not reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program, which a lot of people think is an emergency because it provides healthcare to more than 9 million children. We are not reauthorizing community health centers, which serve more than 25 million people; and, after killing Planned Parenthood—the money—that means a lot more people will need a community health center. We are not renewing the Perkins Loan Program, which many low-income students rely on for their education.

Those three programs expired on September 30, but we are not considering them today. Instead, despite a record of 86 months of job growth—every single month for 86 months we have grown jobs—and an unemployment rate that remains steady, the majority is prioritizing tax cuts—not tax cuts for the middle class.

Don't let anybody tell you that this is tax reform. It isn't. It is a moving around of rates, but very specifically geared toward helping the rich with nothing much for the middle class who work hard to make ends meet, but tax cuts for the wealthy. The middle class will see their money go directly to the rich.

That is what the bill was designed to do. You can tell by who wrote it. There is not a single Democratic fingerprint or breath anywhere to be found. Instead, it was crafted by the lobbyists who virtually run Washington under the majority's leadership. Some swamp clearing.

Consider this: there are 11,000 registered lobbyists in Washington, D.C. More than half of them—more than half of 11,000—reported working on the issues involving taxes during the first three quarters of this year. Each of the 20 organizations that hired the most lobbyists to work on tax issues have reported lobbying specifically on tax reform, covering the matters included in this bill.

Now, this is the quote of all time. One lobbyist admitted to The New York Times that few Members actually had any influence on the final product. He said, ''You are dealing with 14 people instead of 535 people,'' saying specifically, as much as possibly could be said, that the 535 people in the Congress representing the people of the United States didn't do a thing on this. They wrote it.

The New York Times has reported that the travel industry lobbyists directly emailed those writing the bill to kill an amendment on tourism because a competitor who favored it has been critical of President Trump.

Business lobbyists, after already securing a lower corporate tax rate in an early version of the bill, called the members of the majority and made it even more favorable to them. They secured the removal of the corporate alternative minimum tax, a provision designed for the very rich to get away with paying no taxes at all, and we know some people who have done that.

The majority has been very clear about whom the bill is written for. One of the members of the majority, Congressman CHRIS COLLINS, said: ''My donors are basically saying, 'Get it done or don't ever call me again.'''

But, Mr. Speaker, what about the average American? What about workers and members of the middle class who can't write big campaign checks or who don't have an army of lawyers to scour the Tax Code on their behalf? Those are the people who are going to be forced to pay the price for providing the wealthy with these tax cuts.

Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg is certainly a man who prefers business and knows a thing or two about running a business. He recently wrote this:

''Corporations are sitting on a record amount of cash reserves: nearly $2.3 trillion. That figure has been climbing steadily since the recession ended in 2009, and it is now double what it was in 2001. The reason CEOs''—this is an important point. ''The reason CEOs aren't investing more of their liquid assets has little to do with the tax rate. CEOs aren't waiting on a tax cut to 'jump-start the economy'—a phrase of politicians who have never run a company—or to hand out raises. It is pure fantasy to think that the tax bill will lead to significantly higher wages and growth, as Republicans have promised.''

Now, that is not somebody who is an enemy of business, and he has called this bill a trillion-dollar blunder.

This is really a remarkable time in the United States, knowing that we are on the brink of passing a bill that will adversely impact virtually every American except the rich. The majority has the votes, and there is not much Democrats can do to stop it.

Let me say again, I am glad the Democrats are not involved in writing it, but it is an insult to the word ''reform'' to associate it with this bill.

The American people know they are not getting what they were promised by the majority. We know the President campaigned mightily on doing away with carried interest, but it is still in the bill.

The bill hurts the middle class, children, veterans, and the elderly by limiting or outright eliminating many of the deductions that they rely on.

Under this bill, the personal exemption is eliminated, the mortgage interest deduction is limited, the State and local tax deduction is limited mightily, and the moving expense deduction for individuals has been eliminated. Even the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate is eliminated. That will cause premiums to go up by 10 percent for those in the individual market, and 13 million people will lose their insurance—13 million.

I want to pause on that because countless times I have stood here at this very spot when there were almost 60 bills to repeal and replace ObamaCare, so we have been able to insert this now in the tax bill, which will really hurt it. I have always wondered why there was such a rush to take healthcare away from persons, and I guess somehow that money—obviously, that Medicaid money—will pay for a lot of these tax cuts for the rich.

All the tax cuts made for individuals will expire in 2025, but the tax cuts for corporations are permanent. That is not what we call reform. That keeps our Tax Code complicated by design. Wealthy families and big corporations can continue taking advantage of a system that they helped create.

Broken promises are embedded throughout the legislation. For years, I have heard members of the majority come to the floor talking about the need to address the national debt. Apparently, that was little more than a talking point, because this bill explodes the deficit by $1.5 trillion and it is completely unpaid for. Because of that, Federal law requires cuts to programs Americans depend on, including a $25 billion cut to Medicare.

This isn't fear-mongering; this is fact. Speaker RYAN said just last week: ''We're going to have to get back next year.'' Next year we are going to say: Oh, my, we are going to have to do something about this spending and this debt, and so we will have to cut spending.

What is he going to cut? The things he has always wanted to cut. He says: ''We're going to have to get back next year at entitlement reform, which is how you tackle the debt and the deficit.''

We have known he has wanted to do that for a long time.

So let me say this to the public watching today: When this majority speaks of reform, you should be very worried about your future. They pushed this scam under the guise of so-called reform, but it is simply a corporate giveaway. Soon they will be back here talking about reforming Social Security and Medicare to pay for what is going to happen here today.

Let's call it what it really is: a systematic dismantling of the social contract. It will impact everyone from children to veterans to the disabled. It begins today with this bill to help the wealthy who haven't even asked for it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER), who serves on the Financial Services Committee. Congressman LUETKEMEYER, from St. Elizabeth, will talk about a piece of this bill that is from the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his steadfast support on so many important financial services issues.

Mr. Speaker, first, I want to quickly lend my support to the tax package slated to be considered by the House today. This legislation will bring simplicity and fairness to the Tax Code. It will lower tax rates so individuals and job creators can invest in our communities and hire more workers. I also want to commend Chairman BRADY and the House leadership for their incredible work on this issue.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, there is another bill slated to be considered today by this body, H.R. 3312, my Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act. It will remove the ill-conceived approach taken in Dodd-Frank to designate bank holding companies as systemically important financial institutions, or SIFIs.

Under the current regulatory framework, the designation of SIFIs is based solely on size. Any bank holding company with more than $50 billion in assets is subject to enhanced regulatory supervision and a variety of special assessments.

This approach fails to take into account differences in business models or risks posed to the financial system. As a former bank regulator, I can tell you this isn't a responsible basis for supervision, a fact that has been recognized by Federal Reserve Chair Yellen, Secretary of the Treasury Mnuchin, former Treasury Secretary Lew, and many Members of Congress. Even Barney Frank, the former Democratic chairman of the Financial Services Committee and author of Dodd-Frank, has said the $50 billion threshold is completely arbitrary and has negative implications on our economy.

□ 1045

This legislation closely ties the safeguards intended in the designation of a bank holding company with real risk to the system.

My legislation would require the Federal Reserve to examine not just size, but also interconnectedness, the extent of readily available substitutes, global cross-jurisdictional activity, and complexity, criteria they already use in their own risk calculation analysis.

An inefficient regulatory structure that does not reflect the reality of the U.S. banking system can have real economic consequences. We should no longer let the SIFI process lead to marketplace disruption or penalize companies based on size alone.

It is time to take a more pragmatic approach to the SIFI designation process and, more generally, the punitive regulatory regime hitting financial institutions and their customers. It is time to actually manage risk and limit real threats to our financial system.

This legislation received broad bipartisan support when it was reported by the Financial Services Committee with a vote of 47–12. That means nearly 80 percent of our committee members voted in favor of this legislation. I hope our House colleagues will join us in supporting H.R. 3312 later today. I thank the chairman for his leadership and help with this initiative.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the world's biggest corporate tax dodgers get the most out of this bill: a 40 percent reduction in the corporate tax rate and the right to bring back those profits they have hidden in Caribbean hideaways for pennies on the dollar.

Another loophole will encourage jobs in America to be exported abroad, a long commute to work if the job is in Europe or in Asia.

Of course, they have camouflaged this corporate tax giveaway with some changes for individuals.

Who gets those?

Well, it is a Who's Who of not you: the Trump family, real estate moguls, and their millionaire buddies.

Disguised as a middle-class tax relief, this wretched bill targets the middle class with a dime of every dollar that is in the bill. What most Americans will really get is more debt and the coming cuts that these Republicans will insist on making to Medicare, Medicaid, and educational opportunity.

Tax fraud is criminal, but passing this fraudulent tax bill apparently is not.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL).

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to set the record straight on tax reform.

Opponents to this plan would have Members believe that tax reform is only a benefit for the wealthy or, hearing them today, a plot by the Trump family. That is simply partisan rhetoric.

I have long said I would only vote for tax reform that helps families living paycheck to paycheck—families like the one I grew up in. My dad worked on the line at General Motors, and my mom worked for the Salvation Army. More money in their pockets from their paycheck every week would have made a huge difference. They worked hard to support their family and raise seven children. That little bit of money would have made a difference. Undoubtedly, now, it will make a difference for the American people.

That is exactly what this plan does. It puts meaningful money back in the pockets of working families. A typical family is projected to save over $2,000 a year. That may not sound like much to some on the other side of the aisle, but, where I grew up, that is huge.

For 57 percent of Americans who don't have enough money to cover a $500 emergency, that money matters. For businesses, it means investments, hiring, and better wages. I have talked to business owners across my district, and they have had the same message: cuts taxes so they can increase wages and hiring.

Vic, a restaurant owner in my district, talked to me about tax cuts that would help his business. Vic said: We pay our taxes first, we pay our people second, we pay our bills third, and then if there's anything left over, we get paid.

Our Tax Code shouldn't be a challenge or impediment for business owners like Vic.

Currently, Americans pay more in taxes than they pay for food and clothing. It is time to fix this. This tax plan does that. This tax plan will help families and businesses across my district and across America, which is why I proudly support it, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR), a conferee, I believe.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Here we are about 1 week before Christmas, and the GOP has proposed a tax bill that Ebenezer Scrooge would love. It is a big ''bah humbug'' for America and the families and communities we represent back home.

Their bill will raise taxes on millions of American middle class families while showering tax breaks and new loopholes on the superrich and big corporations. It is fundamentally unfair. It does this with a massive increase to our national debt of about $2.3 trillion, in essence, mortgaging the future for our kids and grandkids and squeezing out our ability to invest in medical research and modern infrastructure.

They admit they are going to look to cut and raise costs on families who depend on Medicaid and Medicare. It is not fair. In this bill, they even go so far as to rip health coverage away from 13 million Americans in another attack on the ACA. In Florida, 1.7 million of my neighbors rely on the healthcare.gov insurance pool for affordable coverage. They are, in essence, giving them a lump of coal for Christmas.

We have got to defeat this bill. Vote ''no'' on this Scrooge tax bill.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by the way, the gentlewoman would want to state that we are not taking this away. There will be a 1-year transition. So, I am sorry, but it will not be Ebenezer Scrooge at Christmas. It will be the bright lights of a big future that lies ahead for us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY).

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

When we are in this House, the people's House, I know sometimes the message goes back and forth. Unfortunately, this idea of identity politics is what we have to play all the time. Instead of talking to the American people, we talk past the American people,

and we try to make it so divisive that they can't see the facts.

I would just tell my friends on the other side, as a child growing up, I think all of us were the same. We would sit down about this time of year, and we would write a letter to Santa. We would ask Santa Claus for everything we wanted. Then we would mail it off to the North Pole.

Then we would come down on Christmas morning, and we would see that Christmas tree and all those gifts laid out. We never got everything we wanted, but we were sure thankful for everything we got.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is so critical. When we talk about debt, if I were to tell an investor: For every $1 that you invest, I can return $1.90 on it, they would be excited.

Let me just explain something when we talk about American families. It is not Republican families, by the way, not Democrat families, or Libertarian families. I am talking about American families. A typical family of four earning $73,000 a year will see a cut in their taxes of $2,059. A single parent with one child earning $41,000 a year will see a tax reduction of $1,304.

I would ask my friends, please do not be on the wrong side of history. You will have an opportunity today to do something that is great for America, to make America great again. We look at everything that is going on, and we decide that somehow, in this House, we must be divisive and not united. When we think that somehow giving people more of their own money back is the wrong policy, when we think that somehow giving tax relief to every single American is the wrong policy, when we think that the tone and tint of somebody's skin, the shape of their eye, where they worship, where they live, what they earn is the main issue, and we can divide them as a people, that is absolutely wrong. It is totally un-American.

What is truly pro-American is making sure that every single American gets to keep more of her or his money that they earn in a day, and they don't have to give it to the government. Nothing could be more simple. Nothing could be more easy.

I would ask all my friends to please, let's act in the best interest of America. Forget the identity politics. Look at what is good for those neighbors of yours, those friends of yours, and that family of yours, and let's decide where America is going to go.

We have seen a dramatic rise in our economy since the last election. This tax cuts bill, this jobs bill, will allow this economy to take off where all boats will rise. Not just red boats or blue boats, but red, white, and blue boats. It will happen at the best time of the year, a time when people look to this House to do the right thing for the right reason. Good things happen when we do that.

This is an incredible opportunity in the history of the country. The is an incredible opportunity to show the American people that we are not divided as a House. We are united. We are united in doing the right thing for them because it is the right thing, and good things will happen.

I would like to wish all my friends on both sides of the aisle and all those folks at home a very Merry Christmas and happy holidays. On Christmas morning, I guarantee you, you may not get everything that you wish for, but you are going to be so thankful for everything you got.

Let's pass this tax cut and jobs bill and make sure America moves forward. We have labored for too long behind the rest of the world. Individuals have more take-home pay, corporations will stay home. They will make investments in land, bricks, mortar, equipment, education, and in making our workers the best workers in the world and able to compete anywhere on any stage and win.

We will not only just participate, we will dominate, and that will trickle down to every single American, not just red, white, and blue; as I said earlier, not just Republicans or Democrats, but every single American. What a wonderful gift for Christmas.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH), the distinguished ranking member of the Budget Committee.

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my fellow Kentucky native for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, today, my Republican colleagues will vote to approve a historically unpopular bill.

The American people don't buy Republican claims that the bill will help middle class families. In fact, in several years, more than 83 million middle class families will see a tax hike.

The people see that Republicans have sold their souls and principles to give tax cuts to wealthy corporations and to pay back their billionaire donors. They know the Republicans have abandoned any claim to fiscal responsibility. After all, nonpartisan analyses conclude this bill will add more than $1 trillion to the debt.

But the Republican leadership has a plan to make up the difference, and it is something else. They are already working on legislation to make massive cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and other programs families need.

This isn't tax reform. This isn't help for the middle class. It is a scam, it is fraud, and it will have dangerous, long-lasting consequences for the American people.

I urge my colleagues to defeat the rule and to reject this scandalous Republican donor payback legislation.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE), a distinguished member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding and his continued leadership.

We are on the cusp of something truly historic that will make life better for millions of people across the United States. By reforming the Tax Code, we will be able to put more money in people's pockets and create a fair and simpler tax system.

Under the current Tax Code, well-off individuals and big businesses can higher lobbyists and lawyers to help them find loopholes and special interest giveaways, all at the expense of working Americans.

With our plan, the Tax Code will be simplified, loopholes will be closed, and the playing field will be leveled.

I want to make one thing clear: if you are looking for a tax plan that benefits the elite, the well connected, and the 1 percent, then you need to look at the current Tax Code.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are going to great lengths to defend the current Tax Code that truly benefits the top 1 percent. For example, the Democratic leader has called the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act ''the end of the world.'' So, apparently, giving the hardworking people in this country a tax cut is, to her, ''Armageddon.''

Let's stop with all the doomsday political rhetoric, cut to the chase, and say what this bill really does:

It cuts taxes on hardworking Americans and allows them to keep more money in their pockets;

It supports American families by increasing the child tax credit and doubling the standard deduction;

It grows the American economy by making the corporate Tax Code actually competitive with other industrialized countries;

It benefits Main Street businesses in Alabama and across the country with a new 20 percent tax deduction for pass-through income;

It will lead to greater economic growth, higher wages, and more jobs, which is exactly what the American people sent President Trump and the Republican Congress to Washington to do.

□ 1100

So let's save the political hyperbole for another day. Let's pass the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and let's give the American people a real Christmas present and put more money in their pockets.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I ask the American people to ask themselves: Have they ever seen a Republican big-time tax cut for the wealthy and big companies ever trickle down to them?

If you look over the course of these things that they do every few years, all they do is concentrate wealth at the very top and take money out of the hands of working people. They starve government and make it more difficult for your government—which is of, by, and for the people—to help you with

disaster, with Social Security, with Medicaid, with Medicare, or with any kind of program that you need. It just starves the government of its ability to make your life better.

But, do you know what, Mr. Speaker?

There is another thing about this particular tax bill. They have been studying it, and there is going to be one tremendous beneficiary of this tax bill. It is going to be Wells Fargo. Wells Fargo, which will see its corporate tax rate drop down to 21 percent from the 35 percent it is now is going to make, on average, a 13 percent increase in earnings per share.

Do you remember that big company that opened up a bunch of accounts people didn't need and sold people insurance they didn't need?

They will be doing better. American families will be doing worse.

Vote ''no'' on this rule and vote ''no'' on this tax bill.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS).

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman SESSIONS for his leadership and for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we are about to make history this week by delivering a tax cut to families at every income level.

The math clearly shows that the average family of four, making the country's median income of $73,000, will receive a $2,000 tax cut.

Yet many of my friends on the other side of the aisle continue to say this bill is going to raise taxes on millions of middle class families. That is just not true, unless you are referring to 2025, when these tax cuts expire and we go back to the status quo.

Why is there an expiration date?

Because many of the very same people, using this as a talking point against this bill, are the reason they sunset. If we could get 60 votes in the Senate, requiring just a few of my friends on the other side of the aisle to work with us, we could make this tax cut for middle class families permanent right now. They have chosen not to work with us.

I will be giving my friends on the other side of the aisle another chance to support tax cuts for hardworking families in their district. I will be introducing a bill to make the individual tax cuts permanent.

I am not sure there is anyone who truly believes that a future Congress would let them expire, given the fact that we have extended the Bush tax cuts in the past.

Nonetheless, I am introducing this bill to ensure these tax cuts will be in place for middle class families this year, and to make sure they are here to stay.

Mr. Speaker, I hope each and every one of my colleagues will sign on as a cosponsor.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for her tremendous leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this rule and the underlying bill, which really is the greatest tax scam in America's history. It is cruel and it is coldhearted.

It steals from the hard-earned paychecks of low- and middle-income families; lines the pockets of millionaires, billionaires, and wealthy corporations; and, yes, it makes it easier for corporations to ship jobs overseas.

Now, for weeks, Republicans have been selling the pipe dream that tax cuts for the rich will somehow trickle down and benefit the majority of Americans. That is so far from the truth.

Just yesterday, the Tax Policy Center revealed that 83 percent of the tax breaks in this bill go to the top 1 percent.

What is worse, 86 million middle-income households will face tax hikes and 13 million Americans will lose healthcare coverage.

Mr. Speaker, constituents in my congressional district are afraid of their futures because this tax scam is going to severely devastate families in California. Nearly 2 million Californians stand to lose their State and local deductions if Republicans succeed.

This is truly a slap in the face to the American people. Republicans have already and have always, yes, made it clear that this tax scam is a Trojan horse for Republicans to take an axe to Medicare, Social Security, and programs that lift people out of poverty. But the public is not going to let them get away with this. They will remember who is shattering their lives.

This bill is ruthless. It makes clear that Republicans only value the lives of the wealthy and their donors. That is whose side they are on.

Well, Democrats are on the side of middle- and low-income families who are working hard just to make ends meet, to take care of their children, to make better wages, and who are fighting for a better future.

Mr. Speaker, we should oppose this bill and this rule. It is really a raw deal for the American people. The public knows whose side we are on, and the public knows whose side that the Republicans are on.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to, if I could, advise the gentlewoman that, to balance out the time, I am going to allow her to have the next couple of speakers so that we can equal the time.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, today we are debating the final version of the Republican tax bill, which I cannot support.

This bill was flawed from the start. First of all, it was never deficit neutral and there was never a bipartisan negotiation. This is a Republican-only bill, and it was developed without any input at all from Democrats because they never sought our input at all.

My Republican colleagues say they would like to jump-start the economy. Well, we can do just that by providing more tax cuts to working class families whose paychecks are already stretched far too thin and who would reinvest that money in the local economy.

Instead, this bill provides them with crumbs, and temporary crumbs at that.

Under this plan, corporate cuts, though, will be permanent. With this bill, we will see an entirely different, more expensive, individual Tax Code in 2025, when the middle class tax cuts expire.

This bill also balloons the national debt, make no mistake about it. It repeals a critical healthcare provision that will result in 13 million Americans becoming uninsured.

Now, these days, I hear a lot about accountability and encouraging competitiveness for the American worker, which I support. But this bill, with its novel loopholes and flawed trickle-down philosophy, does neither. It is a wasted opportunity.

I believe that it is not too late, but the way this bill is written, I cannot support it. This was written for corporations and the wealthy 1 percent in this country. It was not written for a strong middle class. We can do better.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, a bill that is done in the dark of night, in the midst of a crisis like the lack of Perkins funding for our students, the lack of funding for CHIP and for healthcare for millions of Americans—yet our friends on the other side go without shame in passing the GOP tax scam bill.

In the Houston Chronicle, they aptly put winners and losers, and they aptly put at the top of the winners The Trump Organization. This is a Christmas gift for the Trump family—no one else—with huge cuts to the uninsured, to commuters, and to homeowners in high-tax States. This is not a fair distribution of funds, and it certainly is going to impact those who are still suffering from hurricanes all over the Nation.

So I ask the question: Why the rush? Why the rush to give tax cuts to the top 1 percent, and increasing taxes on millions of middle class Americans, to pay for a permanent tax?

The American people have it right: a permanent tax cut for the rich. This is the worst catastrophic bill that has ever been passed by the Members of the Republican Party in the House of Representatives. It is a shame.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH).

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

We do need tax reform. We need tax reform that we all described in the beginning as something that would help the middle class, that would simplify taxes, and would be revenue neutral. This bill, sometimes described by its authors as doing those things, accomplishes none of those things.

Now, first of all, for the middle class, wages have been stagnant. The jobs people are getting aren't paying the bills. We know the biggest challenge we face is increasing investment, increasing wages, and increasing security.

There are some benefits in this bill for the middle class, but let's get real. Those benefits are tiny and they are temporary.

If you are a Vermont family, if you are lucky—we get hit with the SALT deduction loss—you might make a couple hundred bucks.

But at what price?

Once these benefits expire, 83 percent of the benefits of the individual tax rate goes to the top 1 percent.

At what price?

$2 trillion added to the deficit.

Let me tell you this: Vermont families, hard-earning families, working families, they would like a tax cut, but not one that their children and grandchildren are going to have to pay. That is unconscionable.

What about these corporate tax cuts?

We want simplification, so we are competitive. There is a 40 percent reduction for multinational corporations.

But, in this bill, is there any corresponding requirement that they start reinvesting in America?

Exactly the opposite.

There is a lower tax rate for companies that invest abroad, send jobs abroad, rather than invest at home. That is outrageous.

And what happens because of this deficit?

Medicare is going to be cut directly as a result of this tax bill. The infrastructure plan we all want is evaporating.

Defeat this rule and defeat this bill.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

(Mr. BARTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I am one of the few Members that was here back in 1986 when we had the last major tax cut before this body. The President was Ronald Reagan and the Speaker of the House was Tip O'Neill. They worked together on a bipartisan basis to cut taxes across the board. The result was the economic growth of the late 1980s and the early 1990s, up until the early 2000s, when we had 9/11. It is one of the best votes that I have ever taken as a Member of this body.

Well, now we are here on another major tax bill. The problem this time around is that there is no bipartisanship.

Why is that, Mr. Speaker?

It is not because the Republicans don't want to be bipartisan. It is because the Democratic leadership this time around has just said no.

This tax bill is a good bill.

The distinguished gentleman from Vermont who just spoke is correct in that it is not revenue neutral. But, Mr. Speaker, revenues are at an all-time high. We are going to raise more money this year than we have ever raised before at the Federal level. Let me repeat that: raise more money than we have ever raised before at the Federal level.

Isn't it time to give hardworking Americans a little of that money back?

That is what this bill does. It cuts rates for every working American. Let me repeat that: it cuts rates for every working American.

No matter what your tax rate is today, under this bill, it is going to be lower if you are an individual. If you are a corporation, it is going to be lower. If you are one of these passthroughs, it is going to be lower.

Every American who is paying taxes today is going to pay less taxes starting January 1, 2018. That is a good deal. That is a good deal. We are cutting taxes across the board for every working American.

We repeal the individual mandate under ObamaCare.

□ 1115

Unfortunately, it doesn't kick in until 2019, but we still repeal that.

This is a good bill. It is a historic bill. It is a bill that everybody in this Chamber will benefit from, regardless of whether you vote for it or vote against it. So when the time comes this afternoon to vote ''yes'' or ''no,'' I am voting ''yes'' for America. I am voting ''yes'' for America's future. I am voting ''yes'' for every working American who is paying taxes today. Let's put more money back in their pocket. Let's double the rate of growth for the economy. Let's put more Americans at work. Let's show some faith in the American people, vote ''yes.''

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the biggest economic challenge of our time is that too many people are in jobs that do not pay them enough to live on. Wages are not keeping up with rising costs. Too many families struggle today to make ends meet. Some have two or three jobs. They can't afford healthcare. They can't afford—some can't afford to put food on the table. They don't take vacations, and their retirement is in jeopardy.

But it is the big corporations, the millionaires and the billionaires, who are writing the rules to make government work for them, and it is the Republicans who are their comrades in arms who are rigging the game against the middle class.

Senator ORRIN HATCH, who wrote this bill, said: ''I have a rough time wanting to spend billions and billions and trillions of dollars to help people who won't help themselves, won't lift a finger, and expect the Federal Government to do everything.''

This is the ugly truth of this Republican tax bill. And I say to Senator HATCH: ''The Federal Government has taken good care of you. It is about the great people of this Nation that we are not taking care of.''

That is what this vote is about. This is where their values are. They are on display. The final bill is even worse than we feared. It lowers the tax rate for the wealthiest people even more. It repeals a key element of the Affordable Care Act, kicking 13 million people off their insurance, raising premiums by 10 percent.

Don't let them fool you on the child tax credit. It is a shameful proposal. It shuts out military families, rural families, large families, minimum wage workers, those with the youngest children. If you make $400,000 a year, you get a $4,000 child tax credit. If you make $14,500 a year, you get $75. Who are they fooling with this bill?

And you know what, my colleague, just a minute ago, said: Yes, those in this Chamber will benefit. You bet.

We are eligible for the child tax credit, but low-income families are not. This bill fails the middle class. It benefits the richest 1 percent. Vote against it as I will.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Lawrenceville, Georgia (Mr. WOODALL), the Rules Committee designee to the Budget Committee and the gentleman who sits with esteem on the Rules Committee.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me the time. We were in the Rules Committee last night, Mr. Speaker, and we were having this same kind of conversation. We were going through the list one by one by one of all the families and how folks were going to benefit, about the children and graduate students, folks facing medical challenges. We went through one by one by one and talked about all the folks who were going to benefit from this great tax cut, and it was powerful.

But I was reminded, Mr. Speaker, that when we started this conversation, it wasn't even a tax cut conversation. It was an economic growth conversation, Mr. Speaker. It was an economic growth conversation. Where we have ended up is there are going to be tax benefits for every single working family in the country, but where we started was how do we get those wages for working families up? How do we get job creation up? How do we get America growing, not at these stagnant rates of Obama years, but back at powerful rates as we saw in the Bush years,

as we saw in the Clinton years, as we saw in the Reagan years? That was the conversation.

Mr. Speaker, if we had historically normal economic growth—not fantastic economic growth—historically normal economic growth, we would have a balanced budget in this country today. There is an economic consequence of economic failure. What we have done in this bill, Mr. Speaker, by allowing businesses to expense their investment, allows them to make their employees more productive on day one. That is going to have a powerful impact, not just on employee wages, Mr. Speaker, but on economic growth across the entire country.

This bill is not about should we pay taxes. We must. This bill is about how we pay taxes. Can we do it better? Does America need to be the worst in the world? Or can we be first in the world?

We are answering that question today. We are answering that question today. And with every single vote a Member in this Chamber casts, it is not about is everything in this bill exactly the way you would have crafted it. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, for me, it is not. The question is: Does this bill move us in a direction of competitiveness across the globe? It does. The question is: Does this bill focus on wages and growing those wages? It does. The question is: In this opportunity that we have, did we take it or did we waste it?

We haven't answered that question yet, Mr. Speaker, but I believe that later on today we will. We are going to answer in the affirmative. Give us a chance. Should it have taken us 31 years to get to this place? It should not. Can we make a difference together today for the country? Yes, we can. It will be a lasting difference. It will be a powerful difference. It is going to be one of the proudest votes I have had an opportunity to take in this Chamber, and I appreciate the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his leadership on this.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this has been the most awful process. Mr. BARTON wanted to know why the Democrats weren't involved. We weren't involved in any of it, for heaven's sake. We almost didn't get to see a copy of what they had.

But I think the debate we have had here today must be very similar to the one we had in the Reagan administration. And David Stockman, who talked Ronald Reagan into trickle down, he says today it didn't work. It didn't work then. It didn't work for President Bush. It didn't work for the Governor from Kansas, whose name escapes me for the moment. Very recently, it didn't work, and it isn't going to work this time.

So I am really appalled that we are doing it. But I have to say that this was the worst process that any of us have ever been through. We operated on Thomas Jefferson's manual in the Rules Committee. We didn't even come close.

Mr. Speaker, let me speak on the PQ. We must protect middle class families against the disastrous Republican tax plan, and if we defeat the previous question, I am going to offer an amendment that will prohibit any legislation from being considered on the floor that limits or repeals the State and local tax deduction or repeals the ACA's individual mandate.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), the ranking member on the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from New York. You know, I have been here a long time now, and I have to say: This is one of the worst pieces of legislation I have ever seen; one of the worst processes I have ever seen. You know, when you were a kid, and you went to high school and college, and you learned how a bill becomes a law, well, take that and throw it out because the Republican leadership here doesn't want to work with Democrats.

The reason no Democrats are working with you is you shut us out. You won't let us have any input. You won't do anything with us, and this is not the way to govern, absolutely not. You know, someone near and dear to me once said: The Republican Party is the party of the rich person, and the Democratic Party is the party of the working person.

If that was ever true, it certainly is true today. Rich people do really, really well. Middle class and the poor people don't do well at all. In fact, the corporate tax breaks last for years and years and years, and the other tax breaks for the middle class expire in 5 years. This helps the rich; it hurts the poor; it helps the middle class.

Even Ronald Reagan tried to be bipartisan and have Democrats work with him. And whatever happened to my friends on the Republican side, lectures about fiscal responsibility? This blows a hole in the budget. It is irresponsible. My State of New York, which is a donor State, is getting screwed. That is all I can say.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the gentlewoman that we are through with our speakers, that I will be closing, so I ask that she go ahead and consume her time.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I have one more speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I rise in strong hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will come to their senses and defeat this job-killing bill that will explode the deficit and hurt working people.

It is important to note 83 percent of the benefits of the cuts in this bill go to the top 1 percent; 86 million hard-working middle class families will actually see a tax increase. Of course, we need to reform our Tax Code, but we need to do it in a way that raises wages, produces good-paying jobs, and makes sure the people have a brighter future.

This does just the opposite. It ransacks Medicare and Medicaid. It creates an unsustainable burden for the next generation, and it is very, very important to recognize it is not going to create jobs. This is trickle-down economics. Let everyone at the top hold on to all of their money, and it will trickle down to the rest of us.

It doesn't work. This is a failed economic policy. This does not support strengthening the middle class. We need to defeat this bill and reform our Tax Code in a way that will really promote job growth, that will raise wages, that will ensure working families can get ahead. There are millions of Americans tonight who will go to bed worrying about how they are going to take care of their family; how they are going to make ends meet. This bill will make that problem worse. I urge my colleagues to defeat it.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Members of the majority have lined up today to tell the American people how great this bill is. If that is true, why were they afraid of holding a single hearing or listening to a single outside expert?

The 1986 tax bill had over 30 hearings and 430 witnesses and took well over a year; this one about three 3 months—written, apparently, by lobbyists. There wasn't a single hearing held on the text of this bill, not one. It was jammed through the Ways and Means Committee where our amendments, the Democrats', were blocked.

Democratic Members had under an hour to review the final text before voting. It was rushed to the Rules Committee a day earlier than announced with only 4 hours' notice, so nobody had any chance to read, and the majority there blocked 140 bipartisan amendments.

This has been a secretive process on both sides of the Capitol. Senators received the text of the final bill also within an hour of the vote. The nearly 500-page bill in the Senate was riddled with errors, last-minute edits, and illegible handwritten changes in the margins. There was a single meeting of a conference committee between the House and Senate. Members there were

prohibited from offering amendments or even seeing the negotiated text.

Imagine that, you couldn't even see what they were supposed to vote on. The Senators and Representatives sat around the table for show while the press reported that the deal, even before the meeting had started, had already been reached. The Democrats had no say at all.

House Ways and Means Chairman KEVIN BRADY says he is proud of this process, but it will take a separate bill just to correct some of the errors here. And there is no reason to believe he would include Democrats in that process either. It would be another partisan effort.

Let me remind everyone watching that we used emergency procedures to meet this onerous bill. In this Congress, disaster relief is not an emergency. Isn't that amazing? Funding CHIP and community health centers is not an emergency. Disaster funding is not an emergency. But rushing these tax cuts to the wealthiest among us is an emergency.

This bill, which has no deadline, is their top priority, while real emergencies are being ignored, and it is shameful. I urge a ''no'' vote on the previous question on the rule and the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York, the ranking member of the Rules Committee, and really each of the members of the Rules Committee for their diligence in working yesterday for a long period of time.

As the Rules Committee met last night, not only to consider this, but really to offer full and open debate, an opportunity was given for the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) to come and speak representing the Democratic Party; the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM), to come and represent the Ways and Means Committee; and the distinguished gentleman from The Woodlands, Texas (Mr. BRADY), the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, to come and thoughtfully articulate not only the ideas behind this bill but what we are going to do.

□ 1130

Mr. Speaker, it is true that what we are doing is taking what was done by President Obama and a Democratic majority in the House and the Senate that raised taxes a trillion dollars, that, in 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011, really raided the American people by raising taxes on them, by causing an economic downturn, a GDP rate of 1.2 percent—an assault on not just the taxpayer, but on the free enterprise system.

It is true that we promised this last election, through the election of Donald Trump, to Make America Great Again. Part of making America great again means making Americans great again also, making Americans not only proud of their country, but giving them an economic opportunity, and that is what the Republican Party is doing here.

We have heard not only from MIKE KELLY, Congressman KELLY, who spoke about making America better, making the free enterprise system better, we heard from Congressman WOODALL about being in 24th place, which is what America is, 24th in the world in doing business in a friendly environment.

We cannot survive in 24th place—24th place—by keeping the current Tax Code we have, where over and over and over we see not only companies moving to other locations within the United States of America, but moving offshore, stranding dollars, and jobs going with that.

What we are attempting to do in this bill is to make America number one, make America and the American worker number one again. We are going to make the big deal the big deal for people wherever you live in the United States. We are going to offer an opportunity for you to not only be taxed less, but that business that is in your city, your State that proudly they represent their hometown, they will have the opportunity to now be competitive.

Forget this, ''Oh, Republicans want to move jobs offshore.'' That is what we are sick and tired of hearing. We are sick and tired of hearing that jobs and investments go overseas.

They are coming back to America because this places America, instead of being the bottom wrung in terms of taxes, as the highest in the world. We are going to go to where we are the most competitive, where the American worker will stand a chance to stamp ''Made in America'' on those items that they want, made from my hometown, the pride of authorship of the middle class of this country, pride of authorship of knowing not just is my country going to get better, but my community and I will be better.

It is about financial responsibility, but it is also about the integrity of the free enterprise system. The free enterprise system is the greatest economic system in the history of the world. It will continue to produce great and better things for so many people.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Party tried to kill the free enterprise system when they came after the free enterprise system. We knew it and we saw it, and the world saw it, too. 1.2 percent GDP growth as opposed to, now, with a new viewpoint about making America great, we have not only doubled GDP, but we have added, net, 1 million jobs. If the summer had not produced the storms it had, no telling what our job growth would be.

This is what lies ahead, and this is what this Republican bill does. For that reason, I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying bill on this conference report.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Budget Committee, I rise in strong and unyielding opposition to the rule and the Conference Report to H.R. 1, the so-called ''Tax Cut and Jobs Act,'' which more accurately should be called the ''Republican Tax Scam Act.''

There are four reasons why I oppose this cruel and immoral $1.7 trillion tax giveaway to wealthy corporations:

1. The GOP tax scam raises taxes on tens of millions of middle class households and distributes the largest tax cuts to those in the top 1 percent causing $1.7 trillion to be added to the debt;

2. It eliminates or reduces tax benefits that directly benefit the middle class at every stage of life;

3. It results in 13 million fewer Americans with health insurance coverage; and

4. And it adds over $2 trillion dollars to deficit spending, which triggers statutory PAYGO's automatic spending cuts to mandatory programs such as Medicare, which along would see a $25 billion cut.

Instead of doing tax reform the Republicans have found new ways for the wealthy who use tax accountants and lawyers to further game the tax payer system by adding new loop holes that are only for the corporations and the wealthy.

Corporations receive a 14 percentage point reduction in their statutory tax rate, from 35 percent to 21 percent, the largest one-time rate reduction in U.S. history.

Republicans designed this tax scam to benefit the wealthiest in our country and now they are working as hard as possible to make sure Americans are too busy looking the other way to notice.

I have to tell them that it is too late, the American public sees what you are doing and they are not going to have any of it.

The Republican Tax Scam doubles the dollar amount at which the estate tax, currently affecting only the wealthiest 2 in 100 families.

It lifts the level at which the alternative minimum tax (AMT) would kick in, while dropping the top tax rate from the current 39.6 percent to 37 percent.

Mr. Speaker, where are the promises made to working Americans to give them a break.

Americans are not fooled; they know trickle-down economics has never worked, and they see right through this phony tax plan and recognize it for the scam that it is.

What people may not understand is they will not have to wait until 2027 to see the pain and misery that this tax cut will cause.

Congress has established mechanisms in rules that require pay-fors when budget deficit spending reaching astronomical levels, like what we have in this bill's wholesale giveaway of taxpayer money to Corporations and the wealth—it is called PAYGO.

The PAYGO compels new spending or tax changes not to add to the federal debt.

PAYGO requires that new spending must either be ''budget neutral'' or offset with cuts to existing programs.

So the Tax cut that corporations will be getting today, will cost the American workers dearly in next year when the Budget Committee must draft a budget that will have to slash domestic programs to pay for these cuts.

Mr. Speaker, as you may know, my constituents and others in Texas are still struggling to recover from the devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey, the worst storm ever to make landfall in the continental United States.

Two weeks ago, nearly 8,000 of them took time out of their busy schedules to join me in a tele-town hall to discuss the tax scheme that has been rushed to the floor for a vote by the Republican leadership in the hope of passing it before the American people learn its insidious details.

My constituents understand and let me know that they believe it is important that the United States has a tax system that is fair, balanced, smart, and provides the resources and opportunities to allow all Americans to reach their potential.

And by margins exceeding 90 percent, they reject:

1. Any cuts to Medicare or Medicaid to finance tax cuts for wealthy corporations and the top 1 percent;

2. Eliminating the mortgage interest deduction;

3. Eliminating the deductibility of state and local taxes;

4. Eliminating existing deductions for student loan interest or making taxable college endowment funds or college fellowships expenses.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents, and Americans across the country, oppose this unfair Republican tax giveaway because nearly half of the $1.7 trillion tax cut goes to just the top one percent.

In fact, the average annual tax cut for the top one-tenth of one percent is $320,000; for the top one percent it is $62,000, and for those earning $1 million a year it is $68,000.

Nearly 25 percent of the tax cut goes to households in just the top one-tenth of one percent, who make at least $5 million a year (2027).

While super-wealthy corporations and individuals are reaping windfalls, millions of middle-class and working families will see their taxes go up:

1. 13 million households face a tax increase next year.

2. 45 million households face a tax increase in 2027.

3. 29 million households (21 percent) earning less than $l00,000 a year see a tax increase.

On average, families earning up to $86,000 annually would see a $794 increase in their tax liability, a significant burden on families struggling to afford child care and balance their checkbook.

It is shocking, but not surprising, that under this Republican tax scam, the total value of tax cuts for just the top one percent is more than the entire tax cut for the lower 95 percent of earners.

Put another way, those earning more than $912,000 a year will get more in tax cuts than 180 million households combined.

The core of this Republican tax scheme is a massive tax cut from 35 percent 20 percent corporations, but that is not the only way that the wealthy are rewarded.

The massive tax cuts for corporations are permanent but temporary for working and middle-class families.

Another immoral aspect of this terrible tax scam is that it abandons families that face natural disasters or high medical costs by repealing deductions for casualty losses and medical expenses.

Mr. Speaker, in what universe does it make any sense to eliminate, as this bill would, a deduction for:

1. teachers who purchase supplies for their classroom;

2. moving expenses to take a new job and taxes employer-provided moving expenses; or

3. Dependent care assistance, making it harder for families to afford day care, nursery school, or care for aging parents?

This Republican tax scam jeopardizes American innovation and competitiveness by eliminating the deduction for student loan interest, which affects 12 million borrowers, and cuts total education assistance by more than $64 billion.

Under the extraordinary leadership of President Obama and the determined efforts of ordinary Americans, we pulled our way out from under the worst of the foreclosure crisis when the housing bubble burst in 2007.

Inexplicably, Republicans are now championing a tax scheme that will make the homes of average Americans less valuable because deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes are much less valuable than under current law.

A tax plan that reduces home values, as this one does, puts pressure on states and towns to collect revenues they depend on to fund schools, roads, and vital public resources.

Mr. Speaker, an estimated 2.8 million Texas households deduct state and local taxes with an average deduction of $7,823 in 2015.

But this is not the end of the bad news that will be delivered were this tax scam to become law, not by a long shot.

The proposed elimination of the personal exemption will harm millions of Texans by taking away the $4,050 deduction for each taxpayer and claimed dependent; in 2015, roughly 9.3 million dependent exemptions were claimed in the Lone Star State.

Equally terrible is that this Republican tax scam drastically reduces the Earned Income Tax Credit, which encourages work for 2.7 million low-income individuals in Texas, helping them make ends meet with an average credit of $2,689.

The EITC and the Child Tax Credit lift about 1.2 million Texans, including 663,000 children, out of poverty each year.

So to achieve their goal of giving more and more to the haves and the ''have mores,'' our Republican friends are willing to betray seniors, children, the most vulnerable and needy, and working and middle-class families.

The $5.4 trillion cuts in program investments that will be required to pay for this tax giveaway to wealthy corporations and individuals will fall most heavily on low-income families, students struggling to afford college, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

America will not be made great by financing a $1.7 trillion tax cut for the rich by stealing $1.8 trillion from Medicare and Medicaid, abandoning seniors and families in need, depriving students of realizing a dream to attend college without drowning in debt, or disinvesting in the working families.

America will not be positioned to compete and win in the global, interconnected, and digital economy by slashing funding for scientific research, the arts and humanities, job retraining, and clean energy just to pay for a tax cut to corporations and individuals who do not even need it.

Mr. Speaker, the tax scheme presented here by Republicans is not a plan but a scam that represents a betrayal of our values as a nation.

This tax scam is not a revenue policy adapted for the real world that real Americans live in but a fantasy resting on the monstrous belief that the wealthy have too little money and that poor, working, and middle-class families have too much.

Our Republican friends continue to cling to the fantasy belief that their tax cuts for the rich will pay for themselves despite all precedent to the contrary and evidence that their tax scheme is projected by experts to lose between $3 trillion and $7 trillion.

Mr. Speaker, in evaluating the merits of a taxing system, it is not enough to subject it only to the test of fiscal responsibility.

To keep faith with the nation's past, to be fair to the nation's present, and to safeguard the nation's future, the plan must also pass a ''moral test.''

The Republican tax bill fails both of these standards.

I strongly oppose the Conference Report to H.R. 1, the ''Republican Tax Scam Act,'' and urge all Members to join me in voting against this reckless, cruel, and heartless proposal that will do nothing to improve the lives or well-being of middle and working class families, and the poor and vulnerable 'caught in the tentacles of circumstance.'

The material previously referred to by Ms. SLAUGHTER is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 667 OFFERED BY MS. SLAUGHTER

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

''SEC. 5. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST ANY TAX BILL THAT RAISES TAXES ON MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES BY ELIMINATING OR LIMITING THE STATE AND LOCAL TAX DEDUCTION.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that repeals or limits the State and Local Tax Deduction (26 U.S.C. §164).

(b) WAIVER IN THE HOUSE.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives to consider a rule or order that waives the application of subsection (a). As disposition of a point of order under this subsection, the Chair shall put the question of consideration with respect to the rule or order, as applicable. The question of consideration shall be debatable for 10 minutes by the Member initiating the point of order and for 10 minutes by an opponent, but shall otherwise be decided without intervening motion except one that the House adjourn.''

''SEC. 6. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST ANY TAX BILL THAT REPEALS THE INDIVIDUAL MANDATE UNDER THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that repeals or limits the individual mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (26 U.S.C. §500A). (b) WAIVER IN THE HOUSE.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives to consider a rule or order that waives the application of subsection (a). As disposition of a point of order under this subsection, the Chair shall put the question of consideration with respect to the rule or order, as applicable. The question of consideration shall be debatable for 10 minutes by the Member initiating the point of order and for 10 minutes by an opponent, but shall otherwise be decided without intervening motion except one that the House adjourn.''

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on ordering the previous question will be followed by 5-minute votes on:

Adopting the resolution, if ordered, and

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 4254.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 233, nays 187, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 688]

YEAS—233

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—187

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—11

Bridenstine
Buchanan
Clarke (NY)
Davidson
Davis, Danny
Hudson
Kennedy
Pocan
Richmond
Scott (VA)
Smith (TX)

□ 1156

Mr. GOTTHEIMER and Ms. MCCOLLUM changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. SHUSTER changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 233, noes 193, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 689]

AYES—233

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—193

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—5

Bridenstine
Clarke (NY)
Hudson
Kennedy
Pocan

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1205

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts changed her vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WOMEN IN AEROSPACE EDUCATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4254) to amend the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 to strengthen the aerospace workforce pipeline by the promotion of Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program and National Aeronautics and Space Administration internship and fellowship opportunities to women, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 409, nays 17, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 690]

YEAS—409

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gomez
Goodlatte
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)

Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—17

Amash
Buck
Davidson
Duncan (TN)
Gaetz
Garrett
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Gosar
Grothman
Harris
King (IA)
Labrador
Massie
Perry
Sanford
Yoho

NOT VOTING—5

Bridenstine
Clarke (NY)
Hudson
Kennedy
Pocan

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1213

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 4375, STEM RESEARCH AND EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be directed to make the change in the engrossment of H.R. 4375 that I have placed at the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the modification.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: ''A bill to provide for a report on broadening participation in certain National Science Foundation research and education programs, to collect data on Federal research grants to science agencies, and for other purposes.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1, TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 667, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 1) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 667, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of December 15, 2017, at page H9943.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, we are delivering on our tax reform promise to the American people. For the first time in over three decades, we are delivering a new Tax Code that provides more jobs, fairer taxes, and bigger paychecks to Americans across the country.

With this bill, a middle-income family of four earning $73,000 a year will see a tax cut of over $2,000. Our local job creators will see the lowest tax rates in modern history so they can invest more in their workers and in their futures. And our businesses will finally have a Tax Code that helps them compete and win anywhere in the world, especially here at home.

This is our moment to make history, to make good on our promise, and to make tax reform a reality for the first time in 31 years.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, what you are about to hear from our Republican friends for the next 30 minutes is the following: a mixture of theology and science fiction. And then they are going to take you to revisionist history.

This is the most regressive piece of tax legislation that has come from the Ways and Means Committee in the 25 years that I have been a member.

This is not about simplification. When you have a chance to look at the phase-ins and the phaseouts, you will be passed out by the time they get to the expiration dates.

They say it is about simplicity; it was going to be on a postcard. You are going to need to carry a billboard around with you to understand what is in this actual bill.

And here is the best part: when Secretary Mnuchin said, Mr. Speaker, that under no circumstances would people at the top get tax relief. Well, I guess if you are formerly in the 39.6 percent tax bracket, which is summarily lowered to 37 percent, that that is dressed up as no tax relief for people at the very top. But then again, to help out with their argument, then they double the exemption on the estate tax, which will go from $11 million to $22 million.

The people at the bottom in this, they are going to argue: Everybody gets a tax cut. Well, here is where we go to revised history.

In 2001, President Bush said everybody gets a tax cut. The Federal budget of $1.3 trillion included a tax cut for everybody. The people at the bottom got a hundred bucks, and the people at the top got hundreds of thousands of dollars. This is a creative replay of exactly what happened.

And then in 2003, they came back and cut taxes again for people at the very top and blew a huge hole in the Federal deficit, which had been estimated at the time, after Clinton left on January 19, 2001, to project surpluses of $5.6 trillion over the next 10 years. Instead, the Federal deficit mounted to $6.1 trillion.

So here is the simplicity of their proposal today. They are borrowing $2.3 trillion to give a tax cut to people at the very top of American society. That is not in dispute.

In addition to borrowing the money, recall that the Federal Reserve Board said they are projecting, already, three increases next year in interest rates. We don't know what this is going to look like by the time they get done, but this, today, is more about ideology than it is about public policy.

Think of it this way as well: This was done in 1 month. In 1 single month, the entire revenue system of the United States is being transformed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. NEAL. I yield myself an additional 1 minute, Mr. Speaker.

Not one public hearing was held on this bill. And when they say today, ''Oh, we had 5 years of public hearings,'' we did not have one hearing on this bill—not one. No witness testimony was sought. No committee was convened for the purpose of a hearing. And then when we went to conference, we were all granted an opening statement, and we got to question the nonpartisan Director of the Joint Committee on Taxation.

Mr. Speaker, more than anything else today, this is a missed opportunity where both sides could have accomplished something great for the American people.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. NUNES).

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I stood here several weeks ago to speak in support of the original House-passed tax reform bill. Since then, as a member of the conference committee, I have participated in the process of strengthening this bill and making it even more transformative. That is why I continue to stand in strong support of the bill and conference report we will be voting on today.

Washington's special interests have distorted business decisions for too long, and we cannot afford to wait any longer to reform our broken Tax Code.

Should we fail to act now, businesses will continue to leave the United States for tax purposes, taking thousands of good-paying jobs—American jobs—with them. Our small businesses will continue to suffer the damaging effects of a bewildering and punitive Tax Code that gives unfair advantages to their larger, well-connected competitors.

But all this will change if we pass this bill.

For years, I have advocated for full and immediate expensing, which will allow businesses of all sizes to write off costs immediately. This bill will provide full expensing, which is one of the many progrowth pieces to this legislation. I am confident my colleagues will soon see the tremendous effect of full expensing and make the important decision to extend it before it expires.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here with my colleagues on an historic day in support of one of the most dramatic reform bills to come before this body since I came to Congress. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act simplifies the Code, grows the economy, and allows for strong business investment.

I have said before that I will not accept the status quo of our broken Tax Code or a minimal reform that merely adjusts rates. Instead, we must transform the Code into a system that is simpler and fairer and that encourages economic growth instead of suppressing it. That is what this bill does, and that is why I strongly support its passage.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the longest serving member of the Ways and Means Committee, and a well-deserved 1 minute, I might add.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, in all of my 35 years in Congress, this is one of the most deceitful bills I have ever seen.

It is deceitful when Republicans say the bill is focused on the middle class while it is really aimed at making the very wealthy even wealthier and forcing millions of middle class families to pay higher taxes.

It is deceitful when they say it makes the Tax Code simpler, even as the legislation creates complicated new loopholes while allowing existing ones, such as carried interest, to continue.

It is deceitful when the bill will increase the outsourcing of American jobs by providing a lower tax rate on foreign investment compared to investing here.

It is deceitful about the debt. Republicans say don't worry about the expiring tax provisions, but extending them would raise the bill's already devastating effect on the deficit to $2.3 trillion.

Republicans are rushing this bill, but, even in their haste, they are already too late. The majority of the American people already say this bill is a deceitful sham.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM), chairman of the Tax Policy Subcommittee.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time.

We have heard some strong language for the past couple of minutes. This has been described as theology, science fiction, ideology, and now deceit.

Well, where is the deceit?

The deceit is in the assumption that we can live with the status quo, Mr. Speaker.

The deceit is a blindness to the recognition that we have a Tax Code that is literally dissolving underneath us. It is dissolving underneath us.

And this Congress has an opportunity to do something transformational, and I propose, along with my colleagues, to be transformational and opportunistic.

There is a lot of discussion in the subtext of this about class envy and opportunity and so forth. Here is what I know: It is the status quo that is serving the few. It is the status quo that is so off-putting and unsettling and keeps people at arm's length.

What we are proposing is something very different. Mr. Speaker, we are proposing the economics of opportunity, not the economics of envy; the economics of buoyancy and the economics of participation.

Therein lies the foundation of this bill. It offers tax relief that my constituents are longing for, and it offers a business environment in a milieu that makes things happen, and happen for the good.

So I am pleased, I am honored to be a part of this. I urge my colleagues to vote ''aye,'' and let us celebrate a job well done.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, one of the great men of our times.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend and ranking member, Mr. NEAL, for yielding me time.

I rise to oppose this conference report with every bone in my body.

This bill is a $2.3 trillion cowardly gift to Wall Street, the rich, and the wealthy. This bill was conceived in the darkness of the night and birthed with the help of their donors and funders.

This bill is not for the people; it is not of the people; and, Mr. Speaker, it is not tax reform. They reward their donors so that our children and grandchildren will suffer. This is not fair, it is not just, and it is below the dignity and the worth of this body.

Mr. Speaker, I have said on many occasions that you cannot get blood from a turnip; you cannot justify robbing poor Peter to pay billionaire Paul.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, when the bill comes due, the chickens will come home to roost.

I urge all of my colleagues to be on the right side of history and vote against this act.

I thank my good friend, the ranking member, Mr. NEAL, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose this conference report with every bone in my body.

This bill is a $2.3 trillion holiday gift for Wall Street, the rich, and the wealthy.

This bill was conceived in the darkness and birthed with the help of your donors and funders.

This bill is not for the people. It is not of the people, and, Mr. Speaker, it is not tax reform.

Working and middle class families, the sick, the elderly, and generations yet unborn will bear the burden of this reckless act.

To pay for this so-called tax cut, Republicans will destroy the hopes of those, who dream of affordable, quality health care.

To pay for this tax cut, Social Security, Medicare, and CHIP will be on the chopping block.

To pay for this tax cut, bipartisan repairs of transportation, affordable housing, and student debt will be out of reach.

To pay for this tax cut, every single federal program that matters to the American people will be dealt a crippling blow.

You reward your donors so that our children and grandchildren will suffer.

This is not fair. It is not just, and it is below the dignity and the worth of this body.

Mr. Speaker, I've said on many occasions that you cannot get blood from a turnip, and you cannot justify robbing poor Peter to pay billionaire Paul.

Mr. Speaker, when the bill comes due, the chickens will come home to roost.

I urge all of my colleagues to be on the right side of history and to vote against this bill.

□ 1230

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK), the chairwoman of the Budget Committee and a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, this is truly a monumental day for the American people.

During my 7 years here in the House serving on the Ways and Means Committee, we have studied, considered, and outlined the sorts of reform that could benefit the American people.

As a conferee for H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, I am proud that we kept our promise of providing tax relief for hardworking, middle class families and making the Tax Code simpler and fairer for all.

It has been more than three decades since our Nation's tax system has been modernized, and this is finally the day to change that.

I want to remind my colleagues that the process began long before this year. When passage of the budget provided the key, our ideas for conservative tax reform were finally unlocked and could be pursued for real tax reform.

Without question, this conference report reflects our shared conservative principles. The conference agreement addresses the heavy tax burden weighing down hardworking Americans and holding back job creators. It brings simplicity to the Tax Code. It helps low- and middle-income Americans see more of their hard-earned dollars in their paychecks. It empowers entrepreneurs and small businesses to continue opening, operating, and expanding on Main Street.

With every major legislative effort, there will be critics. But the critics have it wrong. The truth is that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act delivers relief at every income level and protects more hard-earned dollars from taxes. For the average family of four, this legislation means a tax cut next year of more than $2,000.

The point of this exercise is that we are cutting your taxes, plain and simple. I urge my colleagues to stand on the right side of history and support this legislation because the benefits will be felt by all Americans for generations to come.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the very capable legislator and Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I was here in 1981. They said the 1981 bill would pay for itself.

David Stockman, a former colleague from Michigan, was here. He was at OMB. A few years later, he wrote a book and he said: I said it would pay for itself, and I knew that was not true.

The same can be said of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, history will indeed remember this vote. Future generations of Americans will remember who cast their votes to raise taxes on 86 million middle class households and heap another $1.5 trillion in deficits onto our children and our grandchildren.

They will remember who cast their votes for a plan that gives 83 percent of its benefits to 1 percent of the American people.

They will remember that President Trump promised that the middle class would get a tax cut and wealthy individuals like him would not, before turning his back on that promise.

They will remember those who cast their vote to kick 13 million Americans off their health insurance coverage.

They will remember those who acted with the full knowledge that their votes would trigger a $25 billion cut to Medicare. I know you said you are going to waive it, which would simply add $25 billion more to the deficit.

Posterity will also remember those who stood up in the face of this dangerous and partisan bill and said ''no.'' Those of us who vote against it are doing so not because we oppose tax reform. On the contrary. We recognize, as most Americans do, that this bill is not tax reform. It is a tax giveaway to those who don't need our help, paid for by those who need it the most. This is reckless and dangerous deficit spending at its worst.

In 1986, Democrats and Republicans worked together in good faith and over many months in an open, transparent, and regular order process to craft real, bipartisan tax reform that helped the middle class without adding a dime to the deficit. Not a single dime.

This has not been an open process. This has not been bipartisan. This has not been transparent or through regular order.

This raises taxes, as I said, on 86 million Americans, who will pay more taxes 10 years from now than they do today. It gives 83 percent of the tax cuts to the top 1 percent, not the $59,000 family that PAUL RYAN talked about, but to those families making over $900,000 a year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. This bill adds $1.5 trillion to the deficit. This is not tax reform.

So Republicans may pat themselves on the back in the coming days for having finally passed something out of Congress. Unfortunately, it is a bad thing. I urge them to remember that this vote may be the most consequential of their careers, and not positively.

I say to my friends across the aisle: Stand up and say ''no'' with us and commit to start working on a product all Members of the Chamber can be proud of, as was the case in 1986. That is what Ronald Reagan did. In 1986, Reagan did not go down this reckless and irresponsible path.

Stand up for the principles you used to espouse but are now about to abandon. Stand up for fiscal responsibility. Stand up for the middle class. Stand up for what the American people hope we would do. This is not it.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM).

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a farmer, a rancher, a small-business person, but most importantly as a mom. I rise to support the conference report on H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Mr. Speaker, in my home State of South Dakota, the average household income is $54,000 per year. Out of that $54,000, our families pay double the national average in energy costs just because of where they are located. These are hardworking families and they deserve a break. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act gives them that break.

By lowering tax rates, doubling the standard deduction, and doubling the child tax credit, that family in South Dakota making $54,000 can go from an $833 tax liability to a $781 tax refund. That is a $1,600 difference in after-tax income. That is $1,600 that can go back to benefit their families and their communities, rather than into the greedy hands of those in Washington.

On top of that, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is designed to build a healthier economy—an economy in which that family making $54,000 can get a raise, an economy that actually grows jobs.

I am proud to have served on the conference committee that put this report together. I thank Chairman BRADY for his leadership throughout the process. We worked literally hundreds of hours putting this together and getting the child tax credit where it is today.

We had vigorous debates about the benefits to rural America. I am thrilled to be able to go home and tell South Dakota farmers and ranchers they will have new expensing tools, a new small business deduction, and significantly lower individual rates.

While I am disappointed that this bill doesn't completely repeal the death tax, it does provide more relief for producers and small-business owners.

While no plan is perfect in anyone's eyes, this legislation puts more money in the pockets of hardworking taxpayers. The bottom line is this: the American people deserve more control over their paychecks. They worked for

that money, and it is time folks in Washington respect that.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), a valued member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, between tweets, Trump apparently had time to take those calls from his rich friends that kept asking for more. Not even this lapdog Republican Congress initially did enough to satisfy the Trump family and their billionaire buddies.

Instead of adjusting the differences between the House and the Senate, Republican conferees, last week, secretly concocted even more benefits for them. Those real estate moguls, like Trump, who had already been granted preferential tax treatment, can now take advantage of an entirely new loophole that was not in either of the previous bills.

Just in case their endless loopholes left some donor behind, the Republicans have provided a new, across-the-board tax cut for billionaires. It is working families who will pay to put the platinum tinsel on this Christmas tree for the elite.

This is not tax reform. It is a reward for the privileged. It is a Christmas where working people get to keep the gift wrapping, but the wealthy and corporate tax dodgers get the gift.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI).

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, this is a historic day.

I am reminded that 17 years ago, I got elected to Congress, campaigning on tax reform and campaigning on the fact that it is not our money, it is our constituents' money.

Today we are giving the money back to our constituents. To Bob and Betty Buckeye in Ohio, it is more wages in their pockets.

The bill also includes an initiative that I worked on with Mr. KIND that is bipartisan, called the Investing in Opportunity Act, cosponsored by Mr. NEAL. This bill, authored by my friend in the Senate, TIM SCOTT, will help areas that haven't seen economic recovery to allow private investment in poor rural and urban areas. Thanks to Mr. SCOTT, the bill was in the Senate version and in the conference committee.

Mr. NEAL knows that incentives like that, the low-income housing tax credit, the new markets tax credit, and the historic tax credit will help those in communities that have been left behind with more money in working families' pockets.

I urge adoption of the conference report.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON), a distinguished Vietnam veteran and a well-known and valued member of the committee.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, this tax bill is bait and switch.

Republicans said the tax bill would simplify the tax system and help working people, not the rich. Well, that is out the window. With this Republican bill, 86 million middle class households will see their taxes go up.

Remember when the Republicans said we would be filing our taxes on a postcard?

The postcard is now gone. Instead of making our Tax Code simpler, Republicans have made it more complicated. They have even added an additional bracket.

Their claim that this is not a tax bill that favors the rich and the corporations, some of which ship jobs overseas, is malarkey. While there are some tax cuts for the middle class, they are all temporary. But the breaks for corporations are permanent. That is leaving too many people behind.

Let's not forget about the State and local tax provision. Because of the changes the Republicans are making, some home values in some States are projected to drop by 10 percent.

The richest of the rich are getting a break. The top bracket is dropping from 39.6 percent to 37 percent. Those folks are not your working, middle class families. To add insult to injury, it raises our debt by $2.3 trillion.

It is a bad bill. Please vote ''no.''

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS).

Ms. JENKINS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on this very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to be a voice for Kansans who know our status quo Tax Code no longer works for them. They know it doesn't work when it favors special interests over individuals or when it causes Kansas factories to close, sending those jobs to other countries.

I rise today because Kansans know that without rejuvenated and sustained economic growth, we will never find the money to pay down our Nation's debt.

That is why I strongly support H.R. 1, which will close special interest loopholes and lower rates for everyone—not just the rich, not just the poor, but everyone.

Individuals in my district will see immediate tax relief with the doubling of the standard deduction and the child tax credit. We also lessen the financial burden of education by keeping important college tax provisions and expanding access to 529 savings plans.

On average, a family of four in my district will see a tax cut of just over $2,300 because of this bill.

A fairer, simpler Tax Code means every hardworking family will see the tax relief and economic growth this country rightfully deserves.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON), the former president of the State Senate and a well-informed member of the Ways and Means Committee.

□ 1245

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the Congressional Budget Office's accounting of the $25 billion that will be taken out of Medicare.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
U.S. CONGRESS
Washington, DC, November 13, 2017.

Hon. STENY H. HOYER,
Democratic Whip, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN: This letter responds to your request for information about the effects of legislation that would raise deficits by an estimated $1.5 trillion over the 2018–2027 period, specifically with respect to a sequestration—or cancellation of budgetary resources—in accordance with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010(PAYGO; Public Law 111–139).

The PAYGO law requires that new legislation enacted during a term of Congress does not collectively increase estimated deficits. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is required to maintain two so-called PAYGO scorecards to report the cumulative changes generated by new legislation in estimated revenues and outlays over the next five years and ten years. If either scorecard indicates a net increase in the deficit, OMB is required to order a sequestration to eliminate the overage. The authority to determine whether a sequestration is required (and if so, exactly how to make the necessary cuts in budget authority) rests solely with OMB.

CBO has analyzed the implications of enacting a bill that would increase deficits by $1.5 trillion over a 10–year window, without enacting any further legislation to offset that increase. In accordance with the PAYGO law, OMB would record the average annual deficit on its PAYGO scorecard, showing deficit increases of, in the example provided, $150 billion per year. If the bill were enacted before the end of the calendar year, that amount would be added to the current balances on the PAYGO scorecard, which for 2018, show a positive balance of $14 billion. (For years after 2018, the balances range from a $14 billion credit to a $1 billion debit.)

Without enacting subsequent legislation to either offset that deficit increase, waive the recordation of the bill's impact on the scorecard, or otherwise mitigate or eliminate the requirements of the PAYGO law, OMB would be required to issue a sequestration order within 15 days of the end of the session of Congress to reduce spending in fiscal year 2018 by the resultant total of $136 billion. However, the PAYGO law limits reductions to Medicare to four percentage points (or roughly $25 billion for that year), leaving about $111 billion to be sequestered from the remaining mandatory accounts. Because the law entirely exempts many large accounts including low-income programs and social security, the annual resources available from which OMB must draw is, in CBO's estimation, only between $85 billion to $90 billion, significantly less than the amount that would be required to be sequestered. (For a full list of accounts subject to automatic reductions, see OMB Report to the Congress on the Joint Committee Reductions for Fiscal Year 2018, https://go.usa.gov/xnZ3U.)

Given that the required reduction in spending exceeds the estimated amount of available resources in each year over the next 10 years, in the absence of further legislation, OMB would be unable to implement the full extent of outlay reductions required by the PAYGO law.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them.

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL,
Director.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to be here today, as we approach Christmas, and not look at this bill, knowing that we have honorable Members on the other side, who, this Christmas, will be sitting with their relatives, their family members, their mothers and fathers, their brothers and sisters, and knowing that this creates not just a $2 trillion debt, but the pay-for—the pay-for—out of the Medicare program: an automatic cut of $25 billion in a plan that was never debated. It fulfills a grand vision of Grover Norquist and the ideology that you took a pledge to. But what about the oath of office, and a pledge to the Constitution, and standing up for the people of this Nation, and the very elderly at this Christmas, and throughout the year, who will need our help?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN).

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

One of my predecessors—a good friend and mentor—was Bill Frenzel. He was the last Minnesotan to serve on the Ways and Means Committee when tax reform was passed. It was 1986.

In the 31 years since then, our Tax Code has been one of the most complicated, unfair, and most uncompetitive in the world. It has led to a stagnant economy with sluggish growth, with America losing our manufacturing, our jobs, our innovation, and our headquarters overseas.

But today, that all changes. Today, we will pass and give Minnesota employers the confidence and the capital that they need to grow their businesses, to hire more workers, and to give their employees a raise.

This provides middle-income families with tax cuts they need to save for their future and improve their standard of living. This helps real people with real needs.

Mr. Speaker, tax reform for me is about one thing and one thing only: it is about restoring the hope for a prosperous future for ourselves, our parents, and, most importantly, our children.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the report.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), a very capable member of the committee, and a champion of renewable energy.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this bill will be the largest transfer of wealth in our Nation's history, financed by mortgaging our children's future with a mountain of increased debt. It is not really even a policy. It is, rather, a collection of special interest provisions being sold on a false set of promises.

It is not middle class tax relief. It is, instead, permanent and massive tax reduction for the largest corporations and wealthy individuals like Donald Trump. Eighty-three percent will flow to the top 1 percent.

Everybody else will receive only a small, and temporary, tax reduction. Ultimately, 86 million Americans, middle class Americans, will have their taxes increased.

This legislation fails utterly to invest in the American people for this $2.3 trillion. But it is a bonanza for the attorneys, the accountants, and the lobbyists finding ways to further enrich the most privileged in America.

And, for weeks to come, we are going to learn more about the special gifts hidden within this bill to nail down the last few votes.

No wonder the American public is opposed. They are right, and the Republicans are wrong.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the tax reform conference report.

This is our great opportunity to reduce the tax burden on Americans across the economic spectrum, while modernizing our Tax Code for the 21st century.

I would like to take a few moments to discuss what this bill does for American agriculture.

First and foremost, this bill cuts taxes for most Americans, while simplifying compliance and transitioning us to a more competitive tax system internationally.

In addition to retaining the deduction for State and local taxes for individuals and families up to $10,000, this bill leaves intact the full deduction for property taxes on ag land and property.

In addition, I am grateful this conference report includes a solution to concerns raised by agriculture co-ops and their members about the repeal of section 199.

With commodity prices low, it is important we ensure the Tax Code continues to work as intended, with co-ops passing along their profits to their producer owners.

Finally, while I would have preferred we repeal the death tax in full, doubling the exemption and keeping a stepped up basis will help provide certainty for more farmers, ranchers, and small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the conferees for their work on this strong product. I am anxious to pass this bill and get it to the President for his signature.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND), a very capable member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, if we are going to borrow $2 trillion from China over the next 10 years, it better be for a very good reason. And lavishing huge tax breaks to multinational corporations and to the most wealthy amongst us is not a good reason.

I am very concerned about many of my fiscally conservative friends across the aisle. So I offered an amendment that would have expanded the endangered species list to include fiscally conservative Republicans because they are about to go extinct under this bill.

And under this bill, they are creating a mess that is going to take years to clean up because of the potential for fraud and abuse.

Consider this: They are pitting a hastily written bill, drafted without one hearing, considered without feedback from people back home, without proper vetting, all over the course of a few short weeks against some of the smartest accountants and tax attorneys that money can buy.

Who do you think is going to win that battle?

This is a bill that was drafted of, for, and by the powerful special interests in Washington, and it should be rejected.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Once again, the Chair reminds Members to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE), the majority whip of the Republican Conference.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BRADY for yielding time and for his leadership in the entire group of conferees on bringing this tax cuts and jobs bill to the floor.

I thank President Trump for working with us every step of the way to bring us to a historic moment where we are actually going to provide tax relief to hardworking families.

There are those on the other side who would say: Keep all the money in Washington, stunt economic growth, continue to let America be noncompetitive where we see jobs go overseas over and over again—large companies, thousands of jobs at a time moving to foreign countries—because we have the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is time for that to end, and we do end that in this bill. We finally make our country competitive again so we can bring those jobs back.

Why deny opportunity for so many people who want a chance at the American Dream?

In our bill, Mr. Speaker, we cut every single tax rate and make it lower. That is more money in the pockets of hardworking families. On average, families are going to see over $2,000 more back in their paychecks every year. That is real money, when you look at, right now, the average savings for families is $400 in their checking account. This is real money to help people have better opportunities to go put more money in their kids' college tuition accounts.

When you look at what this means, it is not only good for economic growth, creating jobs, and rebuilding our middle class, but it is historic in the simplification where over 90 percent of

American families will actually be able to do their taxes on a postcard. Just think of how simplified that makes the Code.

The last time this was done was in 1986. And when Ronald Reagan was signing that bill, he talked about how hard it was and how many times people said it couldn't happen. In fact, Ronald Reagan read a quote from a headline, and he said: ''The impossible became the inevitable.''

Today, Mr. Speaker, we make that impossible the inevitable again and restore that hope and opportunity for so many families who just want a chance at the American Dream. We give them that.

Let's pass the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act today. Get it on President Trump's desk so we can finally see this economy going again. What a great Christmas present this is going to be to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everybody to vote ''yes.''

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), the very quotable Congressman.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, all on a postcard, simple as that. I say it is a postage stamp mentality. Many of them need counseling in economics. If they want to keep it simple, let's keep it simple. Very simple.

How about that couple that wants to send their kids to college and put a second mortgage on their house. You can't do that anymore. You cannot do that. That is not a middle class legislation. That is the stick it to the middle class.

Mr. Speaker, this is serious business. I will tell you what is simple. If you are born in a family with an estate worth more than $11 million, this Republican Congress is coming to your aid with a $3 million average windfall.

And if this Congress actually still practiced oversight, we would know from his tax returns that Donald Trump and his family will see cuts worth millions of dollars per family.

This is not good policy, Mr. Speaker—not at all—and it is dangerous.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MARCHANT).

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, today, we are keeping our promise to the American people and sending comprehensive tax reform to the President's desk for the first time in 31 years.

Lowering the tax rates for middle-income families and providing a tax cut for every income level in 2018 is a very historic Christmas present delivered to my constituents in north Texas.

This year, our country has—after many long years of low growth—begun to experience the level of growth and economy that it needs. This tax cut bill will assure Americans years of sustained high growth and new jobs.

Mr. Speaker, job creators and investors know that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will create lasting economic growth and a booming economy for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill and deliver tax relief to the American people.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), the chairman of the Democratic Caucus, a good friend, and a former member of the committee.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, the Republican bill is unaffordable, with a $2.3 trillion price tag.

It is inequitable, costing working families more, while cutting taxes by $200,000 for the top 0.1 percent.

It is a scam, and the American people know it.

Is this bill about helping people who are living paycheck to paycheck?

Hell no.

Is this bill going to bring back jobs and lift up the middle class?

Hell no.

Is this bill going to make life better for cops, firefighters, nurses, truck drivers, students, veterans, teachers, and shift workers?

Hell no.

Do you know who this bill is going to help?

Corporate special interests, the wealthiest Americans, and, yes, the Trump family.

My colleagues, if it looks like a scam, quacks like a scam, it is a scam.

Can you vote for this bill with a clear conscience?

Hell no, you can't.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are advised to observe proper decorum in debate.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED).

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding to me.

And to the colleague from New York, to all of the people you referenced in the middle class, I say: Hell yes, they are going to be helped by this bill.

And do you know what it is going to do? It is going to let them keep the money in their pocket that they earned, the $1,600, for the average resident in my district.

And what it is also going to do, Mr. Speaker, is it is going to create jobs.

And what does a job do for a person?

I will tell you what it does. It not only puts money in their pockets, Mr. Speaker, but we are going to have a new wave of optimism. We are going to have a new wave of opportunity, where people will be able to go to work, soil their hands, and earn their livelihood, which gives them dignity, which gives them pride, and gives them honor.

This is a new day in America. And with tax reform and tax cuts coming, I say to all of my colleagues: Join us to stand for those hardworking Americans, give them their money, and allow us to give hope and opportunity to all of them going forward.

□ 1300

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS), a very knowledgeable Member from the city of Chicago and champion of all things Chicago.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, any way you cut it, with this bill, the rich will get richer, the poor will get poorer, and middle class families will get shafted. Thirteen million Americans will lose their health coverage, and people with preexisting conditions can forget it.

Then the writers of this bill will be coming after entitlement programs, after Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, SSI. We are down to the wire, and no matter what is said, this bill raises the debt, raises taxes on middle-income families, and provides wealthy individuals and corporations with big tax cuts they don't need.

It is a sad day for my district; it is a sad day for the State of Illinois; it is a sad day for the United States of America; and I will vote ''no.''

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING).

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be here today to support this much-needed overhaul of our broken Tax Code. The status quo we have seen over the past decade is unacceptable, and this bill will finally provide much-needed relief to working families and put our economy back on the path to stable and sustained growth.

This bill restores the global competitiveness of American businesses by lowering the corporate rate and moving toward a territorial system. Further, H.R. 1 provides our small businesses the lowest tax rate in a generation, ensuring that these job creators are able to reinvest more of their hard-earned money in our future.

Instead of handing over more of their money to the government, small businesses can hire that extra employee, open that second location, or buy that new piece of machinery or lab equipment that they need to take them to the next level by putting in place a Tax Code that encourages growth and rewards investment. It is projected there will be over 10,000 new full-time jobs created in my State of North Carolina.

I am proud to support this transformational bill that will bolster growth and investment here at home, leveling the playing field for U.S. businesses.

Further, I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to ensure that Americans across the globe have a similar level playing field through a system of residence-based taxation.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS), a capable member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, the rich and wealthy corporate winners of this Republican tax scam love company, and they just got the company of 14 United States Senators who will personally benefit from a new 20 percent deduction for wealthy

real estate investors with no employees to pass that benefit on to.

One Senator who voted against the bill, before he announced he was voting for it, stands to gain $7 million annually and personally. The Senator said he was unaware of the provision and that he did not read the bill.

Mr. Speaker, the conference committee, the reconciliation process, was to narrow the differences between these two bad bills, not add new provisions that benefit rich Senators. This bad bill just took a dramatic and potentially illegal turn that should be fully investigated before a vote is taken today.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the majority leader of the House.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to thank the gentleman.

Today, we will take a vote that every Member on this floor will remember. The country will remember. Then next year, when people check their checks and realize they have more money, they are going to remember who voted for status quo and who voted to make America's comeback.

I want to thank the chairman, KEVIN BRADY, for that work.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a month ago, when the House passed an earlier version of this bill, I said that, for all the jobless, for everyone who hasn't gotten a raise in years, for the parents, for the small-business owners, and for anyone who ever dreamed of being that entrepreneur and a small-business owner, we heard you. This bill is the start of their comeback, and when they win, well, that is the start of America's comeback.

Our country has faced some tough times. I don't have to tell you about that. And for too long, year after year, more and more Americans gave up hope. They were out of work. Or maybe they had a job, but they could not see past the next month or even the next week. They watched factories and businesses close up shop and move out, even moving out of the country.

Nobody wants to see their communities hollow out. Nobody wants to feel like they live in a nation in decline. That is not who Americans are. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, we are not a country that gives up on hope. This legislation and the Republican Party's entire economic plan, they are giving people hope.

You can see it in the stock market. For every American who vests their retirement in a 401(k), 84 times it has set a new record since last year's election alone.

You can see it in companies like Broadcom. You know, Broadcom was a company created in America, but they are not domiciled here today. They moved to Singapore simply over our Tax Code.

So for those who want the status quo and want to keep Broadcom in another country, go ahead and vote ''no.'' For those who believe in the hope of this country, even greater, looking at this bill, Broadcom said they are coming back to America.

Mr. Speaker, you know what that means? $20 billion in revenue in just a year. That means $3 billion every year invested in R&D; $6 billion every year invested in manufacturing. Those are jobs we all dream about, and the action of this bill is making it happen.

You can see it in the faces of families who learn that next year thousands of dollars that they earn won't go straight to Washington; it will actually stay right at home. And this is all in an environment of disinformation and fear-mongering. I mean, I have seen what has been said, and, to me, it is absurd.

Mr. Speaker, Leader PELOSI said that this bill was, and I quote, ''Armageddon'' and ''the end of the world.'' Now, Mr. Speaker, I listened a great deal to what my counterpart on the other side, the minority leader, has said, and I have read when The Washington Post analyzed what she had said.

Now, when you say something that could be a little off and don't have all the information, they have this rating for you. She has had a rating on this. She did not get one Pinocchio. She did not even get two. She didn't even get the extreme of three. She got the most Pinocchios you can say when it is totally false, four, for her conversation about this bill.

Mr. Speaker, in such times when the other side will say anything to win their political game, I recommend that folks actually look at the bill: doubling the standard deduction; lowering rates; simplifying the Code so you don't spend weeks, you spend minutes; doubling the child tax credit; ending the individual mandate; lowering taxes on small businesses to the lowest it has been in 40 years; creating incentives for business to invest and hire. That is not a recipe for Armageddon. That is hope for a nation to come back.

The American people see through all this rhetoric, and they are going to feel it next year when they check their paychecks and they see they keep more money because of the vote today. They are going to feel it next year and the years after and when they get that raise they have been waiting for. They are going to feel it more and more as companies announce coming back home. They are bringing jobs right back to the USA. They are going to feel it when we start looking to the future not with fear, but with hope.

I won't accept the status quo. But there will be some in this body who will vote for the status quo. I won't accept failure.

Now, I do not believe anybody in this body was elected to preside over America's decline. I recently was overseas, and I was sitting at a dinner table with some elected leaders from other countries, some Americans who were working in other countries, and I asked them: What is the impression of what is happening in America today? I thought the reports I would get would be a little different.

Do you know what they said to me? They said: America is back. You are now tackling big items again. Not only are you going to lead your own country, but you will help, again, lead the world. They were fearful of the competition of rising America one more time.

So don't vote for the status quo. Vote for a tax cut. Vote for reform. Don't vote because some leader whipped you and intimidated you. Vote for your constituents. Vote for your country, and vote to raise the paychecks of America.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, the stock market has been going up since March of 2009, and we have had 88 straight months of economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL).

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority is ramming this tax bill through, calling it a Christmas gift to the American people. I have never seen such intellectual dishonesty in my life. It is more like the Grinch who stole Christmas.

In poll after poll and through elections in New Jersey, Virginia, and my home State of Alabama, the American people continue to send a message that they do not want this tax bill to move forward. But here we are watching the fiscal hawks of the Republican Party blow through every red light on the way off the cliff, adding $1.5 trillion to the deficit.

What is the rush, I ask you. Last week, the American people in my home State of Alabama spoke up and spoke out. We deserve to have our duly elected Senator to vote on this bill.

What is the rush? Not one hearing, not one expert testifying, and no regular order. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, what is the rush?

I believe the rush is because they know this is not tax reform. It is a tax sham. The American people deserve better. My constituents from Alabama deserve better. We should vote ''no'' on this tax bill.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH), the secretary of the Republican Conference.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the folks of southeast Missouri. The district that I represent, the average median income is right at $40,000. It is one of the lowest average median incomes in the country.

I have asked my folks back home, just last week, if they support this tax bill, and, in fact, 67 percent say they support the Trump tax bill. Mr. Speaker, $40,000 back home is a salary. It is not a Christmas bonus that people get in New York City or California. $40,000 is their salary.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you some facts: Mr. Speaker, the first $24,000

that people earn in southeast Missouri will be at a zero percent tax rate. A family of four that makes $55,000 will pay zero in income tax.

When you look at a median average income in southeast Missouri being $40,000, we are winners. What you are hearing on the other side is complete, false, and absolute lies.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this body to support the conference committee.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DELBENE), who is very successful.

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, in this tax bill, Republicans have gifted the wealthiest corporations and individuals with massive new tax cuts and loopholes to take advantage of. But when I go home to my district, there isn't a mother working two jobs to put food on the table or a farmer struggling through a bad year or a senior trying to pay for a prescription who has ever told me that tax reform means corporate cuts on the backs of them and their families.

□ 1315

They know Republicans always promise that the benefits will trickle down to working people, but they never do and they never will. What is worse, Republicans have made it clear that cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are next.

This bill takes care of corporate special interests, the wealthy, and the well connected, while putting middle class Americans' finances and healthcare on the chopping block.

We need tax reform that helps middle class families. This bill does the exact opposite. I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI).

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support today of H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

If you believe the rhetoric you hear, you may think this bill means the world is ending. I guarantee you, it is not.

The truth is this tax cut bill means a brighter future for the hardworking people and hardworking Americans who will have more money in their pockets and a better shot at the American Dream.

Here are the facts: we are cutting taxes for Americans at all income levels. We are doubling the standard deduction. We are doubling the child tax credit and preserving the adoption tax credit. We are keeping deductions for charitable giving, mortgage interest, medical expenses, and student loan interest. We are improving 529 education plans and leaving retirement savings alone. People will be able to keep more of their money they earn and spend less time filing their taxes.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't just a good bill, this is a great bill. This isn't the Apocalypse. It is a new day in America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to make history and support this momentous bill.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU), the former revenue commissioner of the State of California, who is going to tell us about the State and local tax deduction ending.

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, we were promised a middle class tax cut. This is not it. What we have instead are tax cuts for the wealthiest paid for by the rest.

So what happened?

Maybe Trump thinks multimillionaires are the middle class or maybe this all is just a tax scam.

To see how working families will pay for corporate interest, all you have to do is read the bill, which is hard to do, because it was written overnight behind closed doors.

Tax cuts: they reduce the tax rate for the wealthiest from 39.6 percent to 37 percent.

State and local taxes: they cap the deduction to just $10,000. But in my State of California, the average deduction is $18,500, meaning families will be forced to pay taxes now on twice their income in order to give a staggering tax break to corporations.

So hear this: 83 percent of the benefits of this bill goes to the top 1 percent.

Who gets cut?

Seniors, families, children.

Is this the right thing to do?

The answer is a resounding no.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act today.

At its core, reforming our Nation's Tax Code is about how we, the policymakers, view the role of government in our economy and society.

Over the past 10 years, the American people have seen a stagnant economy and a steady decline in labor force participation. Meanwhile, the government has grown to an unprecedented level, the economy has slowed, and our debt has nearly tripled. All the while, government has given away sweetheart deals to select companies, leaving Main Street job providers to hold the bag.

But all of that ends today. Today we reduce the burden on job creators and families. Today we create an environment that will generate real economic growth.

The conference committee report before us today is about our constituents, about allowing our constituents and neighbors to keep more of their hard-earned money. For starters, we double the standard deduction, which means for joint filers, the first $24,000 of their income is free from Federal income tax liability. That is real money back in the pockets of working class families across America.

The plan expands the child tax credit to $2,000 per child to help families with the cost of raising children. For students struggling with debt, the bill preserves the student loan interest deduction and graduate students will continue to receive tuition tax waivers tax free.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), who will tell us about the great harm that this does to New York and to the island of Puerto Rico.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, after Hurricane Maria, Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, including the Republican leadership, went to Puerto Rico. They looked the Puerto Rican people in the eye and promised to help.

This bill betrays that promise. It treats Puerto Rico as a foreign jurisdiction, levying new taxes on companies operating there, creating incentives for them to leave the island. All told, these provisions will cost Puerto Rico more than 200,000 jobs.

That is how they help Puerto Rico?

This bill is morally bankrupt. It harms American citizens everywhere, especially the 3.5 American citizens in Puerto Rico. Vote ''no.''

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT).

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to give everyone a slightly different view.

There was an interesting editorial this weekend in The Wall Street Journal, and it basically said: Hey, those on the left look at income inequality. Those on the right, we look at economic expansion, economic growth.

They are both honorable, but if you actually look at the data of the last 10 years and our own CBO projections of the next 10 years, 1.8 percent GDP, we are in incredible trouble, because you actually look at what happens when you have this flatlined economic expansion and growth, and income inequality gets dramatically worse. You look at the charts when we have had times of economic growth, it closes and everyone gets a better chance.

If you actually do care about the promises we as a government have made to retirees, working people, veterans, young people, we will not have the resources if we continue for the next 30 years, as our own CBO says, of 1.8 percent growth. Status quo is devastating.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), the assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the Ryan-McConnell tax scam bill. This bill should be named the ''Republican Donor Class Relief Act'' because that is what it is, and several of my Republican colleagues and many in the media have admitted as much.

This tax scam represents a grotesque set of priorities revealing deep depravity of American values. One of the first

principles of our Judeo-Christian value system is grounded in what we do ''for the least of these.''

From the outset, this bill violates that principle by lowering the marginal tax rates on the wealthiest among us by 2.6 points, while raising those rates on the least among us by 2 points.

This tax scam bill adds insult to that injurious act by doubling the estate tax exemption from $11 million to $22 million.

The Republicans add further insult to injury by lowering the tax rates for corporations by 14 points while raising tax rates on 86 million middle-income families. It makes the tax cuts for corporations permanent and the miniscule individual cuts temporary, while also kicking 13 million people off their health insurance and increasing premiums for millions more.

The tax scam caps deductions for State and local taxes and home mortgages and adds over $2 trillion to the deficit. Our children and grandchildren will be left with the bill.

Mr. Speaker, history will not treat kindly the crass cruelty of this so-called Christmas gift for hardworking Americans.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Today we move away from a trickle-down government redistribution economy to one that is bottom up, organic, and growing. While the trickle-down government of the last 8 years was great for Washington and the 1 percent, it did little for the rest of the country.

Today we turn the tide and put money back in the pockets of hardworking taxpayers and Main Street businesses. This bill gives immediate relief to moderate income and middle class families.

A single mom earning $41,000 with one kid will see a tax cut of $1,300, while a family of four making $73,000 will get more than $2,000 back.

The questions are: Will we vote together and put this money back into the pockets of hardworking Americans? Or will we keep that money here in wealthy Washington, D.C.? Will we vote together to level the global playing field for America's businesses and end the unfair status quo that sends American companies and jobs overseas?

It is an easy choice, Mr. Speaker: vote ''yes'' on this bill and let's make America prosperous again.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the Democratic leader.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and I salute him for his extraordinary leadership and being a champion for America's working families. I commend him and the Democratic members of the House Ways and Means Committee for putting forth the facts on what is in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, today we choose what kind of country America will be: one that champions the ladders of opportunity for all or one that reinforces the power of the wealthiest and well connected.

Outside the Congress, the American people have already made their decision. Polling shows that Americans oppose the GOP tax scam by a margin of 2 to 1. Hardworking families see right through the brazen con job Republicans are trying to sell them.

So why aren't our Republican colleagues standing with their constituents? Why aren't they joining us on insisting on A Better Deal for American families? Why aren't they joining us in demanding that we write real bipartisan tax reform that puts the middle class first?

Because helping the middle class has never been their goal.

From day one, the donors, lobbyists, and the wealthy and well connected came first. The Frankenstein monster of giveaways and special interest loopholes we are voting on today proves it, and this monster will come back to haunt them, as Frankenstein did.

Republicans claim that their bill is a middle class tax cut. The fact is, according to the Tax Policy Center, their bill raises taxes on 86 million middle class households.

When The Washington Post asked Edward Kleinbard, former chief of staff for the Joint Committee on Taxation, if the tax package in aggregate would mean a middle class tax cut, he said: ''That is delusional or dishonest to say. It is factually untrue. The only group you can point to that wins year after year and wins in very large magnitude is the very highest incomes.''

That is from the Joint Committee on Taxation former chief of staff.

The only greater delusion in this bill is the ludicrous Republican insistence, their claim that these giveaways to the wealthiest will pay for themselves.

Bruce Bartlett is the architect of Jack Kemp's supply-side economics. As Bruce Bartlett has testified in our hearing and in public, when it comes to tax breaks for the wealthy paying for themselves, he said:

It is not true. It is nonsense. It is BS.

He said the whole words.

In a few minutes, Republicans will vote to explode catastrophically our national debt at minimum of $1.5 trillion, likely $2.2 trillion or more.

Where are the vaunted Republican deficit hawks? Are they endangered? Are they extinct? Do they care about the deficit when we pass giveaways for the rich and big corporations?

They don't care about deficits, then. Tax breaks for the rich, corporate tax breaks: they don't care about the deficit.

Do Republicans only care about the deficit when the issue is helping children, seniors, our veterans, who are a large part of hardworking Americans?

My colleagues, my fellow Americans, remember this vote. Remember the vote, when they will cheer at the end of this vote, they will stand up and cheer, adding trillions to the national debt in order to give tax breaks to the wealthiest 1 percent and to big corporations. They will cheer that.

They will cheer when they say we can't afford to protect the health of our innocent children. They will cheer that.

Remember, they will cheer when they tell you we can't afford the next step, we can't afford Medicaid, Medicare, and a dignified retirement our seniors spent a lifetime earning. That is an applause line for them.

Remember this day when Republicans cheer for a bill that hands a $4,000 child tax credit to families of four earning $400,000 a year. If you earn $400,000 a year, you get $4,000 in a child tax credit.

□ 1330

But if you are poor, a single mom, a mother of two earning only $14,500, guess how much you get?

Seventy-five dollars. Seventy-five dollars.

Today we gather on this floor in the midst of a holy season. In this season, we celebrate the miraculous blessings of God. We reflect on the wondrous joy of children and our responsibility to them.

We remember our duty to live justly. For those of us blessed to serve in this Congress, we must remember our special responsibility to govern fairly, to meet the needs of all of God's children.

In this holy time, the moral obscenity and unrepentant greed of the GOP tax scam stands out even more clearly.

As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said early on, ''. . . this proposal appears to be the first Federal income tax modification in American history that will raise income taxes on the working poor while simultaneously providing a large tax cut to the wealthy. This is simply unconscionable.''

They will be cheering it. Unconscionable. Remember what the Bishops said.

Now, here, get back to the Republicans. This is in sharp contrast to the words of Senator HATCH. Now, he is the chairman of the Finance Committee in the United States Senate and an author of this bill. He said: ''I have a rough time wanting to spend billions and billions and trillions of dollars to help people who won't help themselves, won't lift a finger, and expect the Federal Government to do everything.''

How about that?

Tell that to the moms we just saw speaking out with their children, children with disabilities, who wonder how this could be so cruel.

This is an act of misery, but not according to Senator HATCH. And that is in terms of getting back to our Bishops. In his encyclical, God is Love. And I have said this to my colleagues before, but with, obviously, no effect on the Republican side.

Pope Benedict quoted the urgent moral wisdom of St. Augustine 17 centuries ago, my colleagues. Seventeen

centuries ago, St. Augustine said: ''A State which is not governed according to justice is just a bunch of thieves.''

Pope Benedict went on to say: ''The State must inevitably face the question of how justice can be achieved here and now.''

In his words, he cautioned against ''the danger of certain ethical blindness caused by the dazzling effect of power and special interests.''

Mr. Speaker, is there justice in a bill that rewards corporations shipping jobs overseas? Jobs of hardworking American men and women and veterans, shipping those jobs overseas? Is there justice in that?

No, I don't think so.

Is there justice in a bill that spikes healthcare premiums and may add 13 million Americans to the ranks of the uninsured?

No justice there.

Is there justice in a bill that raises taxes on 86 million middle class families?

Here we are. Raises taxes on 86 million middle class families, and they try to present the delusion that it is a middle class tax cut.

Is there justice in a bill that hands a breathtaking 83 percent of its benefits to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans? Eighty-three percent of its benefits to the top 1 percent?

Is there justice in a bill that explodes the national debt to give the wealthy and the well connected a break and sticks the debt with our children? Is that justice?

I didn't think you thought so. I wish our Republican colleagues would join us.

This GOP tax scam is simply theft, monumental, brazen theft from the American middle class and from every person who aspires to reach it. The GOP tax scam is not a voice for an investment in growth or jobs. It is a vote to install a permanent plutocracy in our Nation. They will be cheering that later.

It does violence to the vision of our Founders. It disrespects the sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, who are a large part of our middle class, and to whom we owe a future worthy of their sacrifice. It betrays the future and betrays the aspirations of our children.

It morally demands a ''no'' vote from every Member of this House of the people.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK).

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I opposed the original House bill because it severely limited or abolished broad-based deductions, resulting in higher taxes for many families in high-tax, high-cost States like California.

Thanks to Chairman BRADY's leadership, this bill has largely addressed these objections and, in combination with much lower rates, it assures that nearly every California taxpayer will pay lower taxes. More important still is the higher wages and better jobs it means for all Americans.

Last Friday, I toured a local company that makes the active ingredient for certain drugs, yet the actual medicine is not produced here. It is produced in Ireland.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has detected a disturbance in the gallery in contravention of the law and against the rules of the House.

The Sergeant at Arms will identify the person or persons responsible and have them escorted from the House Chamber.

The gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) is recognized for his remaining 20 seconds.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I was saying that the actual medicine, the ingredient is produced here, but the actual medicine is produced in Ireland, solely because of our uncompetitive corporate tax.

Because of this tax reform, the company plans to grow dramatically here at home, employing hundreds of new workers. That is what the Democrats mean by tax breaks for the wealthy.

The proof of these policies will come over the next year, and every American will be able to decide for themselves if they are better off because of it. I am now highly confident their answer is going to be a resounding ''yes.''

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 4¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. NEAL. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 4 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, there is only one fundamental question today: Who gets to decide? When Americans work hard for their money, who gets to decide what you do with it? Is it you? Or is it some nameless, faceless government worker here in Washington?

When a family with young children is working feverishly to fund their kids' future, who gets to decide how they spend their money: them or Washington?

The single mom fighting every day trying to get by and give a good life to her daughter, who decrees where her money goes?

When a Main Street businessowner works late into the night and through the weekend, risking every penny they own to reach their dream, who gets that meager profit each day? Does it go to you, who earned it, exhausted at the end of a long day? Or is it grabbed by a Federal Government who doesn't even know your name except on April 15?

Our communities have watched their companies, jobs, and futures move overseas for too long. Our local businesses have been fighting other countries with one hand tied behind their back from an old, outdated Tax Code. They deserve a new Tax Code that allows them to compete and win anywhere in the world, especially here at home.

When they compete and win, who decides where that money goes?

Today, Washington says spend it overseas. Our new Tax Code says bring it home, spend it here in America to grow our jobs, our paychecks, our communities. That is why this moment is so important.

Opponents of this tax bill don't really worry about tax cuts for the rich. They worry about tax cuts for you because if you spend your money, they can't. If you have the first claim over your earnings, they no longer do. And if your dreams come before theirs, everything in Washington changes, everything.

Given a choice between the Federal Government and you, we choose you, the hardworking American taxpayers. We choose you, the only special interest that truly matters.

Americans deserve a Tax Code for a new era of American prosperity. We deliver on that promise because it is your money.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

So, in 1 month, we have taken the entire revenue system of the country without one public hearing, without any witness testimony, without the solicitation of one expert. ''We,'' meaning the Republican majority. They have decided to go forward with this reckless plan.

Contrast this with Reagan and O'Neill and Rostenkowski and Packwood in 1986.

When Gephardt and Bradley first offered their bill in 1982 on tax reform, 4 years ensued before the measure came to the floor for passage, and, in that time, 450 witnesses offered testimony. Every expert from every nook and cranny in America was invited to offer their vision of what a better tax system might look like. And those individuals—and I knew them all because I went to the committee when Mr. Rostenkowski was the chairman—saw that as the fabled achievement of their time in a bipartisan manner.

Do you know what else?

Secretary Reagan and Chief of Staff Jim Baker sat through the markups on that tax reform measure.

Now, Secretary Mnuchin, instead, has said, nobody at the top will get a tax cut. And then they cut the rate from 39.6 at the top to 37. Well, nobody at the top will get a tax cut.

We are going to double the exemption on this estate tax so that you might now keep $22 million rather than $11 million, without any formalization of taxation.

My friend, Mr. BRADY—and he is my friend—he spoke before about the people's money.

Well, you know what the people's responsibility is?

A million new veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. That is the people's responsibility.

When we talk about responsibility and the people's money, Medicare is the people's responsibility. Social Security is the people's responsibility.

As we celebrate the extension of life expectancy in America, Medicaid today now cares for people with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. That is the people's responsibility.

They have carefully taken theology and wed it to science fiction.

Remember what we heard around here all these years?

Don't worry, tax cuts pay for themselves. That was the offering in 2001, $1.3 trillion worth of tax cuts.

Well, we get to 2003, another $1 trillion worth of tax cuts. By the way, there was time in between for a repatriation holiday, at 5¼, all advertised on the basis of job creation, and layoffs ensued almost the next day.

□ 1345

This money is going to be used for stock buybacks and dividends. There will be little investment in this lost opportunity where we should have invested in community colleges and vocational education and apprenticeship programs.

Six million jobs in America go unanswered every single day because of a skills alignment problem and also the horror of what opiate addiction has done across the United States. It has sidelined 2 million people.

What they are telling us today is the following: We have got tax simplification. What happened to the postcard? As I said earlier, we are going to have to carry around a billboard for tax simplification to figure out what is in it. They keep talking about phase-ins and phaseouts. I am telling you, we will all be passed out by the time they get done with this. This is more complexity.

And wait until people have a chance over the next few weeks to sort through what is in this bill. But here is something you might give some thought to: the bottom quintile, you are going to get $60 a year. The second quintile, you are going to get $380 a year. The top 1 percent, they are going to get $51,000 a year. The top 0.1 percent, they are going to get $193,000 a year, all in the name of middle class tax relief.

As we proceed to the holiday, they are telling us this is their Christmas present. And you know what they are doing with it? It is going to be Christmas hangover debt, and they are putting it on the credit card and adding $2.3 trillion to the Federal debt.

Merry Christmas.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN), who has devoted his life to this moment and tax reform, our Speaker of the House.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding time to me.

First, I want to start off by thanking all of the members and the staff of the Ways and Means Committee for all of their hard work in putting this bill together. I want to thank them for this.

I want to personally thank one of my predecessors from the Ways and Means Committee, who helped lay the foundation to get us where we are today, and that is Dave Camp. Dave Camp did a lot to help us get to where we are.

I want to, most of all, commend and express my profound admiration to the architect of this measure, Chairman KEVIN BRADY.

His endless patience and his persistence and his great demeanor have seen this through and gotten us to where we are today.

My colleagues, this is a day I have been looking forward to for a long time. We are about to achieve some really big things, things that the cynics have scoffed at for years, decades even; ideas that have been worked on for so long to help hardworking Americans who have been left behind for too long.

Today—today—we are giving the people of this country their money back. This is their money, after all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair notes a disturbance in the gallery in contravention of the law and against the rules of the House.

The Sergeant at Arms will identify the person or persons responsible and have them escorted from the House Chamber before proceedings will resume.

The Chair will also remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of the proceedings in the House are in violation of the rules of the House.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin, the Speaker of the House.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to remind my colleagues and the Speaker that my minute can last for as long as I want it to last.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, today we are giving the people their money back. The bottom line here is the typical family making the median income in America will get a $2,059 tax cut next year alone. What this is is real relief for families who are living paycheck to paycheck, struggling to make ends meet.

They hear about the economy getting better. They turn on the TV, and they see the stock market going up, but now we need to make sure that these people in our communities and our country, who are struggling, see their own personal economy getting better, and that is what this is all about.

We have got to understand that times are tough for a lot of people in this country right now. Today, this is about how much better things can be. This is about more jobs, fair taxes. It is about bigger paychecks. It is about faster growth and upward mobility. It is about a strong economy that makes all of us stronger and healthier. Those are the effects, those are the benefits, of tax reform.

Here is the heart of it, and here is why this is so vital that we do this. Here is what it speaks to and what I truly believe is a generational defining moment for this Nation.

Our Tax Code is so broken that it undermines the very thing that makes our Nation exceptional in the first place. It punishes hard work. It discourages our entrepreneurial spirit. It dims freedom and free enterprise. It limits the potential of our own people.

When Americans see good jobs going away, when Americans wake up and they see the companies that they grew up with in their communities going away, they wonder if we have lost something bigger.

The mission that drives us here today is to restore this beautiful American idea. What is that idea? That the condition of your birth does not determine the outcome of your life. You can work hard, play by the rules, get ahead, and make a better life for yourselves and an even better one for your kids.

It is that sense of possibility. We want people to be free to strive to make the most of their lives. We want a country with the resilience to endure and tackle all of its challenges.

Mr. Speaker, economic growth and job creation will not solve all of our problems, but it will help make all of our problems much easier to solve. This is the direction that we are choosing here today because we know exactly where the status quo leads us.

For years, the powers that be have blocked and stonewalled reform under the umbrella of an arrogant, condescending, and paternalistic ideology—an ideology that seeks to limit mobility, to limit aspirations, to accept less in our lives. It is a view of the world that sees life and the economy as a zero-sum game. Your gain comes at my loss; therefore, we can't do it.

Look at where this got us: the worst recovery since World War II, flat wages, and an economy just limping along. Stagnation is a breeding ground for a class-based society where elites predetermine the outcome of our lives. That is not the American idea.

They will tell you this: Just hand over more freedom to the unelected bureaucrats, and they will figure it out, they know more, we will all just be okay. Hand over more of your hard-earned dollars to the IRS, and it will all be okay.

There is your scam right there. We know, given the opportunity, there are no limits to what our people, our fellow citizens, our brothers and sisters can

do. Yet for years now, this Tax Code has been skewed to the well connected, full of special interest carve-outs and loopholes.

Meanwhile, the hardworking family in America has got to jump through all the hoops that the IRS can muster. Reform means we bring rates down at every level. We clear out these loopholes so that people can just keep more of what they earn in the first place, because it is their money in the first place. No special favors, just basic fairness.

Reform means simplification, too. Nearly 9 out of 10 Americans will still be able to do their taxes on the form the size of a postcard. That is amazing.

And given the opportunity, there are no limits to what our workers and our entrepreneurs can do.

Yet while the world has changed, while the world has become more competitive, closer, smaller, our Tax Code has not. Instead of leading, we have been falling behind to the point where we now are the worst in the industrialized world at how we tax our businesses.

We tax our businesses a whole lot more than our foreign competitors tax theirs. They win; we lose. That is not fair.

It is basically open season for our competitors to come in and take our jobs overseas under the current Tax Code. Reform means we go from the back of the pack to the front of the pack.

Instead of the slow growth that we have been slogging through for years, we want to get back to real sustained economic growth. We want to build an opportunity economy where there is more demand for higher paying jobs. That is the whole purpose of all of this. Make sure that people can grow up and reach their potential. Make sure that the jobs are there to give people the careers they want so they can reach their potential, so their families can reach their potential. That is why we are doing this.

This is, without question, the single most important thing we can do to, once again, make America the best place to do business.

There is more than that in this bill. With this bill, were are finally restoring the freedom to make our own healthcare choices. By repealing the individual mandate at the heart of ObamaCare, we are giving back the freedom and the flexibility to buy the healthcare that is right for you and your family.

Finally, we are doing something truly to put America in the lead. We are doing something historic to develop our own energy resources. Some people have been working here since I was in the second grade on this project. After decades and decades in this Chamber, we are opening up a small, nonwilderness area of the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge for responsible development. It is the most ambitious step we have taken in years to secure our own energy future.

This is one of those times to just take a step back. Let's just take a minute, collect ourselves, and step away from the noise.

We talk a lot in this job about turning points. There is no doubt that we are at one of those turning points right now. This one will determine the kind of country we are going to have this century.

But too often, we have seen before how doubt creeps in, how the tyranny of short-term thinking takes over, and history—history—fails to turn.

There is, after all, a reason that this has not been done in 31 years. This really is a generational defining moment. And let's let this generational defining moment be defined by optimism, not by fear; by the rising aspirations of our people and not the doom and gloom of managed decline that we have become too familiar with.

This is our chance. This is our moment. Let's turn at this turning point. Let's reclaim the principles that have guided us for generations. Let's recapture our destiny for generations to come so this beautiful story of the American idea is repeated and repeated and passed on to the next generation, a nation more united, more confident, more prosperous, and, Mr. Speaker, more free. Pass this bill.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let's pass this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Budget Committee, I rise in strong and unyielding opposition to the Conference Report for H.R. 1, the so-called "Tax Cut and Jobs Act," which more accurately should be called the "Republican Tax Scam Act."

With this Conference Report House and Senate Republicans have pulled off a near-impossible feat: they have taken a bad bill and made it worse, much worse.

I oppose this cruel and immoral $1.7 trillion tax giveaway to wealthy corporations and the top one percent because it raises taxes on poor, working, and middle class families; explodes the deficit by adding an additional $2.2 trillion over ten years; and will require an estimated $5.4 trillion cut in funding for the programs ordinary Americans depend on for health security, educational opportunity, and economic progress.

Mr. Speaker, Americans are not fooled; they know trickle-down economics has never worked, and they see right through this phony tax plan and recognize it for the scam that it is.

That is why Americans reject this Republican tax giveaway by an overwhelming 2:1 margin.

Here are just a few of the myriad reasons why this Republican Tax Scam is by far the most unpopular tax measure ever considered by the Congress:

1. Raises taxes on 86 million middle class families;

2. Gives 83 percent of the tax cuts to the wealthiest 1 percent and explodes deficit by $1.7 trillion;

3. Gives new tax breaks to corporations shipping American jobs overseas which will eliminate jobs and drive down American wages and salaries.

4. The $1.5 trillion deficit that will be created by the GOP Tax Scam will be used by the Republicans to justify devastating cuts in Medicare and Medicaid.

This Republican tax plan is even more toxic to my constituents in the Eighteenth Congressional District of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, as you may know, my constituents and others in Texas are still struggling to recover from the devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey, the worst storm ever to make landfall in the continental United States.

And by margins exceeding 90 percent, they reject:

1. Any cuts to Medicare or Medicaid to finance tax cuts for wealthy corporations and the top 1 percent;

2. Eliminating the mortgage interest deduction;

3. Eliminating the deductibility of state and local taxes;

4. Eliminating existing deductions for student loan interest or making taxable college endowment funds or college fellowships expenses.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents, and Americans across the country, oppose this unfair Republican tax giveaway because nearly half of the $1.7 trillion tax cut goes to just the top one percent.

In fact, the average annual tax cut for the top one-tenth of one percent is $320,000; for the top one percent it is $62,000, and for those earning $1 million a year it is $68,000.

Nearly 25 percent of the tax cut goes to households in just the top one-tenth of one percent, who make at least $5 million a year (2027).

While super-wealthy corporations and individuals are reaping windfalls, millions of middle-class and working families will see their taxes go up:

1. 13 million households face a tax increase next year.

2. 45 million households face a tax increase in 2027.

3. 29 million households (21 percent) earning less than $100,000 a year see a tax increase.

On average, families earning up to $86,000 annually would see a $794 increase in their tax liability, a significant burden on families struggling to afford child care and balance their checkbook.

It is shocking, but not surprising, that under this Republican tax scam, the total value of tax cuts for just the top one percent is more than the entire tax cut for the lower 95 percent of earners.

Put another way, those earning more than $912,000 a year will get more in tax cuts than 180 million households combined.

The core of this Republican tax scheme is a massive tax cut from 35 percent to 20 percent for corporations, but that is not the only way that the wealthy are rewarded.

The massive tax cuts for corporations are permanent but temporary for working and middle-class families.

Another immoral aspect of this terrible tax scam is that it abandons families that face natural disasters or high medical costs by repealing deductions for casualty losses and medical expenses.

Mr. Speaker, in what universe does it make any sense to eliminate, as this bill would, a deduction for:

1. teachers who purchase supplies for their classroom;

2. moving expenses to take a new job and taxes employer-provided moving expenses; or

3. dependent care assistance, making it harder for families to afford day care, nursery school, or care for aging parents?

This Republican tax scam jeopardizes American innovation and competitiveness by eliminating the deduction for student loan interest, which affects 12 million borrowers, and cuts total education assistance by more than $64 billion.

Under the extraordinary leadership of President Obama and the determined efforts of ordinary Americans, we pulled our way out from under the worst of the foreclosure crisis when the housing bubble burst in 2007.

Inexplicably, Republicans are now championing a tax scheme that will make the homes of average Americans less valuable because deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes are much less valuable than under current law.

A tax plan that reduces home values, as this one does, puts pressure on states and towns to collect revenues they depend on to fund schools, roads, and vital public resources.

Mr. Speaker, an estimated 2.8 million Texas households deduct state and local taxes with an average deduction of $7,823 in 2015.

But this is not the end of the bad news that will be delivered were this tax scam to become law, not by a long shot.

The proposed elimination of the personal exemption will harm millions of Texans by taking away the $4,050 deduction for each taxpayer and claimed dependent; in 2015, roughly 9.3 million dependent exemptions were claimed in the Lone Star State.

Equally terrible is that this Republican tax scam drastically reduces the Earned Income Tax Credit, which encourages work for 2.7 million low-income individuals in Texas, helping them make ends meet with an average credit of $2,689.

The EITC and the Child Tax Credit lift about 1.2 million Texans, including 663,000 children, out of poverty each year.

So to achieve their goal of giving more and more to the haves and the ''have mores,'' our Republican friends are willing to betray seniors, children, the most vulnerable and needy, and working and middle-class families.

The $5.4 trillion cuts in program investments that will be required to pay for this tax giveaway to wealthy corporations and individuals will fall most heavily on low-income families, -students struggling to afford college, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

America will not be made great by financing a $1.7 trillion tax cut for the rich by stealing $1.8 trillion from Medicare and Medicaid, abandoning seniors and families in need, depriving students of realizing a dream to attend college without drowning in debt, or disinvesting in the working families.

America will not be positioned to compete and win in the global, interconnected, and digital economy by slashing funding for scientific research, the arts and humanities, job retraining, and clean energy just to pay for a tax cut to corporations and individuals who do not even need it.

Mr. Speaker, the tax scheme presented here by Republicans is not a plan but a scam that represents a betrayal of our values as a nation.

This tax scam is not a revenue policy adapted for the real world that real Americans live in but a fantasy resting on the monstrous belief that the wealthy have too little money and that poor, working, and middle-class families have too much.

Our Republican friends continue to cling to the fantasy belief that their tax cuts for the rich will pay for themselves despite all precedent to the contrary and evidence that their tax scheme is projected by experts to lose between $3 trillion and $7 trillion.

Mr. Speaker, in evaluating the merits of a taxing system, it is not enough to subject it only to the test of fiscal responsibility.

To keep faith with the nation's past, to be fair to the nation's present, and to safeguard the nation's future, the plan must also pass a ''moral test.''

The Republican tax bill fails both of these standards.

I strongly oppose the Conference Report to H.R. 1, the ''Republican Tax Scam Act,'' and urge all Members to join me in voting against this reckless, cruel, and heartless proposal that will do nothing to improve the lives or well-being of middle and working class families, and the poor and vulnerable 'caught in the tentacles of circumstance.'

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 667, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the conference report?

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I certainly am.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Neal moves to recommit the conference report on the bill H.R. 1 to the committee of conference with instructions to the managers on the part of the House to disagree to section 11042 and part VIII of subtitle A of title I of the conference substitute recommended by such committee.

Mr. BRADY of Texas (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The motion is not debatable.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes on:

Adoption of the conference report, if ordered; and

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 4323.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 191, nays 236, not voting 4, as follows:

[Roll No. 691]

YEAS—191

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NAYS—236

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan

Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—4

Brat
Bridenstine
Kennedy
Pocan

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). The Chair notes a disturbance in the gallery in contravention of the law and against the rules of the House.

The Sergeant at Arms will remove the person or persons responsible from the House gallery.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). The Chair notes a disturbance in the gallery in contravention of the law and against the rules of the House.

The Sergeant at Arms will remove the person or persons responsible from the House gallery.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1420

Messrs. STEWART and REICHERT changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 227, nays 203, not voting 2, as follows:

[Roll No. 692]

YEAS—227

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
Lewis (MN)
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (WI)
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)

NAYS—203

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Faso
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rohrabacher
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—2

Kennedy
Pocan

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). The Chair notes a disturbance in the gallery in contravention of the law and against the rules of the House.

The Sergeant at Arms will remove the person or persons responsible from the House gallery.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). The Chair notes a disturbance in the gallery in contravention of the law and against the rules of the House.

The Sergeant at Arms will ensure that the person or persons responsible are escorted from the gallery.

□ 1427

So the conference report was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING VETERANS IN STEM CAREERS ACT

The SPEAKER. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4323) to promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and scientific research, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 420, nays 1, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 693]

YEAS—420

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—1

Amash

NOT VOTING—10

Arrington
Bishop (MI)
Bridenstine
Gaetz
Keating
Kennedy
Lewis (GA)
Loudermilk
Pocan
Serrano

□ 1435

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 4 of rule XVI, I move that when the House adjourns this legislative day, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, December 20, 2017, for morning-hour debate and 10 a.m. for legislative business.

The motion was agreed to.

JOBS FOR OUR HEROES ACT

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1393) to streamline the process by which active duty military, reservists, and veterans receive commercial driver's licenses.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1393

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Jobs for Our Heroes Act''.

SEC. 2. MEDICAL CERTIFICATE FOR VETERANS OPERATING COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES.

(a) QUALIFIED EXAMINERS.—Section 5403(d)(2) of the FAST Act (49 U.S.C. 31149 note; 129 Stat. 1548) is amended to read as follows:

''(2) QUALIFIED EXAMINER.—The term 'qualified examiner' means an individual who—

''(A) is employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs as an advanced practice nurse, doctor of chiropractic, doctor of medicine, doctor of osteopathy, physician assistant, or other medical professional;

''(B) is licensed, certified, or registered in a State to perform physical examinations;

''(C) is familiar with the standards for, and physical requirements of, an operator required to be medically certified under section 31149 of title 49, United States Code; and

''(D) has never, with respect to such section, been found to have acted fraudulently, including by fraudulently awarding a medical certificate.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 5403 of the FAST Act (49 U.S.C. 31149 note; 129 Stat. 1548) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''physician-approved veteran operator, the qualified

physician'' and inserting ''veteran operator approved by a qualified examiner, the qualified examiner'';

(2) in subsection (b)(1)—

(A) by striking ''the physician'' and inserting ''the examiner''; and

(B) by striking ''qualified physician'' and inserting ''qualified examiner'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking ''qualified physicians'' and inserting ''qualified examiners''; and

(B) by striking ''such physicians'' and inserting ''such examiners''; and

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) as paragraphs (3), (1), and (2), respectively, and by moving the text of paragraph (3), as redesignated, to appear after paragraph (2), as redesignated; and

(B) in paragraph (3), as redesignated—

(i) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''PHYSICIAN-APPROVED VETERAN OPERATOR'' and inserting ''VETERAN OPERATOR APPROVED BY A QUALIFIED EXAMINER''; and

(ii) by striking ''physician-approved veteran operator'' and inserting ''veteran operator approved by a qualified examiner''.

(c) RULEMAKING.—The amendments made by this section shall be incorporated into any rulemaking proceeding related to section 5403 of the FAST Act (49 U.S.C. 31149 note; 129 Stat. 1548) that is being conducted as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE STANDARDS FOR CURRENT AND FORMER MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

Section 31305(d) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking ''VETERAN OPERATORS'' and inserting ''OPERATORS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, RESERVISTS, OR VETERANS'';

(2) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking ''subparagraph (A) during, at least,'' and inserting ''subparagraph (A)—

''(i) while serving in the armed forces or reserve components; and

''(ii) during''; and

(3) in paragraph (2)(B)—

(A) by inserting ''current or'' before ''former'' each place the term appears; and

(B) by inserting ''one of'' before ''the reserve components''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 1393.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

S. 1393 would exempt current members of the armed services or reserve components from certain testing requirements for commercial driver's licenses if they had qualifying experience while serving in the armed services or reserve components.

This bill also expands the types of medical professionals at the Department of Veterans Affairs who could certify that veterans meet the physical standards required to operate a commercial vehicle.

These commonsense changes will help remove barriers to employment for the men and women who have served our country in uniform.

This bill is a combination of H.R. 2547, the Veterans Expanded Trucking Opportunities Act of 2017, sponsored by Representative ROB WOODALL, and H.R. 2258, the ADVANCE Act, which is sponsored by Representative PETE AGUILAR. The House passed both bills under suspension on June 26, 2017. The bill we are considering today passed the Senate by unanimous consent on September 14, which means this will head to the President's desk once the House approves it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Mr. WOODALL and Mr. AGUILAR for their leadership on the House bills and Senator CORNYN for his work in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 1393, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of S. 1393, the Jobs for Our Heroes Act.

This bill is a step in the right direction to help the Nation tackle the longstanding commercial driver's shortage—a shortage that I must say I have been working on ever since I have been on this committee and especially since becoming ranking member of the subcommittee—and, of course, at the same time, to support veterans in a successful transition from military to civilian life.

S. 1393 ensures that all qualified medical professionals employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs can perform commercial driver physical examinations for their veteran patients.

The medical professionals that this bill addresses are already eligible to become certified medical examiners. This bill simply allows these individuals to utilize an alternative certification process that is currently being finalized by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

The most recently available data shows that, of the 54,000 medical professionals listed in FMCSA's National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners, only 25 medical professionals are employed by the VA. The online training and testing system being developed by FMCSA and the VA should help remedy this situation. These two agencies have done a good job creating an alternative process that will eventually allow more VA doctors to become certified medical examiners, while maintaining the safety and integrity of the certification system.

Although the FAST Act provision authorizing this process referred to physicians, FMCSA should allow VA-employed nurse practitioners, chiropractors, physician assistants, and other qualified medical professionals to participate. This bill ensures that these medical professionals are eligible to use this process.

The bill also ensures that current servicemembers who have military experience operating commercial motor vehicles will be able to more easily obtain a commercial driver's license. Congress included a provision in the FAST Act to allow States to waive the written CDL knowledge test for drivers with military commercial motor vehicle driving experience, but it restricts this waiver to ''former members'' of the military.

There are a significant number of current reservists and members of the National Guard with military commercial motor vehicle experience who could benefit from the waiver. These servicemen and -women receive what the FMCSA describes as ''thorough and comprehensive training,'' including many hours of behind-the-wheel training, something that I have long sought and advocated for as a requirement for civilian drivers. These military drivers already have it.

FMCSA has already taken action to make current servicemembers eligible for the knowledge test waiver on a temporary basis. Last year, FMCSA issued an exemption that allows States to waive the CDL knowledge test for trained military truck drivers, whether they are current members of the military or our veterans; however, FMCSA's temporary exemption expires October 2018.

□ 1445

This bill makes permanent the ability of current members of the military to utilize the FAST Act waiver. S. 1393 is nearly identical to two bills the House previously passed earlier this year, H.R. 2547 and H.R. 2258, both of which passed by votes of 409–0, or unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL).

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my chairman for yielding me the time. I want to thank him for his leadership. The ranking member, I appreciate her leadership as well.

She was exactly right. These are two House bills that the Senate combined that we passed unanimously here. This veterans trucking language was language that the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY) and I introduced together upon learning that of the more than 54,000 medical professionals that are allowed to certify folks for Federal trucking licenses, only 25 of those worked in the VA system. Of 54,000, only 25 were available to our veterans.

We said that is not right, so this House came together. We expanded. All the physicians of the VA became available to serve our veterans through

these trucking certifications. The bill went to the President's desk, and he signed it.

Then we had folks come back. We had advanced practice nurses, we had physicians' assistants, we had folks working throughout the VA healthcare system who said: You know what, we, too, are licensed to provide these physicals; and if you change the language, we, too, will be your partner in serving veterans.

Again, JULIA BROWNLEY on the Democrat side; I on this side; my ranking member; Ms. NORTON; my chairman here, Mr. GRAVES; we came together and now we have a further improvement to language that the rules are still being crafted for down at DOT.

Mr. Speaker, folks don't think there is cooperation in this Chamber. Folks don't think that we are able to work together in this Chamber. This is an example of what goes on every single day. Constituents raise problems. Republicans and Democrats get together to solve those problems.

I am so grateful to my friends on the committee for their leadership to get this done. To Ranking Member DEFAZIO and Chairman SHUSTER, I thank them as well for their leadership.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. AGUILAR).

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, far too often our brave servicemembers return to civilian life only to find that the skills they have gained in military service do not easily transfer to the job market. These brave men and women who have worked tirelessly to keep their country safe deserve to know that they can thrive here after their service is complete.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Jobs for Our Heroes Act. Among other critical initiatives to help our servicemembers find civilian employment, this legislation contains my bill, the ADVANCE Act.

The ADVANCE Act will allow Active-Duty servicemembers, reservists, and National Guardsmen to access the same unique testing standards for commercial driver's licenses granted to veterans by the latest surface transportation bill.

This commonsense legislation will allow those serving our country to begin the process of finding civilian employment before they finish their term of service, allowing them to hit the ground running upon reentering civilian life. Our Nation's heroes deserve to know that the process of transitioning out of the military will be seamless, and this bipartisan legislation will help ensure that is the case.

I want to thank the ranking member, the chairman for their leadership. I also want to thank Senators WARREN, CORNYN, and TILLIS for guiding this bill through the Senate. I urge my colleagues here in the House to vote in favor of this today.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this bill marries two priorities: jobs for our veterans. So many come back, and they have had training, yet we are finding that we can't always find jobs for them. Here are jobs where there is a chronic problem, tough jobs, jobs which require people to be away from home, often for long hours, jobs that do not pay as well as some other jobs. So there has been a chronic shortage.

This bill serves both purposes, and it serves our Nation very well.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1393.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NO HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON OUR ROADS ACT

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1532) to disqualify from operating a commercial motor vehicle for life an individual who uses a commercial motor vehicle in committing a felony involving human trafficking.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1532

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''No Human Trafficking on Our Roads Act''.

SEC. 2. LIFETIME DISQUALIFICATION WITHOUT REINSTATEMENT.

Section 31310(d) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the heading, by striking ''CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE VIOLATIONS'' and inserting ''LIFETIME DISQUALIFICATION WITHOUT REINSTATEMENT'';

(2) by striking ''The Secretary'' and inserting ''(1) CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE VIOLATIONS.—The Secretary''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) HUMAN TRAFFICKING VIOLATIONS.—The Secretary shall disqualify from operating a commercial motor vehicle for life an individual who uses a commercial motor vehicle in committing a felony involving an act or practice described in paragraph (9) of section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9)).''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on S. 1532.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, human trafficking is a terrible crime with an estimated 20 million victims worldwide. It is incumbent upon Congress to take the steps necessary to combat this crime whenever possible.

Just this past summer there was a case in San Antonio in which 10 people died while being illegally trafficked in a commercial motor vehicle. Drivers have been the first line of defense in helping identify and report these sorts of activities within the trucking community. We need these drivers to stay vigilant and we need to weed out the bad actors.

In addition to the criminal penalties, drivers who knowingly take part in human trafficking should never again be able to drive commercially. Current law prohibits an individual from operating a commercial motor vehicle if they are convicted of one of nine different crimes, including alcohol abuse, negligent manslaughter, and drug trafficking.

S. 1532 disqualifies individuals from operating a commercial vehicle for their lifetime if they ever use that commercial vehicle to commit a felony involving human trafficking.

This bipartisan bill passed the Senate with unanimous consent, and I would like to commend Mr. KATKO for his leadership on the House version of this bill, and I would urge my colleagues to support S. 1532.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of S. 1532. This legislation institutes a lifetime ban from operating a commercial motor vehicle for any individual who has used such a vehicle to commit human trafficking.

In the summer of 2017, 10 people died in San Antonio, Texas, in the process of being illegally trafficked in a truck at Walmart. That horrendous incident served as a stark reminder that the transportation sector can be exploited for heinous acts.

Since 2007, the National Human Trafficking Hotline has received reports of more than 22,000 sex trafficking cases inside our country. In addition, it has received over 5,000 reports of individuals who have been coerced into forced labor or indentured servitude.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates that one of every six runaway children who was reported to them last year had become victims of sex trafficking.

The FMCSA currently prohibits any individual from operating a CMV for life if he or she is convicted of committing specific crimes, including negligent manslaughter and drug trafficking. This bill ensures that the FMCSA also takes action against perpetrators who use their CMV to commit ''severe''—and that is the operative word—forms of sex trafficking, as defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure reported an identical bill, H.R. 3814, to the House by a voice vote in November. This legislation takes important steps to reduce human trafficking in the transportation sector.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO).

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in favor of S. 1532, the No Human Trafficking on Our Roads Act. This bipartisan, bicameral bill strengthens our Nation's efforts to combat human trafficking.

As a former organized crime prosecutor for two decades both on the Northern border and on the Southern border, I have seen firsthand the horrors of human trafficking. Too often, human traffickers take advantage of our Nation's transportation network to transport their victims from one location to the next.

The U.S. Department of Transportation and the transportation industry play a critical role in preventing and stopping these heinous exploitations. I want to commend the trucking industry for their commitment in training drivers to identify instances of human trafficking through organizations like Truckers Against Trafficking.

Truck drivers are often a critical asset in helping law enforcement identify victims who otherwise might go unseen. However, an isolated few individuals have taken advantage of their position to illegally traffic innocent people. We must stop this from occurring.

Earlier this year, alongside my good friend, Congresswoman ESTY, I introduced H.R. 3814, the identical House companion to this bill. While the vast majority of our Nation's truck drivers are hardworking, honest men and women, our bill is necessary to ensure that the select few who commit these crimes are brought to justice.

I am grateful for the chairman's support in moving our bill through the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and bringing this important issue before the floor of the House. I would also like to thank outside organizations, like the National District Attorneys Association, for supporting this legislation.

Again, I would like to thank Representative ESTY and Senators THUNE and KLOBUCHAR for their bipartisan, bicameral leadership in this matter.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, this is another example of what bipartisanship can achieve in the House of Representatives, unlike, sadly, the tax bill that was just passed just before us in the House of Representatives here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1532.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN COMMERCIAL VEHICLES ACT

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1536) to designate a human trafficking prevention coordinator and to expand the scope of activities authorized under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's outreach and education program to include human trafficking prevention activities, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1536

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act''.

SEC. 2. HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION COORDINATOR.

The Secretary of Transportation shall designate an official within the Department of Transportation who shall—

(1) coordinate human trafficking prevention efforts across modal administrations in the Department of Transportation and with other departments and agencies of the Federal Government; and

(2) in coordinating such efforts, take into account the unique challenges of combating human trafficking within different transportation modes.

SEC. 3. EXPANSION OF OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM.

Section 31110(c)(1) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following: ''The program authorized under this subsection may support, in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, the recognition, prevention, and reporting of human trafficking, while deferring to existing resources, as practicable.''.

SEC. 4. EXPANSION OF COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 31313(a)(3) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (E) as subparagraph (F); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following:

''(E) support, in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, the recognition, prevention, and reporting of human trafficking; or''.

SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish an advisory committee on human trafficking.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) COMPOSITION.—The Committee shall be composed of not more than 15 external stakeholder members whose diverse experience and background enable them to provide balanced points of view with regard to carrying out the duties of the Committee.

(2) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall appoint the external stakeholder members to the Committee, including representatives from—

(A) trafficking advocacy organizations;

(B) law enforcement; and

(C) trucking, bus, rail, aviation, maritime, and port sectors, including industry and labor.

(3) PERIODS OF APPOINTMENT.—Members shall be appointed for the life of the Committee.

(4) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Committee shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made and shall not affect the powers or duties of the Committee.

(5) COMPENSATION.—Committee members shall serve without compensation.

(c) AUTHORITY.—Not later than 9 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish and appoint all members of the Committee.

(d) DUTIES.—

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Committee shall make recommendations to the Secretary on actions the Department can take to help combat human trafficking, including the development and implementation of—

(A) successful strategies for identifying and reporting instances of human trafficking; and

(B) recommendations for administrative or legislative changes necessary to use programs, properties, or other resources owned, operated, or funded by the Department to combat human trafficking.

(2) BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Committee shall develop recommended best practices for States and State and local transportation stakeholders to follow in combating human trafficking.

(B) DEVELOPMENT.—The best practices shall be based on multidisciplinary research and promising, evidence-based models and programs.

(C) CONTENT.—The best practices shall be user-friendly, incorporate the most up-to-date technology, and include the following:

(i) Sample training materials.

(ii) Strategies to identify victims.

(iii) Sample protocols and recommendations, including—

(I) strategies to collect, document, and share data across systems and agencies;

(II) strategies to help agencies better understand the types of trafficking involved, the scope of the problem, and the degree of victim interaction with multiple systems; and

(III) strategies to identify effective pathways for State agencies to utilize their position in educating critical stakeholder groups and assisting victims.

(D) INFORMING STATES OF BEST PRACTICES.—The Secretary shall ensure that State Governors and State departments of transportation are notified of the best practices and recommendations.

(e) REPORTS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(1) submit a report on the actions of the Committee described in subsection (d) to—

(A) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives; and

(2) make the report under paragraph (1) publicly available both physically and online.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMMITTEE.—The term ''Committee'' means the Department of Transportation Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking established under subsection (a).

(2) HUMAN TRAFFICKING.—The term ''human trafficking'' means an act or practice described in paragraph (9) or paragraph (10) of section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Transportation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on S. 1536.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

□ 1500

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, S. 1536 empowers the Department of Transportation to play an important role in combating human trafficking. Specifically what this bill does is it directs the Secretary of Transportation to designate a human trafficking prevention coordinator from within the Department; it expands the scope of activities authorized under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's outreach and education program and under the Commercial Driver's License program implementation grants to include human trafficking prevention activities; and it requires the Secretary to establish an advisory committee on human trafficking.

S. 1536 is supported by Members on both sides of the aisle, and it passed the Senate with unanimous consent.

I would like to commend Ms. ESTY for her leadership on the House version of this bill. Because of her work and her partnership on this with Mr. KATKO, the House version passed through committee unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 1536, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill as well. S. 1536 will help ensure that the U.S. Department of Transportation has the necessary tools to reduce the prevalence of human trafficking in commercial vehicles.

In 2016, more than 7,000 cases of human trafficking were reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. With this legislation, Congress is stepping in to ensure DOT has additional authority and resources to combat this egregious crime.

This bill provides the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, FMCSA, more flexibility to combat human trafficking by authorizing funding from two existing grant programs to be used to support the reporting and the prevention of human trafficking. The bill will also help DOT coordinate efforts to fight human trafficking with other Federal agencies, and it establishes an advisory committee on human trafficking.

The advisory committee will convene experts from law enforcement, victim advocacy organizations, and the transportation industry to advise DOT of concrete steps it can take to improve the recognition and the prevention of trafficking.

The advisory committee will also develop and share best practices with State and local stakeholders so that they are better equipped to combat the trafficking in their own communities.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure reported an identical bill, H.R. 3813, authored by the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY), to the House in November.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I don't have any speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY), the author of the bill.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to strongly support the passage of S. 1536, the Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act. This bipartisan, bicameral bill is an important step in combating the terrible crime of human trafficking.

The Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act will help stem the tide of trafficking by providing training to commercial truck drivers through the Department of Transportation to recognize and report trafficking, further empowering them to prevent this horrendous crime.

Specifically, this bill designates a human trafficking prevention coordinator at the U.S. Department of Transportation and increases outreach, education, and reporting efforts at the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

Mr. Speaker, human trafficking is an appalling and inhumane crime, and it is occurring in communities all over my home State of Connecticut and throughout the entire United States. As I learned when a human trafficking ring was broken up in my small hometown, anyone can become a victim of this crime regardless of race, age, gender, or socioeconomic status.

This appalling crime takes many forms, the vast majority of which are sexually exploitative in nature. Shockingly, the average age a teen enters the sex trade in the United States is 12 to 14 years old, and many victims are runaway girls who were sexually abused as children.

Truckers and commercial drivers are often the first line of defense against human trafficking in the United States. Their eyes and ears are on the roads, where victims are being moved across borders and from city to city.

The Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act is supported by Truckers Against Trafficking, the National District Attorneys Association, the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association, and ECPAT-USA.

I am proud to be the coauthor of the House companion to the No Human Trafficking on Our Roads Act along with my friend, JOHN KATKO of New York.

I am also pleased that we will be voting today on another bill that Congressman KATKO and I coauthored, the No Human Trafficking on Our Roads Act.

Both bills were originally introduced in the Senate by Senators KLOBUCHAR and THUNE and passed unanimously. Both bills were also passed unanimously out of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my friends and colleagues to join me in voting ''yes''

on the Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act and the No Human Trafficking on Our Roads Act today so we can send these very important pieces of legislation to the President's desk for his swift signature.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank my Republican and Democratic colleagues both in the House and the Senate for their work on these two important bills.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE).

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Ms. NORTON, for having this amazing interest to our country put before us for a vote.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1532, No Human Trafficking on Our Roads, and S. 1536, the Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act.

As the vice chair of the congressional bipartisan Caucus for Women's Issues and a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I am pleased that we are solving these issues of real concern.

Human trafficking is an inexcusable crime. According to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, about 8 in 10 reported victims are women. It is a crime that exploits women more than anyone else, and especially young girls.

Mr. Speaker, combating human trafficking is a serious concern of mine. Unfortunately, in my district—I represent the Metro Detroit area—a major international transportation and shipping hub in southeast Michigan, we rank number seven in total human trafficking cases reported in our country.

These bills mark progress toward combating human trafficking. We are improving our systems to better recognize and report this crime. We are closing loopholes in our transportation system that traffickers have taken advantage of for far too long.

I am proud to support these bills, and I urge my colleagues to support them as well.

Mr. Speaker, today I needed a vote and a voice for something that is good for this country, and so I stand here in support.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YODER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1536.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SYSTEMIC RISK DESIGNATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 667, I call up the bill (H.R. 3312) to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to specify when bank holding companies may be subject to certain enhanced supervision, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 667, in lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Financial Services printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–49, modified by the amendment printed in House Report 115–474, is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 3312

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. REVISIONS TO COUNCIL AUTHORITY.

(a) PURPOSES AND DUTIES.—Section 112 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5322) is amended in subsection (a)(2)(I) by inserting before the semicolon '', which have been identified as global systemically important bank holding companies pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, or subjected to a determination under subsection (l) of section 165''.

(b) ENHANCED SUPERVISION.—Section 115 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5325) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking ''large, interconnected bank holding companies'' and inserting ''bank holding companies which have been identified as global systemically important bank holding companies pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, or subjected to a determination under subsection (l) of section 165''; and

(2) in subsection (a)(2)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''; or'' at the end and inserting a period;

(B) by striking ''the Council may'' and all that follows through ''differentiate'' and inserting ''the Council may differentiate''; and

(C) by striking subparagraph (B).

(c) REPORTS.—Section 116(a) of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5326(a)) is amended by striking ''with total consolidated assets of $50,000,000,000 or greater'' and inserting ''which has been identified as a global systemically important bank holding company pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, or subjected to a determination under subsection (l) of section 165''.

(d) MITIGATION.—Section 121(a) of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5331) is amended by striking ''with total consolidated assets of $50,000,000,000 or more'' and inserting ''which has been identified as a global systemically important bank holding company pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, or subjected to a determination under subsection (l) of section 165''.

(e) OFFICE OF FINANCIAL RESEARCH.—Section 155 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5345) is amended in subsection (d) by striking ''with total consolidated assets of 50,000,000,000 or greater'' and inserting ''which have been identified as global systemically important bank holding companies pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, or subjected to a determination under subsection (l) of section 165''.

SEC. 3. REVISIONS TO BOARD AUTHORITY.

(a) ACQUISITIONS.—Section 163 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5363) is amended by striking ''with total consolidated assets equal to or greater than $50,000,000,000'' each place such term appears and inserting ''which has been identified as a global systemically important bank holding company pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, or subjected to a determination under subsection (l) of section 165''.

(b) MANAGEMENT INTERLOCKS.—Section 164 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5364) is amended by striking ''with total consolidated assets equal to or greater than $50,000,000,000'' and inserting ''which has been identified as a global systemically important bank holding company pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, or subjected to a determination under subsection (l) of section 165''.

(c) ENHANCED SUPERVISION AND PRUDENTIAL STANDARDS.—Section 165 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5365) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''with total consolidated assets equal to or greater than $50,000,000,000'' and inserting ''which have been identified as global systemically important bank holding companies pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, or subjected to a determination under subsection (l)'';

(2) in subsection (a)(2)—

(A) by striking ''(A) IN GENERAL.—'';

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall''; and

(C) by striking subparagraph (B);

(3) in subsection (j), by striking ''with total consolidated assets equal to or greater than $50,000,000,000'' and inserting ''which has been identified as a global systemically important bank holding company pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, or subjected to a determination under subsection (l)''.

(d) ADVANCED TAILORING.—Section 165 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5365) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(l) ADDITIONAL BANK HOLDING COMPANIES SUBJECT TO ENHANCED SUPERVISION AND PRUDENTIAL STANDARDS BY TAILORED REGULATION.—

''(1) DETERMINATION.—The Board of Governors may, within the limits of its existing resources—

''(A) determine that a bank holding company that has not been identified as a global systemically important bank holding company pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, shall be subject to certain enhanced supervision or prudential standards under this section, tailored to the risks presented, based on the considerations in paragraph (3), where material financial distress at the bank holding company, or the nature, scope, size, scale, concentration, interconnectedness, or mix of the activities of the individual bank holding company, could pose a threat to the financial stability of the United States; or

''(B) by regulation determine that a category of bank holding companies that have not been identified as global systemically important bank holding companies pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, shall be subject to certain enhanced supervision or prudential standards under this section, tailored to the risk presented by the category of bank holding companies, based on the considerations in paragraph (3), where material financial distress at the category of bank holding companies, or the nature, scope, size, scale, concentration, interconnectedness, or mix of the activities of the category of bank holding companies, could pose a threat to the financial stability of the United States.

''(2) COUNCIL APPROVAL OF REGULATIONS WITH RESPECT TO CATEGORIES.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(B), a regulation issued by the Board of Governors to make a determination under such paragraph (1)(B) shall not take effect unless the Council, by a vote of not fewer than ⅔ of the voting members then serving, including an affirmative vote by the Chairperson, approves the metrics used by the Board of Governors in establishing such regulation.

''(3) CONSIDERATIONS.—In making any determination under paragraph (1), the Board of Governors shall consider the following factors:

''(A) The size of the bank holding company.

''(B) The interconnectedness of the bank holding company.

''(C) The extent of readily available substitutes or financial institution infrastructure for the services of the bank holding company.

''(D) The global cross-jurisdictional activity of the bank holding company.

''(E) The complexity of the bank holding company.

''(4) CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF CONSIDERATIONS.—In making a determination under paragraph (1), the Board of Governors shall ensure that bank holding companies that are similarly situated with respect to the factors described under paragraph (3), are treated similarly for purposes of any enhanced supervision or prudential standards applied under this section.

''(5) USE OF CURRENTLY REPORTED DATA TO AVOID UNNECESSARY BURDEN.—For purposes of making a determination under paragraph (1), the Board of Governors shall make use of data already being reported to the Board of Governors, including from calculating a bank holding company's systemic indicator score, in order to avoid placing an unnecessary burden on bank holding companies.''.

(e) SYSTEMIC IDENTIFICATION.—Section 165 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5365), as amended by subsection (d), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(m) SYSTEMIC IDENTIFICATION.—With respect to the identification of bank holding companies as global systemically important bank holding companies pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, or subjected to a determination under subsection (l), the Board of Governors shall—

''(1) publish, including on the Board of Governors's website, a list of all bank holding companies that have been so identified, and keep such list current; and

''(2) solicit feedback from the Council on the identification process and on the application of such process to specific bank holding companies.''.

SEC. 4. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act shall be construed to prohibit the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System from prescribing enhanced prudential standards for any bank holding company which the Board of Governors determines, based upon the bank holding company's size, interconnectedness, substitutability, global cross-jurisdictional activity, and complexity, could pose a safety and soundness risk to the stability of the United States banking or financial system but has not been designated as a global systemically important bank holding company.

SEC. 5. EXISTING ASSESSMENT TERMINATION SCHEDULE.

(a) TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF EXISTING ASSESSMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each bank holding company that, on the day that is 24 months following the date of the enactment of this Act, has total consolidated assets equal to or greater than $50,000,000,000, has not been identified as a global systemically important bank holding company pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, and has not been subjected to a determination under subsection (l) of section 165 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, shall be subject to assessments by the Secretary of the Treasury to the same extent as a bank holding company that has been so identified or subjected.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In making assessments pursuant to paragraph (1), the Secretary of the Treasury shall take into account differences among the bank holding companies subject to such assessment, based on the considerations for establishing the prudential standards under section 115 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5325).

(3) LIMITATION ON AMOUNT OF ASSESSMENTS.—The aggregate amount collected pursuant to paragraph (1) from all bank holding companies assessed under such paragraph shall be $58,000,000.

(4) PAYMENT PERIOD OPTIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall offer the option of payments spread out before the end of the 48-month period following the date of the enactment of this Act, or shorter periods including the option of a one-time payment, at the discretion of each bank holding company paying assessments pursuant to paragraph (1).

(5) ASSESSMENTS TO BE MADE IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER ASSESSMENTS.—The assessments collected pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be in addition to, and not as a replacement of, any assessments required under any other law.

(b) TREATMENT UPON DETERMINATION.—A bank holding company assessed under this section shall no longer be subject to such assessments in the event it is identified as a global systemically important bank holding company pursuant to section 217.402 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations, or subjected to a determination under subsection (l) of section 165 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. Any prior payments made by such a banking holding company pursuant to an assessment under this section shall be nonrefundable.

SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this Act shall take effect after the end of the 18-month period following the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 3312, the Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017.

This very important piece of legislation was introduced by my friend, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, who serves as chairman of the Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee of the Financial Services Committee, and is cosponsored by a bipartisan group of Members of the House. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the bill was approved in October by the Financial Services Committee with a very strong bipartisan vote of 47–12, so strong, Mr. Speaker, that even a majority of Democrats on the committee voted to support the bill.

This bill reforms what Republicans and now many Democrats acknowledge is a flawed and arbitrary framework under the Dodd-Frank Act to designate so-called systemically important financial institutions, also known as SIFIs. In fact, one of those Democrats who acknowledges that it is a flawed and arbitrary framework is none other than former chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, Barney Frank, the very Frank of Dodd-Frank, the coauthor of the Dodd-Frank Act. He, himself, has said that this provision in the Dodd-Frank Act that many of us are trying to reform today is ''arbitrary'' and ''a mistake.'' Those are his words, Mr. Speaker, not mine.

That arbitrary and mistaken provision is Dodd-Frank's one-size-fits-all standard that subjects banks with $50 billion or more in assets to the same costly and cumbersome SIFI regulatory standards as trillion-dollar global systemically important institutions.

We should take note that this flawed standard has now been criticized by Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen, former Federal Reserve Board Governor Dan Tarullo, former Comptroller of the Currency Thomas Curry, and many other Obama appointees. In other words, Mr. Speaker, it is that bad.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER's bipartisan bill—again, very strong bipartisan bill—replaces this inflexible, flawed, $50 billion threshold that has been criticized by so many with a series of well-established, critical standards that more accurately measure systemic importance.

□ 1515

Specifically, his legislation requires the Federal Reserve to review a financial institution's size, interconnectedness, global cross-jurisdictional activity, and complexity, before determining whether the institution should be subject to heightened SIFI regulatory standards.

In other words, this bipartisan bill tailors regulations based on a bank's

actual level of risk, instead of Dodd-Frank's one-size-fits-all system that ensnares smaller regional and midsize banks that, essentially, have simple community bank lending models. These banks are not globally complex Wall Street banks and shouldn't be treated the same.

It simply doesn't make sense to subject small regional and midsize banks with only $50 billion in assets to the same expensive and cumbersome SIFI regulatory regime as a bank like JPMorgan Chase, which has $2.5 trillion in assets. Based on size alone, the $50 billion bank is just 2 percent, 2 percent of JPMorgan Chase's size.

What does make sense, Mr. Speaker, is to base the regulation of these financial institutions on their actual risk profile rather than their asset size alone, which is exactly what Mr. LUETKEMEYER's strongly bipartisan bill will do.

Now, while I personally do not support the SIFI architecture at all and do not believe any financial institution in America should be designated too big to fail, it is important that we always continue to work to find bipartisan reforms where we can find them and improve current law, and the legislation before us today represents a good faith effort to do exactly that.

Let's keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, this is simply not a debate over an arcane definition in law. It is about the real world effect these regulations have on the U.S. economy and the working men and women whom we represent.

Let me share with my colleagues what the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council has to say about the importance of the bill that we are debating today: ''Access to working and growth capital remains a challenge for many entrepreneurs and small businesses. H.R. 3312 would improve the lending environment and unleash capital by alleviating inappropriate requirements imposed on regional and midsize banks under Dodd-Frank. Midsize and regional banks, which many startups and small businesses have counted on for lending, have been negatively affected by this Dodd-Frank arbitrary trigger.''

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve better. They deserve a healthy economy with growing paychecks, better jobs, and a brighter future. It is time to restore economic growth fueled by capital flowing from America's banks to American communities across our Nation.

So I urge my colleagues to correct this widely acknowledged mistake in Dodd-Frank, even acknowledged by former Congressman Barney Frank himself, and put into place real, discernible, critical standards, and help our struggling small businesses on Main Street. Let's pass H.R. 3312.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT).

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as the Democratic lead on this bill, it is very important for me to point out that I worked very closely with Chairman Barney Frank and the Obama administration, both of which admitted at the time that it was a mistake, a blunt instrument, to be able to just put an arbitrary figure of $50 billion and say they are a threat to our financial stability.

No. Our banking system deserves better than that. The American people deserve better than that. It is not the amount of money that you have got in your assets that caused the problem; it was what they were doing that caused the exposure.

So we want to substitute the $50 billion to make sure that we have a five-point test that the Feds will give that will be able to determine if they are a threat to our security and then tailor a program of advanced supervision that would prevent them from causing us this problem.

It is a great bill. It is time we corrected it, and I ask all of my colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, to do the right thing for the American people, and let's have a resounding ''yes'' vote for this SIFI bill.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER), who is the Republican sponsor of the legislation and the chairman of our Financial Services Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking Chairman HENSARLING for his support of this legislation and his dedication to a more reasonable regulatory regime.

I would also like to thank my good friend, Representative DAVID SCOTT from Georgia, for being a cosponsor on the Democrat side and for all the hard work and support he has given us throughout this labor of love here on trying to get this thing done. He has been a champion for us, and we thank him sincerely.

Today, the House will consider H.R. 3312, the Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017, a bipartisan piece of legislation to address an inefficient regulatory structure by accounting for actual risk, rather than the size alone in the designation of systemically important financial institutions, or SIFIs.

Under the current regulatory framework for SIFI designations, any bank holding company with more than $50 billion in assets is subject to enhanced regulatory supervision and special assessments. This approach fails to take into account differences in business models or risks posed to the financial system. It has real world implications, too, stunting economic growth and limiting access to credit.

The risk of a traditional bank is not the same as an internationally active complex firm. In fact, the Fed has produced data showing the risk of every single midsize and regional bank which pales in comparison to risks posed by many and almost all global systemically important banks.

H.R. 3312 will remove the completely arbitrary approach taken today and replace it with analysis of actual risk posed to the financial system. The bill would require regulators to examine not just size, but also interconnectedness, the extent of readily available substitutes, global cross-jurisdictional activity, and the complexity of each bank holding company.

Today's method isn't a reasonable basis for supervision, a fact that has been recognized by Fed Chair Yellen, Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, and former Treasury Secretary Lew, and many Members of this body. Even Barney Frank, as Chairman HENSARLING just noted, the former Democratic chairman of the Financial Services Committee and author of the Dodd-Frank Act, has said the $50 billion threshold is completely arbitrary and has had negative implications on our economy.

It is important to note that this bill will not impact the authority of the Federal Reserve to oversee institutions. The focused standards set forth in the bill don't guarantee that any institution will be permanently freed from the rigors that are associated with SIFI designation. If the Fed so feels that a bank needs to have continuous oversight, they will do so.

I want to take a moment to discuss the score issued by the Congressional Budget Office. CBO opined that this bill would result in direct spending. I disagree with the CBO interpretation of what this legislation will do, and I believe that my bill will actually create a safer financial system.

At the same time, it is important to me and my colleagues that the bill comes to the taxpayers at no cost. The offset included in the Rules Committee Print will more than cover any potential hit to the Deposit Insurance Fund and makes this legislation budget-neutral.

The bottom line is this: an inefficient regulatory structure that does not reflect the reality of the U.S. banking system can have real economic consequences. We should no longer let the SIFI process lead to marketplace disruption or penalize companies for size alone.

I have worked on this legislation surrounding the SIFI designation process for the last 4 years, but I have not done it alone. H.R. 3312 was drafted in good faith with—and with considerable input from—many of my friends on the other side of the aisle as well.

Because we worked together, this legislation received broad bipartisan support when it was reported by the Financial Services Committee with a vote of 47–12. That means nearly 80 percent of the committee members voted in favor of this legislation.

I want to thank my colleagues for their help in this effort, namely, Mr. SCOTT, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. HILL, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. STIVERS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr.

BUDD, Mr. MEEKS, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER. This is an important issue, and I hope our colleagues will join us in supporting this bipartisan, commonsense measure.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, this is a bill about being able to allow these banks that are caught in a ''California Hotel'' situation here to be able to get out of this with a good analysis of their risk profile, their business model, because, at the end of the day, this is what this is all about. Their business model is not a risk to this country or the economic system that we have. It is not like the international connected banks, and, therefore, they shouldn't be treated as such.

As a result, this is important for not only the midsize banks, but for the banks below them because the regulators have been also allowing these sorts of requirements and rules to roll downhill on community banks as well. So it is time we put a stop to this.

It is important that we take a pragmatic approach to this designation process, to manage actual risk, and limit the real threats to our financial system.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER), the chairwoman of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman HENSARLING for his support and for yielding me this time.

I am proud to rise today in support of my colleague, Chairman BLAINE LUETKEMEYER, and urge immediate passage of his bill, the Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017.

H.R. 3312 uses a commonsense approach which would allow regulators the opportunity to weigh multiple factors before deeming a financial institution systemically important.

More importantly, the bill would allow the Financial Stability Oversight Council, FSOC, to more precisely identify systemic risk by differentiating between stable activities and those that would truly threaten the financial stability of the United States.

Under the Dodd-Frank Act, the Federal Reserve was given never-before-seen regulatory power to supervise those that were deemed systemically important. Unfortunately, the Fed has chosen to ignore tailoring their regulatory standards and continues to base them on asset size alone.

If an institution, indeed, is a minimal risk, then it is vital to make sure those standards reflect that lower risk.

Finally, it is important to note that an arbitrary threshold does matter to those caught in the SIFI web. These financial institutions often face significant compliance costs under a SIFI designation, redirecting resources that otherwise would provide consumers with affordable financial products.

Chairman LUETKEMEYER's bill creates a framework that promotes responsible regulations and enforces market discipline, all while protecting taxpayers from unnecessary bailouts.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to applaud my friend, the gentleman from Missouri, Chairman LUETKEMEYER, for his leadership on this issue. H.R. 3312 is about smarter regulation. I urge all my colleagues to support Chairman LUETKEMEYER's bill.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR), the chairman of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a bipartisan bill, the Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017, introduced by my good friend and colleague, Congressman BLAINE LUETKEMEYER from Missouri.

I also want to thank Chairman HENSARLING for his leadership and, for my friends on the other side of the aisle, particularly Mr. DAVID SCOTT from Georgia, for his leadership in support of this legislation.

Among the least transparent and most mysterious black holes of the United States Government is the process under the Dodd-Frank financial control law, by which U.S. financial firms are designated too big to fail.

Formally called systemically important financial institutions, or SIFIs, these firms are considered by all-knowing Washington bureaucrats as businesses so critical to the Nation's economy that they need to be burdened with additional regulations, supervised more strictly to further the cause of bureaucrats, and designated as a SIFI to send a clear signal to investors that it is a firm which is most likely to be bailed out by taxpayers during the next crisis.

For bank SIFIs, there is a one-size-fits-all designation model that says that any bank with more than $50 billion in assets is automatically a SIFI. Bureaucrats do little to nothing to account for the unique nature of each institution that may indicate it is more risk adverse or better positioned to handle a turbulent economy.

Bank SIFIs suffer from the same plight, in that they are not told by the U.S. Government what they need to do to rid themselves of the shackles of this SIFI designation. Instead, these firms are left in the dark to guess what they can do to de-risk by Federal regulators. And even if firms try to make reforms, they have no idea if the changes they are making will help them shed themselves of this arbitrary designation.

□ 1530

In the end, the entire SIFI process does little to make our economy stronger and more resilient. Instead, designated U.S. firms and their workers are harmed and disadvantaged relative to their international competition, undermining credit availability, causing weaker jobs and economic growth in America.

For these reasons, I support the Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act, which will give much-needed transparency to the SIFI designation process and eliminate the arbitrary automatic SIFI designation of banks with $50 billion or more in assets.

Under this legislation, banks will be judged by their merits, such as interconnectedness, size, cross-jurisdictional activity, complexity, and substitutability, and the justifications for a designation will be clearly communicated to them. The end result will be greater credit availability for small businesses, more capital formation, more help for consumers, greater consumer choice, greater economic growth, and greater competition.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank Mr. LUETKEMEYER and Mr. HENSARLING for their leadership on this critical issue, and I urge my colleagues to vote for this legislation.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlemen from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) has 29 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) has 14½ minutes remaining.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, in order to better balance the time on each side, may I inquire if my colleague anticipates having speakers on the bill.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I do anticipate additional speakers, and I will be making comments myself.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HULTGREN), the vice chairman of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Securities, and Investments.

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman HENSARLING for his continued work on this, and I also want to thank my colleague and friend from Missouri, BLAINE LUETKEMEYER, for his important work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a cosponsor on this legislation because it is an important bill for regional banks in Illinois, but also around the country.

The Financial Services Committee has spent a significant amount of time debating which banks should qualify as so-called community banks and regional banks when determining how to legislate regulatory relief.

I have to agree that, as a bank starts getting larger, it starts looking less and less like a community bank. But both Republicans and Democrats have agreed that asset size should not be the sole characteristic for determining a bank's riskiness to the financial system.

There are a number of banks that have successfully made use of the traditional community bank business

model of deposit taking and lending that have grown in size. Some have grown substantially, and now they are able to serve more than one community.

Congress should not punish these financial institutions with an asset threshold that even Congressman Barney Frank described as arbitrary. Our policies should encourage low-risk relationship lending so communities can benefit from institutions of different sizes. At a minimum, we should provide the banking regulators some flexibility to determine which institutions with assets over $50 billion pose higher risk to the financial system.

In addition to the outstanding community banks in my district, my constituents also look to regional banks like BMO and Discover when they are trying to find best rates on mortgages, car loans, credit cards, or their student loans.

Discover Financial Services, which has its headquarters just outside my district in Riverwoods, Illinois, has a simple business model that includes credit cards, student loans, home equity lending, and a number of deposit products that you would expect from a Main Street financial institution. This is the only business Discover is in. Nothing they do is comparable to what you might see in one of the big money center banks.

So why did Congress mandate that this bank be automatically designated as systemically important? The current law is arbitrary and subjects banks to the same standards as trillion-dollar global systemically important institutions.

Automatically designating these institutions as systemically important unnecessarily increases the cost of lending and makes it more difficult for my constituents to achieve their financial goals.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support the Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, because I believe in truth in labeling, truth in titling, truth in the style of legislation, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this bill should be appropriately styled the Big Bank Bonus Bill.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that this bill be styled the Big Bank Bonus Bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot entertain the gentleman's request.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot entertain that request as the majority manager has not yielded for that purpose.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. A UC request.

Mr. Speaker, my friends on the other side have said much about Barney Frank.

Chairman Frank was a dear friend of mine. I knew him well. I still do know him well. Mr. Speaker, Chairman Frank has not endorsed this bill. The language that they have used would lead an unsuspecting person to conclude that Chairman Frank supports this piece of legislation. He does not.

I have in my hand a letter from Chairman Frank. I will read a portion of it. He indicates:

> H.R. 3312 significantly increases the need for subjective judgment by the regulators and very much weakens the ability of financial institutions to rely on clear rules to guide their decisionmaking.

Mr. Speaker, without question, Chairman Frank does not support this legislation.

My friends have made much to-do about the term ''arbitrary and capricious,'' a threshold that is arbitrary. What is more arbitrary than reducing the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent, which you just did? What is more arbitrary than reducing the individual tax rate from 39.6 percent to 37 percent, which you just did?

You are the masters of arbitrary and capricious numbers. That bill that you just passed is flush with arbitrary and capricious numbers.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that they examine their thoughts about arbitrary and capricious before we continue, because I have more to say about arbitrary and capricious numbers.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES), my colleague.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 3312. I appreciate my colleague's redesignation, renaming of the bill. I think it is much more appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, this is a completely unwarranted piece of legislation. If you look at it, it is just another gift to the wealthy and the well connected on Wall Street.

We keep saying that over here because it is true. It is crazy. In 2008, the economy was brought to its knees. Reckless behavior out there by a lot of these huge institutions. The Nation's largest financial institutions crashed the economy. Everybody knows it.

So what did we do? We took steps, smart steps. We put in place the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protect Act of 2010. I think most Americans were comforted by that. They felt, okay. There are guardrails in place now so this kind of thing can't happen again.

But the fact of the matter is that, as soon as the ink was dry on that law, lobbyists moved in, the special interests moved in, and they started to unwind the core provisions, and the guardrails are starting to come down.

This is crazy. This is a case of amnesia at best or cynical capitulation to Wall Street at worst.

Proponents of the legislation say this is about helping the mom-and-pop banks on Main Street—Main Street. Were institutions like Countrywide and Washington Mutual and Wachovia and IndyMac—these are the names that haunt a lot of Americans. A lot of American households suffered because of the behavior of those institutions. Were they Main Street banks?

The fact is, under the bill before us, some of the Nation's largest banks whose failure led to the carnage of 2008 would be exempt from heightened oversight. Exactly the kind of institutions that the public wants us to keep an eye on would no longer have that oversight in place. Of those still standing, 30 of the Nation's 38 largest financial institutions would escape sensible oversight imposed by Dodd-Frank.

Even more than that, this legislation is based on the false premise that the reforms of Dodd-Frank were one size fits all. That is the phrase we always hear to justify letting go of the reins: Oh, it is one size fits all. People can't fit into this. We have got to do something.

But, no, the agency was given the maneuvering room, the flexibility, to actually customize things and have been in a position to do that.

There was a premium put on regulatory flexibility, explicitly instructing the Federal Reserve to tailor its prudential regulatory regime based on size and risk profile of financial institutions.

Ironically, the changes to asset thresholds will increase the likelihood of consolidation as large financial institutions and banks can now grow, that is, buy out small players beyond the $50 billion threshold. The banks are going to start growing bigger again. The financial institutions are going to get heavier again. It makes it easier for them to crash through whatever guardrails we can build.

The public doesn't want this, and that means true community banks very well might be absorbed by superregional banks, which would decrease consumer credit access and worsen pricing.

Mr. Speaker, Americans are tired of watching this Congress forget the lessons of the 2008 financial crash. They are tired of a Congress that routinely favors Wall Street over the interests of Main Street, and they are tired of the same worn-out talking points that are used to justify deregulation of Wall Street.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER), a hardworking member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, some of America's largest financial institutions failed, resulting in near collapse of our entire financial system. The experience destroyed businesses, ruined

lives across the country, and left fear and uncertainty in its wake.

Congress set out to prevent a future crisis by requiring enhanced supervision and regulation of some of the biggest financial institutions in the country by passing the Dodd-Frank Act. In Dodd-Frank, Congress defined the largest financial institutions as ''systematically important financial institutions,'' more commonly referred to as SIFIs, those with more than $50 billion in assets.

The goal of preventing our Nation's largest financial institutions from failing and bringing down our entire financial system is laudable. The problem, however, is Dodd-Frank's definition of what constitutes a SIFI: the $50 billion asset threshold. In fact, the creator of the threshold and former chair of the Financial Services Committee, Barney Frank, admits the threshold is arbitrary, and he supports changing the threshold.

H.R. 3312, the Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act, removes the arbitrary asset threshold and, instead, will classify the largest financial institutions by their activities. Differentiating between stable activities and those that could potentially threaten the financial stability of the United States is a more accurate way to identify and monitor risk.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to support this important and appropriate policy change to ensure the continued stability of our financial system by passing H.R. 3312.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to engage my friend from Minnesota, if I may, before he leaves. Would the gentleman please not leave?

Would Mr. HENSARLING ask the gentleman not to leave? I want to engage him.

I would like to engage Mr. EMMER, if he will come back, please. I would like to engage with the gentleman for just a moment if I may.

The gentleman declines.

Is there anyone on the other side that I can talk to?

I ask Mr. HENSARLING, is 39.6 arbitrary, reducing the taxes on individuals from 39.6 to 37? What is 37? Why is it not arbitrary?

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, is the gentleman prepared to yield me time?

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Pardon?

Mr. HENSARLING. Is the gentleman prepared to yield me time?

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I yield time. Yes, of course.

Mr. HENSARLING. How much time does the gentleman yield me?

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I yield.

Mr. HENSARLING. I inquire of the gentleman how much time is he yielding? I don't wish to be cut off.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I yield you such time as I may deem necessary, if you will take time.

Well, you may use your own time.

Mr. HENSARLING. I am going to respectfully decline the opportunity.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the arbitrary numbers that they have they don't care to defend.

Let's talk about the one-size-fits-all accusation, if you will.

Mr. Speaker, I have a source, and it is the Department of the Treasury, which indicates that we have a tiered system, and we actually have five different tiers. These tiers will allow banks to be classified as small, midsize, regional, international active, and G-SIBs.

□ 1545

There is a tiering system, but within the tiering system, we have given the regulators the authority to tailor rules to fit banks within the system.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned institution failure. I was here. I know what happened in 2008. I understand why we have Dodd-Frank. We don't have Dodd-Frank because Mr. Dodd and Mr. Frank woke up one morning and decided that they would like to regulate banks to the extent that they were regulated.

We have Dodd-Frank because we had a crisis. We had Dodd-Frank developed because of exotic products, the 327s and the 228s, which had teaser rates that would allow persons to get into loans that had fixed rates for 3 years or 2 years, and then they would have 27 years of variable rates or 28 years of variable rates.

This was the exotic product that a good many people had and could not get out of because, quite frankly, they also had a prepayment penalty that would coincide with these teaser rates.

It was a time of great crisis for banking.

We also had the so-called credit default swaps, which were just another way of laying off bets. Banks found clever ways to lay off their bets that they thought were risky.

We had no-doc loans, negative amortization. You could pay as much as you wanted and would add to the principal what you didn't pay, which means that you would end up paying a lot more for your loan than you initially started out owing.

We had interest-only loans: just pay the interest, let the loan continue to increase in value.

There was no firewall between commercial banking and investment banking. They finally got Glass-Steagall. Took them decades to do it, but they did.

Then we had the dastardly yield spread premium, which would allow the person who was servicing you, the loan originator, to qualify you for a loan at 5 percent, come out and shake your hand and say: Good news, you now have a loan for 10 percent.

That was all lawful, but Dodd-Frank ended all of this.

We have Dodd-Frank because we had a deregulation era, very much comparable to what we are about to go through now. Banks were regulated to the extent that they couldn't do all of these things, but we deregulated, just as we are about to do it now, and we will get back to the future, where banks will not have the liquidity necessary, where the credit risk that they take will be unreasonable.

This is a bill that belongs on the trash heap of history. I adamantly oppose the bill. I believe that it is time for us to take the stand that the American people want us to take, not the stand that the big banks would have us take.

This is a big bank bonus. The big banks love this bill. Thirty banks are going to be relieved of their obligation to let us know how to put them out of their misery in the event that they are about to bring the banking system down. Thirty banks. These are big banks, $500 billion max. Big banks.

These banks will continue to give us their stress test so that we can know what their liquidity is and understand their credit worthiness by virtue of the loans that they make.

This bill is what the big banks want, but not the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS), the ranking member.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank Congressman GREEN for his leadership. He is a member of the Financial Services Committee, who is dedicated to the proposition that we can and should work very hard to implement Dodd-Frank.

He has done a wonderful job in representing all of the people of this country when it comes to this issue of whether or not we are going to allow the biggest banks in this country to revert back to the practices that they have been involved in historically, where it caused us to be into a situation that caused the recession in 2008 or whether or not we are going to honor the work of Dodd-Frank and the reforms that were instituted and be about the business of fairness and justice.

I want to thank Mr. GREEN for his work, for his leadership, and for managing this most important legislation today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 3312, the Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act.

At a time when big banks are doing very well and the industry made record profits—more than $171 billion last year—and business lending has increased 75 percent since Dodd-Frank was signed into law, now is not the time to eliminate critical safeguards and reduce oversight of many of our largest banks.

H.R. 3312 will roll back the enhanced prudential standards that currently apply to the 30 of the largest banks with more than $50 billion in assets. These are some of the most important

rules in Dodd-Frank, like enhanced capital and stress testing that are critical to maintaining a safe and sound banking system that supports the broader economy.

Proponents of this bill argue that Dodd-Frank imposed a one-size-fits-all approach to any bank over $50 billion. But the law makes clear that the Fed should tier and tailor its rules to differentiate between even these large banks ''on an individual basis or by category, taking into consideration their capital structure, riskiness, complexity, financial activities (including the financial activities of their subsidiaries), size, and any other risk-related factors that the Board of Governors deems appropriate.''

There is no one-size-fits-all mandate and the Fed has indeed tailored these rules. For example, the prudential rules for a trillion-dollar bank are much tougher compared to those that apply to a $250 billion bank and considerably more so compared to a $50 billion bank.

Yet, after 18 months, this bill would exempt 30 of our largest banks from enhanced oversight, and it replaces the $50 billion threshold with a cumbersome, discretionary process led by the Federal Reserve along with the FSOC. We have a similar process for designating non-bank financial bank companies, like AIG, which have posed a systemic risk. So it is strange that Republicans are now pushing a similar approach after they repeatedly blasted the same FSOC designation process for being arbitrary, opaque, unfair, and unworkable.

Those designations were heavily litigated, if not blocked in court, as these new designations by the Federal Reserve and the FSOC would likely be. Currently, there is only one non-bank designated by the FSOC through this process, so we should expect there would be hardly any designations through H.R. 3312.

Who are these 30 massive banks that stand to benefit?

These banks collectively hold more than $5 trillion in assets or one-fourth of all banking assets in the United States. Of the 30 banks, 12 of them are foreign banks, including Deutsche Bank, HSBC, Credit Suisse, and UBS. These banks have violated a wide range of U.S. laws, including anti-money laundering and unlawful trading practices, so I have no clue why Congress should even consider doing those banks any favors.

For all the talk about helping out small community banks that serve our customers well in our rural and underserved neighborhoods, there is not a single provision that helps out these thousands of community banks and their customers. While some characterize this bill as helping ''medium-sized'' banks, the medium-sized bank has only about $200 million in assets or roughly 250 times less than the massive banks that benefit by this bill.

More troubling, instead of helping community banks, the bill would make it easier for the largest banks to acquire smaller ones, accelerating a 30-year consolidation trend.

Reasonable people can disagree on how best to dial up or down some of these enhanced standards and tier them more effectively—and I know my colleagues have good intentions—but this proposal goes way, way too far in reversing strong oversight of the Nation's largest banks. Even a Senate bill that resembles Chairman HENSARLING's ''Wrong Choice Act'' is far less aggressive, raising the $50 billion threshold to $250 billion, although even that proposal would be damaging.

Let me close by emphasizing that H.R. 3312 represents one of the largest rollbacks of sensible rules for many of our largest banks, including a dozen foreign banks, at a time when the industry is making record profits, and such a bill would hurt and make it harder for community banks to compete.

For these reasons, I strongly urge Members to oppose this bill, H.R. 3312.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, what is the amount of time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) has 10½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I am now pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), a member of the Financial Services Committee and our Republican whip.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the time.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 3312, a bipartisan bill. A majority of the majority party and a majority of the minority party on our committee reported this bill to the House floor. It is sponsored by my friend, Chairman BLAINE LUETKEMEYER, who has spent years studying Dodd-Frank, seven long years of studying the impact of Dodd-Frank, and how to improve it.

This bill removes a requirement that uses $50 billion as an asset test to designate whether a banking company in this country is systemically important and, if they are, subject them to higher regulatory standards.

But instead of ending too-big-to-fail, Dodd-Frank's misguided designation regime just entrenches it, Mr. Speaker.

Authorizing the government to designate large financial institutions as systemically important creates a new class of firms that markets will interpret and assume are too big to fail.

The SIFI designation, as noted by many Members on this side of the aisle, is, in fact, arbitrary, and I respect my friend that other numbers in statute may be arbitrary as well. But this one doesn't have any economic basis on why the participants in designing Dodd-Frank picked $50 billion.

But over the past 7 years, we have had witness after witness tell us that we should look a different direction and not have an arbitrary number of $50 billion.

Several Federal Reserve officials have expressed that similar view. Mr. Frank, as noted, has expressed that view. So here comes Mr. LUETKEMEYER with an excellent idea, an idea of an activities-based designation that the Fed has designed itself, Mr. Speaker.

The Federal Reserve has designed the metric we are using to say that an institution is systemically important. It is activities-based so that we can distinguish between levels of risk that might be systemically important to our country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the time.

So activity-based standards have already been found effective by the Federal Reserve. They work and they were used in evaluating acquisitions on regional banking companies. So Mr. LUETKEMEYER is on to a good idea. Mr. Speaker, instead of using $50 billion that was plucked out of thin air in the dead of night in the conference committee in 2010, let's reflect on 7 years and operate in a better way.

So I urge support of this bill, Mr. Speaker. I thank Mr. LUETKEMEYER for bringing it. I urge our Senators on the other end of this building to look at this as a model for how we should reform Dodd-Frank in their own bill.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does not impact 99 percent, approximately, of the banks. Most banks in this country have assets—about 89 to 90 percent of them—of $1 billion or under.

□ 1600

This bill is for the big banks. The big banks are doing quite well. Last year, the banks made record profits of $171 billion. Community banks grew at 8.3 percent, and big banks grew at a 4.8 percent rate. They are lending to businesses at a record level.

So the contention cannot be that they are doing this because banks are losing money. It has very little to do with how much money they are losing. It has a lot to do with the fact that big banks would like to be deregulated so that they can get back to the business as usual that caused the crisis of 2008.

Mr. Speaker, there are 30 big banks this bill will impact worth more than $5 trillion in assets. This bill is not needed because, if this bill is implemented, it will cause the banks to no longer be placed under the $50 billion threshold, except by way of regulation from the prudential regulator, which won't happen easily.

MetLife is a pretty good example of what can happen. Currently, MetLife is in court. They are tied up in court, probably indefinitely, because the big banks have big bucks, and they are

going to fight being designated as SIFIs.

MetLife is fighting it. It is an insurance company, of course, but it is fighting it. If they are going to fight the designation, you have to have some way to put them under the stress test, under the living wills test. This has to be done.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself an additional 30 seconds.

If you don't have a trigger, it is not likely to be done, because the banks are going to fight you all the way through the courts and tie you up for years.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN), a very hardworking member of our committee.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, all businesses in America, large and small, should be fairly and predictably regulated, including those companies in the financial services industry.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when the real estate market collapsed in 2008, Washington did what it does often. It overreacted by imposing smothering layers of new regulations on small community banks, credit unions, and retirement advisers, when it should, Mr. Speaker, have focused its attention on eight or nine large, major money center banks that have tentacles that run throughout our economy.

Mr. Speaker, the goal of Dodd-Frank was to increase regulations on financial institutions that could bring down the economy if they got in trouble.

Now, the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that this regulatory net was cast so wide, it caught our small community banks and credit unions in having to deal with costly, unnecessary, and redundant regulations.

I travel the State of Maine, Mr. Speaker, and meet with our small financial institutions. They tell me: BRUCE, we are spending so much time and money hiring compliance officers to deal with these regulations instead of loan officers to make sure we get money out to our families and our small businesses can borrow and grow.

God forbid, Mr. Speaker, that the Bangor Savings Bank or the Maine Family Federal Credit Union in Lewiston gets into trouble. If they do, they will not bring down this economy.

Why in the world should they be imposing or have to deal with this additional layer of regulations as they are designated as a SIFI?

Mr. LUETKEMEYER's bill is a terrific bill. It is common sense. It is bipartisan. It will require the Federal Reserve to finally factor in the role and the function of these financial institutions in the economy, instead of arbitrarily based on assets.

This means, Mr. Speaker, that our community banks and our pension advisers, our retirement advisers and credit unions will be able to focus on growing the economy and extending credit so our families can get a home mortgage, maybe buy another automobile, or maybe one of the lobstermen can get a new diesel put in their boat for the season.

The is a good bill, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful that Mr. LUETKEMEYER introduced H.R. 3312. I encourage everybody on both sides of the aisle to help American businesses and families by supporting this bill.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the amount of time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS).

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to talk about what is happening in this country with this administration at this time. It is so related to what we are trying to explain about what this bill attempts to do.

First of all, let me just share with you that committee Democrats have made repeated attempts to follow the Trump money trail and investigate the suspicious financial dealings of the President, his immediate family and his associates, including their possible involvement in illicit Russian financial schemes.

Since March, Democrats have written six letters—two to committee Chairman HENSARLING, one to Deutsche Bank, one to Deutsche Bank CEO John Cryan, two to Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, and another to Deutsche Bank's external counsel, requesting their cooperation in exposing the scope of Russian influence on the Trump administration.

I have also written two letters on my own—one to Attorney General Jeff Sessions, another to Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, regarding the Department of Justice's investigation into Deutsche Bank's Russian mirror trading scheme.

On March 10, 2017, committee Democrats called on Chairman HENSARLING to use the full range of the committee's investigative powers to examine Deutsche Bank's Russian money laundering operation and assess the integrity of the U.S. Department of Justice's ongoing investigation into the scheme, given the Trump administration's conflicts of interest in the matter and the revelations of Attorney General Sessions' communications with the Russian Ambassador. Chairman HENSARLING failed to respond. We have heard nothing from our chairman.

On May 23, 2017, committee Democrats sent a letter to Deutsche Bank's chief executive officer, John Cryan, requesting information on two internal reviews the bank reportedly conducted, the first on its mirror trading scandal and the second on whether the accounts of President Donald Trump and his family members held at the bank had any ties to Russia.

Deutsche Bank's external counsel responded, stating that Deutsche Bank was unable to cooperate with the request, citing privacy concerns.

On May 23, 2017, committee Democrats all sent a letter to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin requesting that FinCEN provide any records to the committee that detail President Trump's financial ties to Russia as well as those of his family, his family members, and associates. Secretary Mnuchin failed to respond.

It goes on and on and on. Letters were sent on June 21. We sent a follow-up letter to Deutsche Bank. On and on and on.

What is important about all of this is Deutsche Bank is known and has been fined for many things, including money laundering. So, knowing that, what we are doing here is lifting oversight on Deutsche Bank, one of the fallen banks that would be covered by this bill.

I think this is outrageous. I think people should know what this bill is all about and how it is going to put us at greater risk. We are dealing with limiting the oversight of banks like Deutsche Bank.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, how much time does the other gentleman from Texas have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) has 4½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I might point out to the ranking member that she should read her mail, since I responded to her letter.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DAVIDSON), a hardworking member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. DAVIDSON. Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to join Mr. LUETKEMEYER in supporting his bill. I am so encouraged that this is a bipartisan bill.

Listening to the Members opposed, I am concerned that the bill is being highly mischaracterized. It occurred to me that when the Member opposed mentioned that 97 percent of banks would not be affected by this, that it automatically excludes 97 percent of banks from being affected by this.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER doesn't pick a number and say big is bad. He says: Let's judge the bank by its behavior, not by the size of its balance sheet.

This is a rational, measured approach, and that is why it has drawn bipartisan support. It is focused on solving the problem, not driving regulatory burdens.

Let me explain that the SIFI designation is an arbitrary number, and it subjects banks with $50 billion or more in assets to the same standards as trillion-dollar globally important financial banks.

So a bank with $51 billion would be regulated the same way as JPMorgan Chase, for example.

Even former Chair Barney Frank, as has been mentioned, seized the problem. Janet Yellen seized the problem.

People look at it and say: What can be a solution?

The Federal Reserve has seen a possible solution as judging the character of the business activity. Mr. LUETKEMEYER's bill firmly addresses that.

A simple asset threshold captures numerous banks that are widely perceived to be no threat to financial stability. It also distorts growth decisions.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, Mr. LUETKEMEYER might have had a good idea, but what we have really seen is an arbitrary FSOC and a Republican-controlled Federal Reserve Board that operates without quorums. This may be a good idea, but until we have a financial regulatory framework where we can trust the people in charge, I think that we should not support this bill.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH), a member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3312.

This bill is really important to Hoosiers back home. Hoosiers back home aren't checking the financial statements of banks around the country. What they are checking are their own financial statements.

According to the FDIC, the total balance of commercial and industrial loans smaller than $1 million has increased by only 0.18 percent since 2018, when the U.S. GDP has grown by 26 percent.

The total balance of nonfarm residential loans has declined by almost 25 percent during the same time period. This is adversely impacting Hoosiers back home and their ability to get capital and loans to be able to start businesses.

Frequently, I get the opportunity to stand up here and talk about one-size-fits-all regulation. But in this particular instance, we are truly talking about one-size-restricting-all regulation.

Chairman LUETKEMEYER uses a very strong approach. Instead of, as the architects of section 165 in Dodd-Frank, using size as a proxy for risk, he simply said: Let's use their underlying risk as an indicator of their actual risk. He does this by using a system already put in place by the Federal Reserve in actually tracking the variables that indicate risk of an institution.

I strongly support the measure. I continue to strongly support the removal of arbitrary lines in regulation.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS).

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to correct my chairman—I do not like to do this—however, I did check my mail, and I have discovered that when he responded to the August 11 letter, he let me know that he would not use his subpoena power to help us out. He did not respond at all to the March 10 letter.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I happen to have the letter in my hand. I would be happy to share it with the ranking member if she has misfiled it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER), a Democratic colleague.

□ 1615

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this bipartisan legislation and to thank my friend, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, for working across the aisle with me on this commonsense measure.

This bill is a smart, thoughtful effort to perfect and improve our financial safeguards, cut burdensome regulation, and spur economic growth. Developed with Democrats and Republicans on the committee, it addresses our systematic risk in the financial sector.

With these changes, we can free up resources at smaller banks to get loans into the hands of New Jersey small businesses, families, and consumers, ultimately growing our American economy. It does so by making practical changes to protect New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this bipartisan legislation to help constituents in New Jersey's Fifth District.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we have to reemphasize that Chairman Frank is not supporting this bill. I thought that the initial comment would be sufficient, but, again, I will read what Chairman Frank has delivered to us. He indicates that H.R. 3312 significantly increases the need for subjective judgments by the regulators and very much weakens the ability of financial institutions to rely on clear rules to guide their decisionmaking. Chairman Frank does not support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is not before the House because banks are losing money. Banks are making record profits: $171 billion last year. The big banks, a 4.8 percent growth rate; and community banks, an 8.3 percent growth rate.

This bill is before the House because the big banks want to again get back to business as usual, which will allow them to do many of the things that brought this economy to its knees.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have 30 banks with assets in excess of $5 trillion. These banks have been designated as SIFIs for a reason. They ought to have to let the regulators know how they can be wound down in the event there is a crisis in the economy. They ought to undergo stress tests.

If a consumer wants a loan, the consumer has to demonstrate creditworthiness. If banks of this size are going to remain in business, they ought to let us know what their liquidity is and be required to have a certain amount of liquidity that will cause them to stay in business, even when we are faced with a crisis. They ought to be tested for their creditworthiness. That is what we currently have.

If the $50 billion threshold is released, then they will be placed under the designation of SIFI only by regulators; and MetLife is proof positive that it is difficult, if not impossible, to do.

AIG went under simply because it was already known to be a systemically important institution.

Mr. Speaker, we must defeat this bill. I call on my colleagues to vote against it. It is a big-bank-bonus bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First, I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Texas, for coming to the floor. I know how busy he is with his impeachment activities, so we are glad he has had an opportunity to come and share his views on this particular bill.

He spent a lot of time telling us who wasn't for the bill, but he didn't tell us who was for it. And I would, once again, inform my friend, my colleague from Texas, that not only is every single Republican member of the House Financial Services Committee for this bill, but a majority of the Democrats on the committee are for this bill. Perhaps that is why he could find so few Democrats to speak out against it.

So what we have heard, Mr. Speaker, is my colleague and the ranking member vociferously defend the whole idea that there should be institutions that are too big to fail. As they defend the Dodd-Frank Act, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that, yet again, the big banks have gotten bigger. Under their regulatory scheme, the big banks have gotten bigger and the communities banks have become fewer.

And now what they are telling us is: Oh, no, we have got to protect this regime.

Well, I don't believe in it. But what I do believe in, Mr. Speaker, and what Mr. LUETKEMEYER believes in, is that we need to try to find some bipartisan solutions, some common ground, to try to make some common sense out of some of these regulations.

What is fascinating to me is so many of the Obama-era regulators have said this $50 billion threshold makes no sense. Usually, my Democratic colleagues will quote Mr. Tarullo, they

will quote Janet Yellen, or they will quote Mr. Curry. Well, all of them have said that the $50 billion threshold is essentially arbitrary and does not work.

So, at the end of the day, what it is doing, Mr. Speaker, is putting in an additional regulatory burden on banks that pose no systemic risk to our economy, making it more difficult to extend credit to hardworking Americans who need it. But for people who just voted against tax relief for hardworking Americans, I guess that is what I would expect.

Now they want to make sure that they don't have tax relief, they don't have mortgages, and they don't have credit cards. That is what they are defending, Mr. Speaker, and it is wrong.

On a bipartisan basis, today, I believe we are going to vote for H.R. 3312 and make some sense out of this SIFI rule, and we will have a better America tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 667, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. For what purpose does the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) seek recognition?

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to remind my colleague that he will have another chance to vote on impeachment and to ask for a recorded vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is not recognized for debate.

The question now is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on passage of H.R. 3312 will be followed by 5-minute votes on:

The motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1536, by the yeas and nays; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 288, nays 130, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 694]

YEAS—288

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blunt Rochester
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Cárdenas
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Clay
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kihuen
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Larsen (WA)
Latta
Lawson (FL)
Lewis (MN)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McEachin
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smucker
Soto
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Torres
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Veasey
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—130

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Crowley
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan (TN)
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Evans
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Johnson (GA)
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Khanna
Kildee
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Matsui
McCollum
McGovern
McNerney
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shea-Porter
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Vargas
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—13

Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Cummings
Jeffries
Kennedy
Loudermilk
Lynch
Messer
Napolitano
Pocan
Renacci
Scalise
Smith (TX)

□ 1649

Ms. JACKSON LEE changed her vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. RICHMOND changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I inadvernty missed the vote for final passage of H.R. 3312, the Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted ''Nay'' on rollcall 694.

COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN COMMERCIAL VEHICLES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1536) to designate a human trafficking prevention coordinator and to expand the scope of activities authorized under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's outreach and education program to include human trafficking prevention activities, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 418, nays 1, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 695]

YEAS—418

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—1

Gaetz

NOT VOTING—12

Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Cummings
Kennedy
Loudermilk
Messer
Napolitano
Pocan
Renacci
Scalise
Smith (TX)
Thompson (MS)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1656

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during rollcall votes No. 694 through 695 due to a death in my family. Had I been present, I would have voted "Nay" on H.R. 3312, Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017, and "Yea" on S. 1536, Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 227, nays 180, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 23, as follows:

[Roll No. 696]

YEAS—227

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Beatty
Bergman
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Buchanan
Budd
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clay
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Cook
Cooper
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Cuellar
Culberson
Curtis
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeGette
DeLauro
Demings
Dent
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Estes (KS)
Evans
Ferguson
Fleischmann
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gallego
Gianforte
Gibbs
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Green, Al
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck
Hensarling
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hollingsworth
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kildee
King (IA)
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Larsen (WA)
Latta
Lawrence
Lewis (MN)
Lipinski
Long
Love
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McHenry
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meeks
Meng
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Pascrell
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Pingree
Polis
Posey
Quigley
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (KY)
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Schneider
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Sessions
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Suozzi
Takano
Taylor
Thornberry
Tiberi
Titus
Trott
Tsongas
Wagner
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Womack
Yarmuth
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)

NAYS—180

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Bera
Biggs
Bishop (GA)
Blackburn
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)

Brownley (CA)	Hice, Jody B.	Pearce
Buck	Hill	Perry
Bucshon	Holding	Peters
Burgess	Hoyer	Peterson
Byrne	Hudson	Pittenger
Capuano	Jackson Lee	Poe (TX)
Carbajal	Jayapal	Poliquin
Cárdenas	Jenkins (KS)	Price (NC)
Carson (IN)	Jenkins (WV)	Raskin
Carter (GA)	Johnson (OH)	Ratcliffe
Castor (FL)	Jones	Reed
Cheney	Jordan	Reichert
Clark (MA)	Joyce (OH)	Rice (NY)
Clarke (NY)	Katko	Richmond
Cleaver	Keating	Rogers (AL)
Clyburn	Khanna	Rohrabacher
Cohen	Kihuen	Rokita
Comer	Kilmer	Ros-Lehtinen
Conaway	Kind	Rosen
Connolly	King (NY)	Roskam
Costa	Kinzinger	Rouzer
Courtney	Knight	Ruiz
Crawford	LaHood	Ryan (OH)
Crist	Lance	Sarbanes
Crowley	Langevin	Schakowsky
Curbelo (FL)	Larson (CT)	Schiff
DeFazio	Lawson (FL)	Schrader
Delaney	Lee	Scott, Austin
DelBene	Levin	Sensenbrenner
Denham	Lewis (GA)	Serrano
DeSantis	LoBiondo	Sewell (AL)
Diaz-Balart	Loebsack	Sinema
Doyle, Michael F.	Lofgren	Sires
	Lowenthal	Slaughter
Emmer	Luján, Ben Ray	Smucker
Espaillat	Lynch	Soto
Esty (CT)	MacArthur	Stivers
Faso	Maloney, Carolyn B.	Swalwell (CA)
Fitzpatrick		Tenney
Flores	Maloney, Sean	Thompson (CA)
Foxx	Mast	Thompson (PA)
Fudge	McGovern	Tipton
Gaetz	McKinley	Torres
Gallagher	McSally	Turner
Garrett	Meehan	Upton
Gomez	Moore	Valadao
Gonzalez (TX)	Neal	Vargas
Gottheimer	Nolan	Veasey
Graves (GA)	Norcross	Velázquez
Graves (LA)	O'Halleran	Visclosky
Graves (MO)	Palazzo	Walberg
Green, Gene	Pallone	Watson Coleman
Grijalva	Palmer	Wittman
Gutiérrez	Panetta	Woodall
Hastings	Paulsen	Yoder
Herrera Beutler	Payne	Zeldin

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Tonko

NOT VOTING—23

Beyer	Kennedy	Rush
Bridenstine	Lieu, Ted	Sánchez
Brooks (AL)	Loudermilk	Scalise
Correa	McCaul	Simpson
Cummings	Messer	Smith (TX)
Farenthold	Napolitano	Thompson (MS)
Garamendi	Pocan	Vela
Gohmert	Renacci	

□ 1704

Mr. POE of Texas changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the Journal was approved.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "Yea" on rollcall No. 694, "Yea" on rollcall No. 695, and "Yea" on rollcall No. 696.

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, the National Park Foundation was established by Congress and President Johnson.

The National Park Foundation is the official charity of America's national parks and the nonprofit partner to the National Park Service. For 50 years, they have raised funds, private funds, to help protect more than 84 million acres of national parks through critical conservation and preservation efforts.

The National Park Foundation has helped safeguard our heritage and engage that next generation of national park enthusiasts by connecting us to the parks right in our own backyard. Although they haven't been around as long as the National Park Service, they have played an important role in strengthening and enhancing our parks.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to thank the National Park Foundation for its work to help protect and preserve the crown jewels of America, our national parks, monuments, and battlefields. Our country looks forward to another 50 years of your great work.

KEEPING OUR PROMISE

(Mr. ESPAILLAT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I looked at the calendar today and saw there was no Dream Act vote on the floor this week. As we approach tomorrow, a potential CR, Republican and Democrats must support this bipartisan Dream Act.

These are hardworking men and women, young people. They are doctors and artists, scientists and police officers, mentors and EMTs. These are Americans through and through.

We made a promise that we must keep. We need to protect the rights and principles that our country was founded on and thrives upon.

We demand a vote for a clean Dream Act today. We demand a vote for a clean Dream Act tomorrow.

MAKING HEALTH INSURANCE AFFORDABLE

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of one of my constituents who has been severely impacted by the rising costs under the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. Watts, from Chico, California, was recently notified by his insurer that his health coverage will shut down at the end of the year. In its place, he was offered another plan that ''may meet his needs'' and that he will be automatically enrolled. That is right. They just sign him up for one.

The problem is, this plan, which covers an adult and two teens, sees his monthly premium skyrocket to $2,067 per month, an increase of $831. That is a huge increase, 67 percent, costing him upwards of $9,900 per year in new costs, bringing his total costs for health insurance to nearly $25,000 per year.

Unsurprisingly, Mr. Watts is no longer able to afford his insurance, and many in Northern California and across the country currently find themselves in the same position.

Sadly, my office staff and I have heard this story countless times. Many in my district were pretty happy with their insurance before ObamaCare, and now, under the individual mandate, they are forced to pay for insurance they can't afford.

But with the repeal of the individual mandate, as in H.R. 1, which passed today, individuals like Mr. Watts are not punished for failing to purchase unaffordable insurance. Instead, we will seek to allow affordable choices for Americans to choose themselves.

SHAME ON REPUBLICANS

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, it is a dark day; $3 trillion in revenue cuts, in tax breaks; three quarters of that goes to corporations under the premise that they will use that money to employ people. The last time they got this kind of a break, 93 percent of the money went to stock dividends, buybacks, and executive bonuses, and it will be no different this time—squandering America's wealth for the wealthiest among us.

Eighty-three percent of the remainder goes to people who earn over $400,000 a year. They are going to trickle down on us, yet again.

At the same time, there is no infrastructure package. The Trump administration, the DOT says, we just don't know where we can find the money.

Well, imagine if they used a fraction of these tax giveaways for infrastructure—15,000 jobs per billion invested. We could have had $1.5 million with 3 percent of the money they just wasted on these tax cuts.

Shame on them.

BERKS COUNTY CAREER PATHWAYS ALLIANCE

(Mr. SMUCKER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize some wonderful work being done for our students in Berks County, Pennsylvania. The Berks County Career Pathways Alliance is an initiative to create a countywide framework to engage K–12 students in career awareness, work-based learning opportunities, and financial literacy.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken in this Chamber before about our work to prepare students for our 21st century economy, but today I get to stand up

here and share the work that is being done by the people on the ground fighting every day to make a difference in the lives of the students in their communities.

The Alliance brings together educators, school administrators, private business, and the local Chamber of Commerce, a cohesive group of diverse organizations, to make real progress toward improving the workforce pipeline in Berks County. Their goal is to have 18 school districts in Berks County adopt their framework and eventually make it a statewide initiative.

This initiative is being led by Dr. Jill Hackman, the executive director of the Berks County Intermediate Unit, and the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance. Thanks to their tireless efforts, and the efforts of many others involved, students will be exposed to new learning opportunities that can open the door to family sustaining careers.

I am very proud of the work being done in my district, and I look forward to seeing their initiative change the lives of some of the 70,000 K–12 students in Berks County.

THE TAX CUT IS A DEBACLE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hand the vote tally for the ''Tax No Jobs'' bill. It is interesting, when you are asked about the tax bill, they put the word ''jobs.''

This was a very close vote, and 12 Republicans understood this was the worst vote, worst bill in the history of the United States; and the reason is, of course, because tens of millions of middle class households and those who need a tax break will not get it. $1.7 trillion in debt.

It eliminates tax benefits that directly impact the middle class, it results in 13 million fewer Americans with health insurance, it adds over $2 trillion in deficit spending, and it triggers PAYGO's automatic spending cuts to mandatory programs.

So let me tell you, my voice is a little rough, but my heart is strong. Social Security to the American people, it is going to be cut. Medicare, it is going to be cut. The Medicaid, for those in nursing homes like my friend who I visited over the weekend, will be cut.

And you know what? There will be no answer in jobs of corporations who got low tax rates, lower than you.

This is a debacle so bad that it has to come back and we have to vote again for it.

My voice is a little rough, but I am going out there to tell the American people that this is the worst calamity since we collapsed under the past Republican administration. Vote ''no'' every time you see this bill because it is ''no'' for the American people.

□ 1715

IN MEMORY OF AGNES DOSTER

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of Mrs. Agnes Doster, who passed away on Monday, December 4, at the age of 79.

Originally from Forsyth, Georgia, Mrs. Doster worked for 40 years in the Secretary of the Senate's office in the Georgia State Capitol. She served in a number of different capacities there with dedication since 1968, always making the Georgia State Capitol run more efficiently, while promoting good government.

Outside of her time working as a civil servant, Mrs. Doster was very active in the First Baptist Church of Snellville for over 45 years. There, she sang in the choir, played hand bells, directed weddings, and taught the 2-year-old Sunday school class.

She is survived by family all over the State of Georgia, including her husband, sister, children, grandchildren, and 30 nieces and nephews.

Mrs. Doster's bright spirit will surely be missed by everyone around the Georgia State Capitol.

WHAT A DISASTER

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, what a disaster. The American people wanted a Tax Code that works for them. Instead, my esteemed colleagues just passed a tax plan that only works for crony capitalists and oligarchs.

The GOP tax plan is scamming hardworking American families in order to line the pockets of millionaire real estate developers and people who paint their toilet fixtures in their private jets gold.

Mr. Speaker, hardworking American taxpayers want jobs, investments in our highways and railroads, fully funded children's healthcare, state-of-the-art schools, and well-paid teachers.

Oligarchs who own gilded skyscrapers, gold-leafed golf courses, and real estate passthroughs want to drown in the excesses of wealth.

The American people wrote their Representatives. They called us. They marched in the Halls of the Capitol for a democratic Tax Code. Instead, they got a scam that takes away money from schools, police officers, fire departments, and families. But I guess money talks.

THE PASSAGE OF H.R. 1 IS THE FIRST STEP

(Ms. TENNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, the passage of today's bill is the first step to providing desperately needed once-in-a-generation relief from the failed status quo, especially in New York State.

Under this bill, the typical American family making $73,000 a year will see a tax cut of $2,059, and low- and middle-income New Yorkers can finally see an immediate raise in their January and February paychecks.

As a single working mom and a person who cared for my elderly and aging parents, I and my New York colleagues fought an uphill battle to include provisions facing elimination that are vital to seniors, single parents, struggling families, and overburdened job creators, many of whom have left New York State in vast numbers.

Despite the fact that these provisions faced the very real threat of elimination, our efforts were successful in securing the historic tax credit for a State like New York, with many of our Nation's most historic and most important national landmarks, expanding the SALT deduction—the State and local tax deduction—childcare and dependent care credits, and continuing the deductibility of medical expenses, to assist our most vulnerable seniors in defraying high medical costs.

In New York's 22nd District, 99 percent of itemizers deduct less than $10,000 in property tax, the cap which represents the new deduction.

Due to Albany's mismanagement, all the counties I represent are in the top 36 highest property tax rates compared with home value nationwide. This bill will provide relief on the Federal level, while, finally, finally, incentivizing Albany to respect taxpayers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana). The gentlewoman is no longer recognized.

Members are reminded to heed the gavel.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE NEED TAX REFORM

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the American people need and want real tax reform, but rather than passing a strong, inclusive bipartisan bill focused on helping hardworking middle class families, today Republicans passed a bill filled with massive corporate giveaways and loopholes for the ultrawealthy.

For example, the top 1 percent in our country will receive over 82 percent of the entire tax benefit in the bill they passed today.

As long as Congress continues to pass legislation for partisan political reasons that seriously serve special corporate interests instead of the families that are struggling just to get by every day, where lobbyists have more input in the writing of this legislation than many Members of Congress, the American people lose.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this legislation today. It is a disappointment and a huge lost opportunity to actually help so many struggling families all across the country.

WE NEED TO RESTART PUERTO RICO'S ECONOMY

(Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, Puerto Rico's economy is the most vital aspect in bringing back some sense of normalcy to the lives of 3.4 million American citizens on the island after the devastating impact of both Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Puerto Rico's economy had already been in a decline prior to these unprecedented natural disasters, due mostly to the island's outdated and discriminatory territorial status.

Tax reform presented this Congress with the historic opportunity to, even if only partially, fix these longstanding inequities by granting Puerto Rico equal treatment to that of the 50 States.

While we are grateful for the extension of federally qualified opportunity zones in this bill to the island, I believe that there is broad recognition on both sides of the aisle that more needs to be done in the future.

Congress must live up to its responsibility and act decisively to end years of improvisation by implementing sustainable pro-growth economic policies that are based upon the bedrock principles of citizen equality and political empower, and my constituents deserve no less.

AMTRAK CASCADES 501

(Ms. JAYAPAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. Yesterday, my home State and my home district suffered a great tragedy. Amtrak Cascades 501, traveling from Seattle to Portland, Oregon, carrying 80 passengers and seven crewmembers, derailed near Olympia, Washington.

Early reports are that at least three passengers have died and nearly 100 people needed hospital care. My heart and prayers go out to all those families as they deal with this tragedy.

Our office stands ready to help any constituents in any way that we can. For up-to-date information, friends and family on Amtrak Cascades 501 can also call 1–800–523–9101.

I also want to thank our first responders for their skill and their courage. This could have been far worse without them.

But as Amtrak, the National Transportation Safety Board, and State and local officials help on the scene, there are still so many questions, like: Why was the train going 50 miles over the speed limit as it rounded the curve? Why was the train not using positive train control technology to slow the train down? How, Mr. Speaker, can we be sure that this never happens again?

Mr. Speaker, I will do everything I can to ensure that the investigation and our affected families have the resources and the support necessary to get the facts in the coming days and months.

HONORING RILETTA CREAM

(Mr. NORCROSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a very special woman, Mrs. Riletta Cream, from Camden County, but was known not only from the city she was born in, but the entire State of New Jersey. She passed away, unfortunately, yesterday.

Mrs. Cream was a kind, gentle, and loving woman, but had special character, strength, and conviction.

She was known as an institution for education and public service. She was a friend, a mentor, an educator, and a dear, dear friend to so many of those children who went to her school.

She was a Camden city native, and was a principal of Camden City High School for over a decade. She served as a role model for students, teachers, and administrators. After retiring, she didn't give up. She then ran as a freeholder, and was elected time after time, continuing to serve the community.

She led projects at the time called Tech 2000 to make sure there was a computer in every child's classroom and at their desk. She fought for libraries when funding was short. She knew the value of education, whether it was going to college or to a trade school.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will join me in mourning the loss of this shining light in my hometown. Mrs. Cream accomplished so much and gave so many years of service. May she rest in peace.

IN HONOR OF LILLIE BIGGINS

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my neighbor in east Fort Worth and my friend, Lillie Biggins, who will soon be retiring from the Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital after 45 years of service.

Lillie joined the Texas Health Fort Worth family back in 1997, serving as vice president of operations. Her role was critical in overseeing major departments, such as emergency services, trauma services, and restorative services.

During her tenure, she helped cultivate a vision of success for the Texas Health Fort Worth community. Not only did Lillie dedicate her time in the health community, but she also volunteers all around the city of Fort Worth. Lillie often mentors and helps others in the area of health, education, youth, senior citizen services, businesses, and so many areas in our city that are underserved.

For her dedicated service to the community, she has been awarded so many awards, including her induction into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Lillie all the best as she moves on into her relaxing retirement, but I know that she probably won't be that relaxed and that she is going to be very active in the community. I wish her the best in the future.

THE REPUBLICAN TAX SCAM

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, what do Iran, Ebenezer Scrooge, and the Republican tax scam have in common?

Well, they are all ruthless, cutthroat, coldblooded, heartless, and stingy.

That is why I voted ''no'' on the Republican tax scam, and if I could have added an H to the no, I would have.

This legislation gives 83 percent of the tax cuts to the wealthiest 1 percent, while raising taxes on 86 million middle-income families.

The numbers prove that this is a tax cut for the ultrawealthy and not for the middle class, and anyone who tries to deceive you into thinking otherwise, shame on them.

Adding insult to injury, this tax cut adds $1.5 trillion to the national debt, and Republicans will soon use the debt to justify their ultimate plan, which is to cut Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Today's vote proves that Republicans care more about the wealthy and big multinational corporations than they do for ordinary people.

Merry Christmas to the wealthy, who already have plenty, and to their special interest lobbyists. And to the rest of America struggling to make ends meet, bah humbug.

THE CORKER KICKBACK

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as Republicans rammed through their tax gravy train for billionaires, we learned of another carve-out to megainvestors in real estate.

This carve-out allows real estate businesses to take advantage of a new tax break, which was parachuted into the Senate bill to swing Republican votes, like Senator BOB CORKER.

Drain the swamp?

The Republicans are laughing all the way to the bank.

A tax expert at Boston College said: This is a big windfall for real estate developers like Donald Trump.

So let me ask: Where's the windfall for the middle class? Where is the guarantee that those investors who make out big time are going to invest their money here in the United States of America and stop shipping our jobs overseas? Where is the guarantee for better wages?

We have seen this movie before.

Cut taxes for the rich and the economy grows?

Well, that didn't happen under the Bush tax cuts.

President John Kennedy said: ''If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.''

Mr. Speaker, this Republican tax scam locks in 83 percent of the breaks in favor of the richest among us, but a day of reckoning is coming November 2018.

□ 1730

RUSSIA AND THE ADMINISTRATION

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, recently there has been a real flurry by the Republicans here in Congress to disparage and call names to the FBI and to the Justice Department, but it is right after Michael Flynn pled guilty, right after George Papadopoulos pled guilty in the investigation into Russia and potential collusion with the administration.

Now my question is: What are you afraid of? Why are you getting in such a big rush to complain about these folks now? What are you hiding? What is it that is bothering you? Let the detectives do their work to figure out what happened between Russia and this administration.

I mean, it is like we have been asking for the President's tax returns for ages. What is he hiding? We won't even know how much money he gets to save under this terrible tax bill that was passed today by the Republican Congress.

So I just want to know: Why are you so worried? What are you afraid of? What are you hiding?

FEMA HOTEL VOUCHERS MUST BE EXTENDED

(Mr. SOTO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, over 250,000 of my fellow Puerto Ricans have arrived in Florida since Hurricane Maria. The tax bill on top of that absolutely is going to decimate the manufacturing sector there, which is going to only hasten further of my brothers and sisters to my home State, the great State of Florida.

We have done our best as a host State to ease school enrollment for our young people, to have instate tuition for our college students coming here from the island. Our hospitals are doing their best to meet the challenge, and many are getting jobs, although not as high paying as we would like.

We also are putting bills forward to speed up Medicaid qualification and expand Section 8 housing. But, most critically, Florida faces a housing crisis of epic proportions.

On January 15, the FEMA hotel vouchers expire. This must be extended for another 6 months. In addition, we are leading a bipartisan effort in Florida to directly seek approval of FEMA direct lease vouchers so that people can have a place to stay.

I am appointing a bipartisan Federal task force on Puerto Rican arrivals in central Florida to help in this very good work.

PASSAGE OF THE TAX CUT AND WHAT IT MEANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Chair for this time to talk about something that is rather important. Something we did today was to pass a horrendous tax cut that doesn't meet this fundamental goal.

Really, whenever we legislate here, we really ought to keep in mind our values: What is the purpose? What are we trying to accomplish? What is the goal? What is the human value that we are trying to put in place?

I often use this because it is here in Washington at the FDR Memorial. It is on the marble there: ''The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much.''

Let me read that again, Franklin Delano Roosevelt: ''The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.''

I want to use this as my compass, my guiding light on where we need to go. So this afternoon, this House of Representatives, by a vote of, I think, just over 200 voted to enact a tax law that goes in exactly the opposite direction of what FDR would say is our value, our goal.

Here it is. The Speaker of the House came here to bring down the gavel to announce the vote that he was so proud to have.

Eighty percent of the individual tax cuts don't go to the poor, don't go to the middle class. They go to the top 1 percent.

How does that fit with what Franklin Delano Roosevelt said to the American Nation during the height of the Great Depression?

No. You may as well take Franklin Delano Roosevelt's words, turn them on their head, because this House didn't follow the edict, didn't follow the value, but did exactly the opposite: gave away, to the top 1 percent, even greater wealth.

How could that be? Why would they do that? Why would they do that?

Well, I don't know why they would do it, but they surely did it. And in addition to that, not just the wealthy 1 percent, the wealthy 10 percent, why don't you add American corporations to that who are awash in cash? $2.5 trillion in the bank accounts of American corporations, and they don't know how to spend it to create jobs in the United States.

Instead, the Republicans, today, decided they needed $1.43 billion additional cash as a result of the tax cut that no Democrats, not a one, but every Republican voted for, $1.43 billion—the number is from the Joint Committee on Taxation—of new after-tax revenue to American corporations.

And what do you suppose they are going to do with that? Create jobs in the United States? Expand their manufacturing? No. Or higher wages for their workers? No.

I will tell you what they intend to do with it. This is it. The corporate tax giveaway will give Wells Fargo an 18 percent earnings increase.

How do they intend to spend it? Hint: Not on jobs.

In his own words, Tim Sloan, CEO of Wells Fargo, December 2017—I think that is this month—said: ''Is it our goal to increase return to shareholders and do we have an excess amount of capital? The answer . . . is yes. So our expectation should be that we will continue to increase our dividend and our share buybacks next year and the year after that and the year after that.''

All right, Mr. Sloan. You can thank the Republicans, because when you buy back your shares, when you increase your dividends, guess what. The stock price goes up, and we know that your compensation is based on stock price. Are you going to use that extra money for loans to small businesses? to farmers? No, you are not. You are not going to make more loans.

This is replicated across the American corporate culture. This is not unique. This new after-tax bonus that the Republicans are giving to American corporations is going to be used for the benefit of the wealthy. So you can add, if you will, to the tax cuts that are coming as a result of the reduction in the top income tax bracket for individuals from 39.6 percent to 37 percent, you can add to it, but, by the way, their investment portfolio is going to go up also.

This tax program is an abomination, and it is going to hurt every American over time.

I am joined here tonight by my colleagues who are probably as riled up about this as I am. I am not sure which one of them came in first.

I yield to the gentleman from the State of Oregon, PETER DEFAZIO, my colleague.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for explaining in some detail what the impacts of this legislation are and who is going to benefit. The gentleman is a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, on which I am the ranking member.

I just want to say, we have been waiting for the trillion-dollar Trump infrastructure plan for a year now, and what we are hearing is, well, they just can't afford it. We can't afford to rebuild America's infrastructure.

So let's compare the impact of a few of these tax cuts to what we could have done or could do with that money. Every tax cut means the government forgoes revenue.

So let's just take the estate tax. Doubling the exemption from an $11 million to $22 million estate, that costs $100 billion. If we invested that $100 billion in infrastructure, we would create 1.5 million working family wage jobs for Americans—1.5 million jobs. Now, I suppose those people with the cuts in the estate tax, they are going to trickle something on working people, probably not jobs, though.

And let's look at one of my favorites, the passthrough. We are going to help small business. Well, no, we are not really going to help small business. If you work in your small business, you are not going to get a tax break. If you are a passive investor in a so-called small business or passthrough entity, you get a big tax break.

Now, the President says he won't benefit. He owns 500 passthrough businesses according to his financial disclosure. Each one of those will give him a massive tax break.

Well, that little beauty costs $600 billion. For $600 billion, if we invested it in infrastructure, we could create 9 million jobs. These passive investors in oil and gas and real estate, how many jobs are they going to create? Again, they might hire another manservant or someone to cut the lawn or someone to wax the yacht, but it's not going to be 9 million jobs, and it isn't going to be at family wages—Davis-Bacon wages, I might say, really good wages.

Let's just look at one item, the top rate. That only goes to people who earn over $500,000 a year. They are going to get a substantial break. About $130 billion it is going to cost us to give a tax break to people who earn over $500,000 a year, more of the trickle class, and that would have created 2 million family wage jobs rebuilding America's infrastructure, and not just benefiting the people who do the work.

And it isn't just construction. It is design. It is engineering. It is small business. And just think of all the benefits in terms of the movement of goods and people and how it makes America more competitive.

What a sad day it is when, as you pointed out very well, we are giving this money—three-quarters of it goes to corporate tax breaks, three-quarters. The last time we gave corporations a big tax cut under Bush when they repatriated almost $1 trillion, 93 percent of the money was spent on stock buybacks, dividends, and executive bonuses. I don't know what they did with the other 7 percent because those same corporations actually reduced employment.

So what a false promise this is. A very, very sad day. I thank the gentleman for bringing this to the attention of the American people.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thank the ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for making a very clear case on how we might better spend our money.

I yield to the gentleman from the great State of California (Mr. MCNERNEY), my colleague and neighbor.

□ 1745

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my neighbor and friend, Mr. GARAMENDI, for holding this Special Order tonight and allowing us to talk about what this tax bill means.

Mr. Speaker, today is a sad day in America, as the House passed an unholy tax scam of a tax bill. This bill was rushed through Congress with no hearings, no Democratic votes, and no Democratic amendments. This Republican tax scam is being deceptively sold as a benefit for the middle class, but the real winners will be the big corporations and those on the cover of Forbes 400 richest Americans.

The Republican tax scam will increase the national debt by almost $2 trillion, burdening our children or giving a Christmas bonus to the wealthiest Americans.

The Republican tax scam permanently lowers the corporate tax rate while the child tax credit increase expires in 2025. In other words, big corporations get a permanent tax cut while the middle class receives a temporary tax cut.

This tax scam places a cap on State and local taxes for individuals, targeting punishment for Democratic States. This is a new low for our democracy. The Republican tax scam also repeals the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate. This will cause 13 million Americans to lose their health insurance. Taking healthcare away from those who elected us is shameful.

Earlier today, we heard from Ady Barkan, who was recently diagnosed with ALS. Many will recognize Ady from the video of him confronting Senator FLAKE in an airplane.

Ady spoke passionately this morning about the dangers of this tax scam. As he was finishing, he talked about the opportunity we have to come back and do a real tax reform, in 2018, and do so in a bipartisan way. His hope for what a good tax bill should look like struck me. He said that we should come back and negotiate a tax bill that elevates human dignity, instead of promoting human misery.

This Republican tax scam will hurt millions of Americans, many who are already struggling. We need a bipartisan solution to tax reform, not a special interest scam that benefits the wealthiest.

Mr. Speaker, Americans should have no doubt this tax scam will hurt them and the economy. Forget about investing in infrastructure. Forget about investing in education. Forget about investing in research. You better start worrying about Medicare and Social Security. This tax scam will make America a Third World nation.

Mr. Speaker, this tax scam is a disgrace.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER), my friend.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Mr. GARAMENDI, for allowing me the opportunity to speak about this.

You have FDR on the poster. He also said December 7 was a day that would live in infamy. This is a day that will live in infamy because of the tax bill that was passed today.

I don't like to speak in this hyperbolic way, but what was passed by the Republican House, and soon by the Republican Senate, is something none of us has ever seen before.

Let's just do some easy math so that people understand how unbelievable the numbers are on this.

Let's take Speaker RYAN's numbers. He said an average family of four making some $60,000 are going to save about $1,183. Okay. Of the four, that is about $275 per person. That is nice. I like it.

What he doesn't tell you, and what the Republicans refuse to talk about, is how much money is put on the credit card of the Nation for the current generation and future generations to have to pay. At best, it is $1.5 trillion.

That is a number that none of us can really understand how big it is. But let's say there are 300 million Americans. Divide 300 million into $1.5 trillion and that is $5,000. Let's do the math. You get to save $270, but you put $5,000 on the credit card.

Wait a second. That doesn't sound quite right. Where does that $4,730 go?

Well, it goes straight up to the wealthiest among us.

So all of us, as a country, as a nation, and as a people, have the obligation to pay this back.

And who gets it?

Just a very slim few. We get $270, but we have $5,000 on a credit card.

Mr. DEFAZIO talked about some of the opportunity costs that are lost from this $1.5 trillion. If the $1.5 trillion were out there to benefit all of us and just put in infrastructure, we would basically fix every road, every water work, every electric grid issue that we have; we would put broadband across the country, and all of us would benefit and make this country competitive for the next 50 years.

Instead, we say: We don't need that money. Let's just give it back to the wealthiest people in America.

Wrong. Terrible.

I serve on the Science Committee. We did some numbers in the Science Committee.

The entire budget for solar energy for our laboratories, in any given year, is about $207 million. We were having this testimony and the Republicans were picking on the managers of the solar budget line and said: You have really got to shrink this. This is costing too much money.

Well, do you know how many times 207 million goes into $1.5 trillion? Do you know how many years worth of budgets that is?

It is 7,480 years worth of solar energy budgets.

I have really been working on getting our astronauts to Mars. We have been advised that that is going to cost about $200 billion over the course of the next 16 years, to 2033, which is when the orbits of Mars and the Earth come close together and saves us a lot of space time, travel time, and is safer for our astronauts.

We could send our astronauts to Mars and back and start from scratch eight times for this tax cut that is going to be received by the rich.

It is not right. It is not American. It is the opposite of what FDR said when he said: ''The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.''

There has been some talk about how real estate developers and others are really going to benefit by this tax cut that nobody has seen until the last day or two. This is a giant piece of legislation.

One of the things the Democrats have asked for for a year now is that we want to see the President's tax returns. He has refused to disclose his tax returns. So we know he was a real estate developer, we know he is a very wealthy guy, and we know he is going to benefit in a large way—or, he might say in a huge way—by this tax cut. But we don't know how much it is going to be because he will never disclose his tax returns.

The ink is just barely dry as to how this is all going to work out. What has transpired today is really a shame. I really am disappointed in my Republican colleagues in how this matter has been rushed through.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman's final sentence was ''rushed through.'' There has not been one substantive hearing in either House. There has been a markup hearing, but that is not a substantive hearing.

No Democratic amendments have been accepted. Not one economist has been called to testify—not one accountant, not one tax lawyer. No hearings whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) to share with us his perspective.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding.

I would like to begin by thanking Mr. GARAMENDI for his relentless and passionate voice on behalf of working people, not only of California, but this country. He comes to the floor regularly and organizes these Special Order hours to help bring attention to these very important issues, and I really thank him for the opportunity to be part of it.

I want to begin where he left off, and that is the process.

We just learned today that the tax scam that the Republicans jammed through the House has to come back for another vote because they made some mistakes and didn't comply with some Senate rules.

This is what happens when you don't have hearings, you don't have thoughtful deliberation, you don't listen to witnesses who can identify problems with the bill, and instead you just bring it to the floor.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, did I hear Mr. CICILLINE correctly that the action taken here on the floor is not dispositive, but has to be modified in the Senate and brought back because they screwed up?

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, yes. Exactly. The bill will come back. So, hopefully, the American people will have another opportunity to make certain their voices are heard.

But this is not the way to do a complicated piece of legislation. The last time the Congress did tax reform, there were 400 witnesses, experts who came in, hearings month after month, because it is complicated. You want to make sure it works right. You are talking about the American economy.

None of that happened here. It was written in the dark of the night. Some of our Republican colleagues didn't see the text. This is not a way to do legislation, and it is one of the reasons that excluding the Democrats from contributing to this process was a terrible, terrible mistake.

What is the result?

We end up with a bill that does exactly the opposite of what it says it will do.

This is a job-killing bill. There is no more urgent priority that all of us have to create good-paying jobs, family supporting jobs. We Democrats have launched a very bold economic agenda that focuses on better jobs, better wages for a better future.

Millions of Americans will go to bed tonight and lie awake worried about whether or not they have enough money to pay their bills, whether they can put aside some savings for their retirement, whether they can send their kids to school.

All of those anxieties come from the fact they are not making enough money to make ends meet. They haven't seen an increase in their income in a very long time. What this tax bill does is make those problems worse. This will raise taxes on 86 million middle class families in this country.

They call it a tax cut. For those 86 middle class families, it is a tax increase. In fact, 83 percent of the tax cuts go to the top 1 percent, the very richest people in this country and the biggest corporations. It also makes more generous tax provisions that incentivize companies to ship American jobs oversees.

This is not a job creator. The idea that if we just let the people at the very top hold on to all their money, it is going to trickle down to the rest of us, is a job killer. We know that doesn't work. They tried during the Bush administration. We had the worst job loss in a generation.

It doesn't work because we all know the way you actually create jobs is you grow the middle class. You make sure folks have good-paying jobs, have more money in their pockets to buy the goods and services.

Go to any small business in my State of Rhode Island, and I am sure it is the same in the State of California, and ask a small-business owner: What do you need to add a job? What do you need to increase the number of people who work in your business?

They will say one thing: I need customers. I need people to buy what I make and sell.

That is why strengthening the middle class, raising the income of people in this country, is the way you grow the economy. This is just the opposite.

I was sickened when that bill passed the floor a few moments ago and I saw our Republican colleagues cheering and hooting and hollering like they were at a ball game. They put points on the board. They didn't put points on the board for the American people.

We are going to keep fighting for a tax reform bill that actually provides cuts to middle class families that will help to promote economic growth and create good-paying jobs.

We think the Tax Code is broken. We have always been willing to work together in a bipartisan way to make the Tax Code simpler, more competitive, and work for the American people.

That is not what the Republicans did. This is a giveaway to their donors. Some of our colleagues said it out loud: If we don't pass a tax cut, our donors told us to not call anymore. They actually said that out loud.

That is not how you write legislation. Let's not forget who sent us here and whom we should be working for.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for giving me an opportunity to contribute to the conversation tonight. This is a bill which will hurt Rhode Island, hurt this country, and hurt our economy.

Finally, it also will result in the gutting of Medicare and Medicaid. Everyone forgets this creates a $1.5 trillion debt which, by our rules, is going to result in automatic cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, student loan programs, block grants, vocational rehabilitation programs, and on and on and on.

□ 1800

They give away $1.5 trillion that we don't have. They borrow the money to give away the tax cuts, and then next year they come back and say: Oh, we have no money. We have to cut Medicare and cut Medicaid and cut Social Security and cut Pell grants and not rebuild the infrastructure of our country.

Our Republican colleagues have said this is part one. Part two will be these cuts. The American people know this, which is why this bill is overwhelmingly unpopular with the American people. They see what the Republicans are up to. They are insulting the American people. They think they haven't figured this out. They are going to dangle a couple of dollars in front of them but then whack them with huge cuts next year.

The American people are smarter than this. The Republicans are going to be held accountable. We have to fight with every fiber in our body to stop this because it is really going to hurt people.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CICILLINE for bringing to our attention some key elements here: The deficit issue, which we will discuss a little longer today. Also, the issue of really growing American jobs: growing wages, growing the future, and creating a better future for American workers. I know that has been the gentleman's passion and his work. We will go through all of those things in the day ahead.

This bill may very well become law, but I would surely like to see exactly how the President is going to do with this. I suspect this passthrough business in which he has 500 passthrough corporations—he is not an active investor. He will make out very, very well, and the working men and women of the middle class are going to lose.

I am just looking at this. This is the distribution tables from the Joint Committee on Taxation, December 18, 2017. Income category, a distribution of individual income tax side of the proposal. 2019, a small $127 million reduction for everybody making less than $10,000. In 2021, they are actually paying higher taxes. So the very, very bottom, in just 3 years, they are going to pay higher taxes.

I notice that my friend from North Carolina has joined us, and I thank him so very much for joining us. I know he has a few things on his mind, as do Mr. CICILLINE and I.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) to share with us his views on what has happened today and where we are going.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding. I am thankful that Mr. GARAMENDI has taken out this Special Order and that so many colleagues have come out to express their views on this travesty of a tax bill that was passed by the House today and that appears to be on its way to the President's desk.

Speaking of the President and how much he will benefit from that, I am sure my colleagues have heard the saying that he campaigned like a populist and is governing like a plutocrat.

Wouldn't you say this bill is a pretty good exhibit A with respect to that?

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, oh, absolutely. And I would say, also, that maybe it is an oligarch, and maybe we are creating one of those Russian oligarch societies here in which a few who are well connected to this President are going to do very, very well.

We are not talking about the Russia thing here today, but it gives me some pause to think: Why are they working so hard to end the Mueller investigation? But that is another subject for another day.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. It is, indeed. But the Russian role model seems alive and well as we look at the development of the American economy and where we may be going.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleague will agree that our Republican friends know this is a very, very unpopular piece of legislation. It is striking, isn't it? They decided that they were going to go into the hole $1.5 trillion, forget about revenue neutrality. They are going to go into the hole and borrow $1.5 trillion. Even with that, they have not been able to write a bill that most of the American people feel a benefit from. It is extraordinary.

Well, the fact is that most of the American people won't benefit from this bill. I think they are on to that. The latest polling shows that Americans oppose this bill by a margin of 2 to 1. That is, of course, before they have even felt the effects of this bill.

I think Republicans know that this opposition is only going to get stronger the more people figure out what is in this bill. That may be why they have rushed this thing to passage in the most chaotic legislative process I can ever remember.

They released thousands of pages of text on this bill last Friday and expected to vote on it today, of course.

Maybe that is the reason why they held no hearings. The less people know, the better.

Maybe that is why we have had almost no debate.

Maybe that is why they won't even allow for a complete scoring of the bill by the Joint Committee on Taxation or the Congressional Budget Office.

Maybe that desire to cover up the consequences of this is the reason they have added these questionable provisions, to provide a fig leaf of coverage for hesitant Members, skittish Members who want to be able to explain this vote back home.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard for years Republican colleagues decry fiscal irresponsibility, a lack of regular order in these Chambers and a lack of orderly, responsible procedures. They have talked about tax reform that simplifies the Tax Code, that benefits hardworking families.

Well, what we have seen today and what we have seen in recent days as this bill came to the floor is just a total contradiction of all that they have professed to stand for all these years. These words are nothing but lip service and false promises. They have sloppily drafted this bill behind closed doors. They plan to raise taxes on 86 million middle class families, and they plan to add $1.5 trillion to the national debt.

Despite claims that this bill will benefit the middle class, 83 percent of the tax cuts go to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans.

And they have also taken aim at healthcare, as if the tax travesties weren't enough. By eliminating the so-called individual mandate, the GOP tax scam will explode premiums, and it will add 13 million Americans to the ranks of the uninsured.

The bill is a windfall for large corporations that want to ship American jobs overseas. They want to cut staff. They drive down wages and salaries. This bill will facilitate that.

Plain and simple, the Republican tax scam asks hardworking families and future generations of Americans to foot the bill for huge tax cuts for corporations and for the wealthiest.

And we haven't seen the end of it yet. Do you know what is coming next? You can bet that, once this bill passes, Republicans are going to pivot. They are going to pivot in a heartbeat to pose as the guardians of fiscal rectitude.

Having abandoned any pretense of revenue neutrality in this bill and having added $1.5 trillion to the national debt and having triggered a $25 billion Medicare sequester cut, they are, all of a sudden, going to sound the alarm: Poor us. We are broke. Our country is broke. We have got to squeeze Medicaid now. We have got to squeeze Medicare. We have got to squeeze Social Security. We have got to squeeze investments in transportation, housing, education, and research.

You can see it coming. We have seen this bad Republican movie before, although never on such an epic scale.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, we don't need to guess what they are going to do. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. RYAN, has said very clearly that next year will be step two. They will take on what he calls the social safety net: Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and food stamps. That is where the cuts are going to come. This is not our words. These are the words of the leadership of this House of Representatives, the words of the Speaker.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is absolutely right. This has been in Republican budgets forever, this war on the kind of safety net provisions that so many of our fellow citizens depend on.

Fiscal rectitude, indeed. They are willing to go $1.5 trillion in the hole,

willing to borrow that money, to take the national debt to dangerous levels.

But it is a matter of being able, then, to say: Poor us. Our country is broke. We can't afford to invest in our people. We can't afford to build our infrastructure. We can't even afford to leave intact the safety net that people have spent their lives depending on.

It is a travesty. This tax bill is not just about taxes. It is about keeping faith with the American people; and that faith, this very day, has been broken by the Republican Party.

Mr. Speaker, I should say this. They had an opportunity to do this the right way. This wasn't inevitable. This wasn't written in stone. They could have worked with Democrats in Congress in a bipartisan way to figure out how to grow the economy and how to simplify our Tax Code.

Do you remember that? Simplify the Tax Code and file it on a postcard. This bill makes the Tax Code far, far more complicated. It is a dream bill for tax lawyers and accountants.

So no more simplification. That has been forgotten.

They were going to lower the tax burden for middle class families. We could have figured out how to do that without exploding the debt. There are many, many things we could have achieved together.

We have, here, a once-in-a-decade opportunity, and they have blown it, they have squandered it, and that is a source of great regret. In fact, the Republicans have jeopardized our economic future to give tax cuts, tailormade, for corporate lobbyists and, as they have actually said, to make their donors happy—to make their donors happy.

Mr. Speaker, we hope against hope that the Senate might yet do the right thing, and when they have to clean up this bill to bring it back to the House for yet another vote, that our House colleagues—it was a narrow vote. It was a narrow vote. It would be wonderful to turn it around. But we certainly need to make sure that there is no mistake how this has happened, what has happened, and we must start, this very day, to figure out how to make our economy and our country whole and to make it work for all of our people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for this opportunity. This is very, very useful to be able to have this kind of extended discussion. Even though the subject matter is not happy—we have had a very bad day here in the House of Representatives—it is important for us to pick up, move ahead, and realize the task that lies ahead.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. PRICE of North Carolina so very much. His thoughtful discussion of this is much appreciated.

He mentioned the deficit issue. $1.5 trillion does not include the interest on the $1.5 trillion. So if you were to add the interest to the $1.5 trillion, it would actually probably be over $2 trillion to $2.3 trillion that this will cost. The actual reduction in revenues, $1.5 trillion, interest on top of that another $600 billion or so, so we are looking at something really serious here.

I would like to go through some of the numbers.

I looked at this. This is not something that is off 10 years from now. This is now.

In 2019, the structural deficit that is already in place, without even talking about this additional burden of increased deficit, the underlying structural deficit in 2019 is right around $600 billion. This tax bill will add maybe $250 billion to $300 billion of additional debt in 2019. So we are going to get very close to $1 trillion of deficit in 2019.

And, by the way, the military budget is increased by about, I think it is over $50 billion. That is not paid for, so that is additional debt. That is going to be here on the floor tomorrow or the next day.

In addition to that, there is this ongoing effort to deal with the hurricanes, fires, and so forth. That is another $120 billion that is not paid for.

So if you take $120 billion, you take $50 billion, and you take the $250 billion to $300 billion in the tax bill and you add that to the $600 billion that exists to begin with, in 2019, it will be over $1 trillion of new debt. And I will guarantee that the exodus, the migration of the deficit hawks from Washington, D.C., during December of 2017 will reverse in the warmer weather, coming back next year. And those deficit hawks will come back, they will come back to Congress, and they will go right after the programs that FDR talked about: those who have the least.

Our colleague, Mr. DEFAZIO, from the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee talked about what we could do if we had the money in infrastructure or if we had that billion dollars; 15,000 people would be employed. But we won't—we won't—have an infrastructure program, and they will be back here.

□ 1815

They will be back here to make cuts in the social safety net, as the Speaker has already said he intends to do. Medicaid, $800 billion to $1 trillion reduction in Medicaid over the next decade.

Who are the beneficiaries of Medicaid?

We think they are the people on welfare. Well, yes, but some 60 percent of Medicaid recipients are seniors, seniors in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

I thank Mr. PRICE very much for joining us.

I think I am going to stop for just a moment and turn to my colleague from the great State of Maryland. If the gentleman would care to join us, I yield to Mr. RASKIN for his remarks.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to join this evening. I thank the gentleman for putting together a discussion, a Special Order on this critical piece of legislation, which is now hurdling through Congress today.

I was reflecting, Mr. Speaker, that I had never seen a riot before, and I wonder how many people have been to a riot. And then as I was watching this bill being rammed through Congress, I realized that we were observing up close a riot, a ruling class riot, a trickle-down riot, special interest riot, a 1 percent riot against the rest of the country, the 1 percent that will get 83 percent of the tax cuts, the 1 percent that is overseeing an explosion in our deficit, adding somewhere between $1½ trillion to $2.3 trillion to our deficit that we are passing on to our children and our grandchildren.

My constituents in Maryland are saying to me: Hey, if we are going to go into an extra $1½ trillion into deficits and debt, why don't we put that into an infrastructure plan for America? Why not rebuild our transportation system, the roads, the highways, the bridges, the Metro systems, the port authorities, the water systems, and cybersecurity? They are collapsing in front of our very eyes. So if we have got $1½ trillion that we are going to put on the Federal tab, let's direct it into infrastructure.

But what do they bring us instead?

Old-fashioned, shopworn, and historically discredited trickle-down economics. It never works. It never works to cut taxes on the wealthy and big corporations and hope that the profits will just magically, mysteriously rain down on the middle class and working people.

It has just never worked like that. The only thing that does work is bubble-up middle class economics that gives opportunity to everybody—the poor working people, the middle class—and the money will flow up. The rich will get richer. We have proven it. That when you actually invest in education and you invest in infrastructure and you invest in healthcare, everybody does better. And then, because everybody is doing better, everybody does better, including the wealthy. We don't need to have top-down class warfare, trickle-down economics in America. But, hey, it is hard to stop a riot once it gets going, and we are in the middle of a riot here.

They said Malcolm X could stop a riot if he wanted to. Well, PAUL RYAN could stop this riot if he wanted to. The GOP could stop this riot. Maybe even President Trump could stop this riot. But the American oligarchs, the ones who are friends with the Russian oligarchs, the American oligarchs can taste victory already. They are carting off their TVs. They are checking out their gorgeous new yachts. They are measuring the drapes at Mar-a-Lago. They are polling for the Senate seats that they plan to buy with all of the new campaign contributions that come rolling in from the Mercers and the Koch brothers and the other plutocrats who are going to make out like bandits with this highway robbery.

In a riot, there is no time for hearings, no time for facts, no time for economic analysis, no time for experts, no time for discussion or democracy. There is no time for us even to read the lousy bills that their lobbyists write for them. They are too busy looting the Treasury in the middle of the night, ransacking Medicare and Medicaid, and trashing the neighborhoods of the beleaguered American middle class by raising taxes on 86 million families over the next decade.

They are too busy trashing the State and local tax deduction, imposing double taxes on our people, something that has not occurred since we developed the tax system back in 1862, when they imposed the first revenue act. In the middle of the Civil War, they exempted State and local taxes.

Abraham Lincoln and the Republicans said then, ''That is double taxation; we won't do it in the middle of the Civil War,'' when they needed to raise money.

And here we are, in a time of record corporate profits, amazing prosperity that comes out of the Obama administration, amazing economic expansion and growth, and what do they want to do?

They want to impose double taxation on what they say is the blue States because now America has got to be divided.

It is their States and our States, so the blue States are going to just pay more. That is the way that they are pursuing their tax policy in the United States Congress. You could almost understand and appreciate this trickle-down mob mentality if it were just our own rich people who were wilding against American democracy. After all, the top 1 percent in America today owns only as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent combined. There is still the remnants of the middle class to destroy, and it is hard to keep up with the lifestyle of the rich and famous in Trump's billionaire Cabinet.

So they need to drive 13 million Americans off of their health insurance. They need to make tens of millions of Americans pay more in taxes. But here is the thing: one-third of the corporate windfall in their gigantic corporate tax break, which is the heart of their bill, hundreds of billions of dollars, one-third of the money will go to foreign investors in Saudi Arabia, in China, in Russia. The one-third of the American stock that is owned by foreign investors is going to just sail outside of the country immediately when we do this.

And that huge sucking sound of hundreds of billions of dollars flowing to other people's oligarchs will be followed by billions more in investments and millions more in jobs because of another little trick that got tucked into this bag of tricks on the American people and treats for our plutocrats. Their bill changes our tax policy to a territorial system.

Well, what does that mean?

It means, if you are an American businessman and you are setting up your new business, the American businessman or businesswoman, you are setting up your business on Main Street, you are going to pay 100 percent of your taxes due. Your rate is going to go way down under this bill, but you will pay 100 percent. If you ship your business and your jobs overseas to Mexico or Indonesia or Switzerland or Vietnam, you are going to pay zero percent of what you would owe.

Now, I think they put in some tiny, little fix about that saying: Well, if it gets too extreme, if you press the joke too far, you will pay something, maybe 10 percent.

Again, that was written in the middle of the night, so I haven't seen that. That is just a talking point.

But let me just close with this: like a riot, this tax scam has little to recommend it. Its only redeeming feature is that it will wake a horrified country up to the depravity and greed that have overtaken our politics and, I am sad to say, a once great political party in the United States of America. And when we wake up to the fiscal damage and the political hangover, then they will be coming with their meat cleavers towards Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid.

And when the American people bounce out the people who rioted today, when they bounce them out of office, well, it is going to be okay for them because they can go and work for the lobbyists and the big companies that made out like bandits today. So the joke is on us if this actually goes through. But don't forget that what we saw today was a riot from above.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. RASKIN so very much for his remarks. The voice of Maryland is strong and powerful and quite correct. Mr. RASKIN spoke of income inequality.

The wealthy in America, the top 1 percent, own as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent?

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, yes, I did say that.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, this bill would seem to further the skewing of wealth to the wealthy.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, the whole point is to cement into place an oligarchy, a plutocracy.

One of the reasons that the Founders of America were so opposed to the intergenerational transmission of wealth is because they said that is going to increase idleness, laziness, presumptuousness, and entitlement in new generations.

At a certain point, if you buy enough houses, if you buy enough horses, if you buy enough yachts, if you buy enough jewels, what do you want?

Well, you want a governorship. You want a Senate seat.

That is not democracy. That is plutocracy. So we can't let this system of wealth discrimination and separation devour our basic democratic values.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, that is interesting. Perhaps the House of Lords is in our future.

I was just thinking, as Mr. RASKIN was talking, of an old comic book that used to be popular. It was one of the Donald Duck comic books, and I remember it was Uncle Scrooge McDuck. I guess, in his treasury, he was playing with the dollars, throwing the coins up into the air. I am wondering if that is what we are really into here.

The superwealthy are just accumulating more and more wealth. For the benefit of the economy? Not really. It doesn't trickle down. There is absolutely no evidence that it does. In fact, there is plenty of historic economic evidence that trickle down doesn't work, but pushing up from the bottom would. We could have had a tax bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN).

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I was shocked to read so many prominent elected officials and political operatives on the GOP side saying that the whole reason for doing this is that their donors were effectively going on a strike and the donors were saying: If you don't get the tax bill through, don't expect contributions from us.

We couldn't have a more vivid demonstration of plutocracy in the country.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, if their tax bill is for their donors, we have a pretty good idea who the beneficiaries of the tax bill are. So the donors are the plutocrats, the superwealthy. It is Wall Street. Very much it is Wall Street because this is really about raising the stock price.

I think Mr. RASKIN may not have been here when I put this up, but I am going to do it one more time. It has been clear that before the 1980s, 50 percent, maybe 55 percent, 60 percent of the after-tax income of corporations went into creating a bigger corporation, into manufacturing jobs, plant equipment, hiring more people, paying better wages.

Beginning in the mid-1980s or so, that began to shift so that, today, exactly the opposite occurs. Maybe 70, 80 percent of the after-tax profits now go into buying back stock, increasing the stock price, higher dividends.

Case in point: the corporate tax giveaway in this bill, which is actually—I said earlier it was $1.4 trillion reduction in corporate taxes over the next decade. It is actually $1.3 trillion. My apologies for being incorrect.

$1.3 trillion reduction in corporate taxes. For a company like Wells Fargo, a rather major bank, the corporate tax giveaway will give Wells Fargo an 18 percent earnings increase.

How does Wells Fargo intend to spend it?

Not on jobs.

Here is what the CEO of Wells Fargo, Mr. Tim Sloan, said in December of 2017. That is this month. He said: ''Is it our goal to increase return to shareholders, and do we have an excess amount of capital? The answer to both is 'yes.' So our expectation should be that we will continue to increase our

dividend and our share buybacks next year and the year after that and the year after that.''

So where are the jobs?

May I cite one other example. Lowering the corporate tax rate was said to be an incentive for corporations to invest. Well, here is one of the great American corporations.

Are they investing?

I think not. They are buying back stock.

AT&T, another major American corporation, effectively reduced its tax rate to 8 percent over the last decade. So they are paying not 21 percent, as this bill would require. They are paying 8 percent.

Did they create jobs?

No. During that same period of time, they laid off 80,000 workers.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to Mr. RASKIN, if he would like to make a few closing remarks, and then I will wrap up.

□ 1830

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, once again, for this opportunity and for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman makes a superb point. We are at a point of record corporate profits. The corporations are swimming in profits and in cash, and if they wanted to be employing more people, they could be employing more people now.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, they could be raising wages. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, or raising wages. They could do it right now.

All that we are doing is bestowing more of a bonus on them so they can give more money away to the CEOs. In the stock dividends and in the stock buybacks, it is cash gains within the corporations, so they are going to get wealthier. There is no reason to begrudge that. It is a large part of a lot of people's dreams to make a lot of money, but let's not press a good joke too far.

They are making tons of money right now, and we have got serious needs in the country. We have got an infrastructure crisis. Our roads and our highways and our metro systems and our water systems are suffering—our schools, our universities, our community colleges.

Why not invest in some common things that bring us together as a society, rather than having highway robbery from above against the rest of the country? It is just incomprehensible to me.

I have got to believe this is something to do with the corruption of our campaign finance regime. People are talking about: Well, we are waiting for the contributions to come in, and that they are telling us on the phone they don't want to give us contributions until we pass the tax bill.

So give them hundreds of billions, drive us into trillions of dollars in debt, and then they will give us back hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions. It is a bad deal. That is why a lot of parts of the country are moving to public financing now, because it is remarkable how much damage you could do to the country on the cheap with a relatively small investment. After the Supreme Court's decision in 2010, in the Citizens United case, redefining corporations as political citizens, now the CEOs can take money directly out of the corporate treasury and put it into politics.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, from their own mouth comes from the truth of what Mr. RASKIN said. They have said it very clearly, they need to do this for their contributors.

Who are their contributors? Well, the wealthy, the superwealthy, and the rest.

Mr. Speaker, I think we are going to wrap it up here. I want to thank Mr. RASKIN for his participation. I want to thank my colleagues who came to the floor tonight to express their dismay at what has happened.

Now, because the bill was rushed through without any public hearings, there were errors in the bill that require that the Senate take the approved conference committee report and modify it, which I suppose means there has to be yet another conference committee, modify it, remove the errors that are in conflict with the Senate rules, and send it back here. Presumably, that will be done tomorrow.

Maybe now, as we bring to the attention of the American public the way in which this tax bill is harmful to the economy, harmful to the American middle class, and will result in 83 million Americans immediately paying higher taxes, and over the period of time, everybody that is less than $100,000, maybe $150,000, will be paying higher taxes, but the wealthy and the corporations will go on and have their lower taxes for many, many years to come, all of that hopefully will begin to sink in on the American public, and they will rise up in indignation and call a halt to what is a major rip-off of the American Treasury and America's future.

So we will continue to talk about this in the days ahead, and those who have voted for this are going to be held responsible and accountable as the days and the months go by.

Keep in mind that the Texas Two-Step is very much in play, and that, in the days ahead, in the next year, as the weather warms, the returned migration of the deficit hawks will take place, and they will go after Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, education, children's health, and other programs that men and women of America rely upon, and perhaps many, many more.

We will be fighting this fight for many months to come.

Mr. Speaker, keeping in mind the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, I yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING HASKELL MONROE, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FLORES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Haskell Monroe, Jr., of Bryan-College Station, Texas, who passed away on November 13, 2017.

Haskell Monroe, Jr., was born in Dallas, Texas, on March 18, 1931. He was the only child of Haskell Monroe, Sr., and Myrtle Monroe.

The family of three lived in Garland, Texas, until Haskell, Jr., was ten, when they moved to Fort Smith, Arkansas, because of his father's job with the United States Department of War. They lived there for 2 years before moving to Orange, Texas, where the family resided through Haskell's high school years.

During his high school years, Haskell was an active member of the band, the track and field team, the football team, and he was a member of the Boy Scouts. His experience at schools in both Garland and Orange fostered a love of learning that lasted throughout his life.

After graduating from high school in 1948, he went on to Austin College in Sherman, Texas, where he continued his involvement in track and field and football. He graduated from Austin College in 1952, with a bachelor's degree in both history and English.

After graduation, he started graduate school at Austin College working to earn his master's in history. While working during his master's degree, Haskell began teaching at nearby Denison High School. He taught history at Denison and found his lifelong calling to be an educator while he was working there.

In 1954, Haskell enlisted in the United States Navy. He served for 3 years in the Navy, and while in the Navy, Haskell's passion for teaching never wavered, and he continued to teach while stationed in South Carolina. There, he taught English to visiting Japanese sailors and volunteered as an assistant coach for a local high school football team.

Haskell completed his service and was discharged from the Navy in 1956. Shortly thereafter, he met the love of his life, Margaret Joann Phillips, known as Jo. The two met while Haskell was working on historical research in North Carolina. On June 15, 1957, Jo and Haskell were married.

In addition to 78 years of love and happiness, the marriage produced four children: Stephen, Melanie, Mark, and John; and eight grandchildren.

The Monroes moved to Houston after their wedding in order for Haskell to pursue a Ph.D. in history at Rice University. They eventually moved to the Bryan-College Station area in 1959. One of his doctoral professors at Rice, Dr. Frank Vandiver, who would himself one day become the president at Texas A&M University, helped Haskell get his first job.

With Dr. Vandiver's recommendation, Haskell became a professor of history at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. This initial position was the beginning of a decades-long career both as a professor and as an administrator.

One of his early contributions to Texas A&M was his appointment to the Texas A&M Aspirations Committee. This initiative was commissioned by then-President Earl Rudder to recommend changes to the university to put the institution on sound footing for the future.

Among the recommendations to come out of this committee were the admission of female students, non-compulsory membership in the Corps of Cadets, racial integration, higher admission standards, and input that led to changing the name of the university to Texas A&M University.

Haskell left Texas A&M, in 1980, to become president at the University of Texas-El Paso, commonly known as UTEP.

After 7 years at UTEP, he became the chancellor at the University of Missouri, where he remained until 1993.

Under his leadership, both schools reached new heights as academic institutions, enrolling record numbers of students, increasing minority student populations, and molding many National Merit Award scholars.

In his down time, Haskell enjoyed collecting postcards from towns where he had lived and visited while traveling, especially the back roads of the United States and Mexico, and learning history through commemorative bricks, plaques, and roadside markers in historical places.

He also shared his father's passion for woodworking and was known to create many pieces for his friends and his family.

A member of the local community, Haskell was a member of the Rotary Club and served on boards of the United Way, Salvation Army, and Boy Scouts. He was also a lifelong member of the Presbyterian church, where he also served as an elder and an ordained deacon.

Mr. Speaker, Haskell Monroe worked tirelessly to teach young people and to give back to his community. He is loved by our Bryan-College Station community, and he left an enduring impression on the entire State of Texas. He will be forever remembered as a great educator, colleague, philanthropist, community leader, husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

My wife, Gina, and I offer our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Monroe family. We also lift up the family and friends of Dr. Monroe in our prayers.

I have requested that a United States flag be flown over the Capitol to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Haskell Monroe, Jr.

As I close today, I urge all Americans to continue praying for our country during these difficult times, for our military men and women who protect us from external threats, and for our first responders who protect us here at home.

HONORING ROBERT ''POPEYE'' CARTER

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor retired Staff Sergeant Robert Carter of Waco, Texas, better known as Popeye to his friends. He passed away on November 26, 2017.

Popeye was born in 1953 and grew up in the Waco area. In 1972, he graduated from Richfield High School. After graduation, he married his high school sweetheart, Geni Kay Reeves. Popeye also heard the call to serve his country and enlisted in the United States Army in 1972.

He was stationed in Frankfurt, Germany, where he patrolled the Czech border during the Cold War. He served on Active Duty from 1972 to 1975.

After his Active-Duty service was up, Popeye served in the Army Reserves from 1975 to 1995, and all his career in the Army spanned 23 years.

In November 1990, Popeye was called into Active Duty with his reserve unit. The unit shipped off to fight in the Gulf war. His unit was placed on the front lines, incurring heavy artillery fire throughout their time in the Gulf.

He returned to the United States, where he soon found out that he was suffering from what became known as Gulf War Syndrome. The aftermath of the war affected Popeye for the rest of his life.

After Popeye's service, he came back home to Waco and served as a mechanic for 30 years. Always wanting to give back, he began volunteering to help local veterans at the Veterans One-stop, which offers support services to veterans to help them reintegrate into society and provide them with an outlet to meet other veterans in the area. He was known as someone who would help anyone in need, often anonymously.

A man of great faith, Popeye believed strongly in God and used his faith to carry him through life. He openly shared his faith with others and believed in helping those in spiritual need just as much as those with physical wounds.

After the passing of his first wife, he married and enjoyed a new beginning with his wife, Roxanne Carter. Together, their family had a son and three daughters, as well as ten grandchildren, all of whom Popeye loved dearly.

In 2013, Popeye was nominated by the members of our community for the Texas 17th Congressional District Veteran Commendation award. It was an honor to bestow this unique award that recognized his selfless service to both our Nation and to our central Texas community.

In his free time, Popeye enjoyed the outdoors, and he loved to fish. He was also an avid motorcyclist and was routinely seen riding his Harley Davidson with friends.

A dedicated family man, Popeye loved to spend time with his family and looked forward to dinners every Monday night, where his immediate family would gather to enjoy food and fellowship.

Mr. Speaker, selfless service to all those around him defined Popeye Carter's life. He worked tirelessly to defend our freedom and to better our Waco community. He is loved by his city, and he certainly left an enduring impression on all of central Texas.

He will be forever remembered as a selfless soldier, a philanthropist, a community member, a husband, a father, a grandfather, and a friend.

My wife, Gina, and I offer our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Carter family. We also lift up the family and friends of Popeye Carter in our prayers.

I have requested the United States flag be flown over the Capitol to honor the life and legacy of Robert ''Popeye'' Carter.

As I close today, I urge all Americans to continue praying for our country during these difficult times, for our military men and women who protect us from threats abroad, and for our first responders who protect us here at home.

HONORING CALVIN ''RYAN'' COFFER

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sergeant Calvin ''Ryan'' Coffer of Bryan, Texas, who passed away on October 24, 2017.

Ryan Coffer was born on September 22, 1983. From a young age, he was involved in the Boy Scouts and achieved the highest rank of Eagle Scout.

True to his Texas roots, he enjoyed hunting, fishing, and loved watching football, especially the Dallas Cowboys and the fighting Texas Aggies, especially with his grandmother, Mimi.

□ 1845

Growing up, Ryan spent many days working alongside his father in a local theater company, a small performance theater in Brazos Valley.

True to his nature, Ryan put duty before himself. He felt a call, and he answered it by serving his country in the United States Marine Corps. He enlisted as an infantryman. Ryan was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines and, later, to the 5th Headquarters Company based in Camp Pendleton, California. During his service, he deployed three times, once to Japan and twice to Iraq.

Ryan was a well-decorated Marine and rose to the rank of staff sergeant. His awards include the Marine Corps Achievement Medal with Valor, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal with Gold Star, and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

Part of his duties included being a zodiak fast assault specialist, a squad leader, and a marksman instructor. On his second deployment to Iraq, he was tasked with providing security to General David Petraeus.

Ryan embodied the core values of being a United States Marine, and he

felt that his true mission was to make sure his squad made it home safely.

After leaving the Marine Corps, Ryan set a goal to attend college at Texas A&M University. He was accepted into Texas A&M, and he planned to attend the university after holding out one semester to work and to save money for school. Ryan embodied the core values of Texas A&M through his spirit of selfless service, leadership, loyalty, and integrity.

Unfortunately, the toll of his military service manifested itself in the form of PTSD, which, unfortunately, went undiagnosed. As the long-term effects of war began to grow within him, he ultimately became another victim of PTSD, and his life ended far too early.

Mr. Speaker, Sergeant Coffer worked tirelessly to serve our country as well as family and friends. He is loved by our Bryan-College Station community, and he left an enduring impression on the Brazos Valley. Ryan will be forever remembered as a courageous Marine, leader, loving son, community member, and friend.

My wife, Gina, and I lift up our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Coffer family. We also lift up Ryan's family and friends in our prayers.

I have requested the United States flag be flown over the Capitol to honor the life and legacy of Ryan Coffer.

As I close today, I ask all Americans to continue to pray for our country during these difficult times, for our military men and women who protect us from threats overseas, and for our first responders who protect us here at home.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL BOB AMMON

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor retired Lieutenant Colonel Bob Ammon of Waco, Texas, who passed away on September 28, 2017.

Bob was born in West Reading, Pennsylvania, on February 28, 1924. He would spend his early years in West Reading, growing up in what he described as an ''average American home.'' He grew up with an older brother, Jim, and a younger sister, Marjorie.

In 1941, Bob was a senior in high school when the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Not being old enough for the draft, Bob was still determined to serve his country and contribute to the war effort. In 1942, he decided to take the aviation exam to become a pilot in the United States Army. He passed the exam and, on August 25, 1942, he was sworn into the Army.

He was called into Active Duty in 1943, beginning flight training in Santa Ana, California, and completing his training at Fort Sumner, New Mexico.

After graduating from flight school, Bob was assigned to Mather Air Force Base to begin training as a B–25 bomber pilot. In 1944, he began bombing runs with the 11th Bomb Squadron, who were fighting to dismantle the Japanese occupation of China. He flew 21 bombing missions in China and participated in combat during the Battle of Hanoi Harbor.

After his service in World War II, Bob reenlisted during the Korean war. In Korea, he flew an astounding 43 bombing missions and earned a Purple Heart for wounds that he suffered after being shot down over North Korea.

Bob again reenlisted to serve when the Vietnam war broke out. He never missed combat in any of the wars he fought in, and he was proud of his military service until the day he passed.

While stationed at James Connolly Air Force Base, Bob met a beautiful woman named Ann at the Officers' Club, and they married in 1952. They enjoyed 64 years of marriage together and raised three sons—Steve, Bob, and Jeff—all of whom graduated from Baylor University in Waco.

Though he was often traveling, Bob made a point to be there for his sons and to make sure they were being raised well. He was known as a loving father who raised his sons with a steady hand, and he passed on his love of flying, golf, and family to his three sons. Today, his legacy includes 25 family members, including grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Bob was a patriotic man and always flew the American flag outside his home in Waco. He always made a point to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem, even as his health began to fail him late in life.

Bob was known for giving back to the local community, and he had a strong faith in God. Bob served in a position of leadership at the Covenant Church for 27 years. He was well-known for greeting parishioners with a smile at the doors of the church. His friendly and welcoming manner will surely be missed at Covenant Church.

Mr. Speaker, Bob worked tirelessly to protect our country, to raise a strong family, and to serve our Waco community. He is loved by his friends and family, and he left an enduring impression on all of central Texas. He will be forever remembered as an American hero, a great community member, a husband, a father, a grandfather, a great-grandfather, and a friend.

My wife, Gina, and I offer our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Ammon family. We also lift up the family and friends of Bob in our prayers.

I have requested that a United States flag be flown over the Capitol to honor the life and legacy of Lieutenant Colonel Bob Ammon.

As I close today, I urge all Americans to continue praying for our country during these difficult times, for our military men and women who protect us abroad, and for our first responders who protect us from threats here at home.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, as we try to get the boards to line up, we are only going to do three of these today.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I wanted to do tonight, and we did it during sort of the debate earlier today—I hear lots of the discussions from our brothers and sisters on the left about the tax bill, and we often tease that this place is often a math-free zone, but I wanted to actually go a little bit bigger on why this tax bill is actually so crucial to every American, whether you be on the left, on the right, or just out there working as hard as you can and not thinking about politics.

The chart I have right on the side, this is what our nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has come up with as our economic growth future. If you take a look over here, you will see 1.8 percent GDP growth for the next 10 years. But we then skyrocket up to just, actually, if you saw the details, just slightly under 2. And then the next decade, so 30 years from now, we fall back down to 1.9 percent GDP growth.

Why this is crucial is, as baby boomers are retiring, we have lots of promises. You have heard discussions, just even someone that was behind the microphone 40 minutes ago, on the other side, talking about Medicare.

There are estimates out there that, over the 75-year actuarial window, Medicare is $105 trillion underfunded. It is the largest unfunded liability we know in America and, possibly, the world. This is what happens when you are growing at 1.8 percent GDP.

If you love people, if you want this society to have an opportunity to keep its promises to our seniors, to our kids, to that working family, we must have economic growth.

I talked about this earlier today, a terrific editorial in The Wall Street Journal over this weekend, saying, hey, from the left's eyes, they think about equality, income inequality, and from the Republican side, we often sound like accountants. And I am sorry, but the math is important.

We think about economic growth because, if you look at the next chart, I just want you to sort of look at the very, very end. You see this sort of gold line, green line, the other green line. Do you see the separation? That is income inequality. It has grown dramatically in the last decade.

We have also grown at only 1.8 percent GDP the last decade. Slow economic expansion is where you get the income inequality.

If the left here actually cared about the very issue they talk about all the time, they would be embracing tax bills, regulatory bills, things that would actually expand the size of this economy so everyone has a fighting chance. But you find the politics of division very powerful around here.

Look, we all get the joke. We understand that so many of our brothers and sisters on the left, they are terrified, or their base is angry, however we want to define it. You can't let the Republicans have a victory, particularly on rewriting the Tax Code for the first time in 31 years, even though, if you actually look at many of their records in the past, they have all stood behind microphones and said the Tax Code is abysmal. It stifles economic expansion; it hurts hardworking people; and, in a low-growth environment, with this crappy Tax Code, this is what you get. But the politics are so uncomfortable that, for a lot of our friends, it is more uncomfortable to vote for something that actually might be seen as a Republican victory.

So I wish I had an elegant way of begging my friends on the Democratic side, saying: Just think about it as giving every American a fighting chance because, if we start to grow, you actually get paid more; you have more job opportunities; you can save money for your retirement, for your kids. Because where we are at today and where we have been the last decade, we are in real trouble.

You actually look at some of the nonpartisan groups, and even some of the partisan groups, on their analyses of what the U.S. debt structure looks like, there are many of these models that, in about 15, 18 years, they collapse, our debt to GDP.

What that means is, when we say, ''Here is the size of our economy, gross domestic product—here is the size of our economy, and here is the size of our debt,'' in just a few years, we actually surpass the amount of publicly sold debt.

This is not where we are borrowing from our own trust funds. The publicly held debt passes the entire size of our economy, and it keeps going and going and going and going. That is status quo.

Please understand, the status quo has many of the models collapsing, much of this economy, in about 15, 18 years because our debt is so huge it consumes everything.

Social entitlements right now are about three-quarters of all of our spending. Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, that includes benefits of other welfare programs, earned and unearned, that is three-quarters of our spending, and it is going to become dramatically more.

So if you are someone who actually cares about health research, if you actually care about education, if you care about the national parks, if you care about the military, if you care about our relations around the world, all those are getting squeezed because of, substantially, the demographic curve we are already in, the growth of those populations, and our attempt to keep our promises.

If you care about keeping our promises, you care about the economic growth; and the tax rewrite is one of the key elements in that. And, yes, it is going to also require thinking through immigration. It is going to be thinking through regulations. It is going to be thinking through the adoption of technology.

□ 1900

But understand, you can't stand around here and give speeches about income inequality and then support the very policies that actually create it. The intellectual inconsistency around here is so frustrating.

This is a really interesting board, and why it is so important is that I ask for everyone to stop thinking about the actual debt number and think about it as its ratio, as its percentage, as its burden on the size of the economy.

If we have a $20 trillion economy and $20 trillion of debt, we are at 100 percent of debt to GDP. Our economy is actually a bit bigger than that, but if you actually look at this red line, that is entitlements.

Do you notice all those years where it is flat?

That is actually not because we were spending less money on entitlements. What that is about is we were growing as an economy. Yes, we were still spending more money, but we were growing faster than the growth in that spending.

If you care about fairness, if you care about opportunity, if you care about the ability to save, if you care about income inequality, you have got to step up and do those things that are difficult—and they are very difficult—that will maximize economic expansion in this country, because the difficulties that are coming in the next decade in our inability to have enough resources or enough borrowing capacity to continue to pay is devastating. We need this economy to continue to grow.

As we walk through this, I want to actually walk through also a couple of observations. And forgive me, but this is one of those opportunities where you have a few minutes to share.

I hold a seat on the Ways and Means Committee. It has been fascinating. On occasion you will hear folks say: Well, this was rushed through.

Well, except it was built on about a decade's worth of work. If you look at all the years that Dave Camp, the previous chairman of the Ways and Means Committee; and then the chairman after him, who happened to be PAUL RYAN; and now the chairman, KEVIN BRADY, there are volumes and volumes of documentation. There are volumes and volumes of hearings and data. And there has got to be hundreds of hours of video out there of different hearings, both the whole committee and the subcommittees have done, in just trying to understand what affects economic growth, what works and what doesn't work.

An observation. How many people in the last couple weeks have you heard walk up behind these microphones and use the early 2000s as an economic example of a tax cut?

Now, understand, that was just substantially a basic income tax. It wasn't rewriting parts of the Tax Code. What so many folks forget to tell you, if you go back to 2002 and you actually look at what we call the baseline—and I am sorry, this is going to geek out a little bit—baseline is our model of what we think revenues are going to look like and what spending is going to look like over the next decade. Then you look at those things that are referred to as the Bush tax cuts when they finally expired.

You do realize the revenues—the revenues—that came into this government were $77 billion higher than the projection, yet you will hear people get up behind the microphone and say: Well, these didn't pay for themselves.

But that is not the math.

Now, this government spent a lot more money than was projected. We had wars, we had bailouts, we had storms. We have had all sorts of things. We spent a lot more money. But if you actually look at the revenue line when those 2002 tax cuts expired, there was $77 billion more in revenue than was projected.

Is that because of the tax cuts?

Partially. Maybe. But there were lots of other effects in the economy, adoptions of technology, and all sorts of things. But the basic rule of thumb is: Here is where we thought we would be, and we were $77 billion over that.

Back to this concept of: Are there tax cuts that pay for themselves?

Absolutely.

Are there tax cuts that don't?

Absolutely.

And that was one of the really gut-wrenching parts of this discussion. If you actually spend some time looking at a nonpartisan group like the Tax Foundation and look at a lot of their modeling, they would come back to us and say: Hey, you could spend this money on something that is great politics, but you get almost no economic expansion from it. Or you could spend that same money or something over here that turns out not to be great politics, but is really good for the economy and really good a few years from now and someone being able to find a job, someone being able to be paid more, someone being able to save for their retirement or their kids.

How do you get up in front of an audience and say, ''I know we would love to have this because this gets me reelected. But for that same money, our society, economically, will be healthier, bigger, wealthier a few years from now if you put that money in expensing, in certain types of business tax cuts, because that expands the size of the economy''?

That is something a lot of folks haven't thought about as they grind through the technical details of thousands of thousands of pages of the Tax Code. Parts of the Tax Code are absolutely an economic document.

How you make us competitive in the world again? How do you maximize

economic expansion? How do you maximize opportunity for everyone to have a good-paying job?

But a Tax Code is also a political document. These are things that are very popular. These are things that get us elected. These are things that certain special interests line up at our door, walk around the hallways. If you actually saw the hallways over the last few months, I didn't know there were that many lobbyists in this town, all advocating for something for their business, for their State, for their community. All are honorable. But you have got to understand, when we put together a few-hundred-page bill and grind through it month after month after month and make a change here and a change here, and then realize the interactivity when they actually model it turns out this idea blows up this idea, the number of hours that have gone into making this math work are stunning and it is a really good document.

Is it everything all of us would want? No. Being a Representative from Arizona, I believe it is really good for my State.

But the thing I care most about is it being good for our country. I believe the tax bill, the tax reform, is fair to individuals. It is simpler. It is going to also deal with the hemorrhaging we have of corporations—and these are big corporations—leaving our country, hiding their profits overseas, and moving their expenses to the United States.

Is that fair?

Of course it isn't, but that is what the current Tax Code allows.

If you hear someone saying, ''Vote 'no' on this bill,'' if you hear them saying, ''We prefer the status quo,'' understand what they are saying: We want to live in a world of absolute mediocrity, with almost no economic growth, no opportunity to save, have higher salaries and higher opportunities. We are happy having, in a decade and a half, a debt crisis in this country.

And what they are also saying is they are okay with the hemorrhaging of American industry leaving this country because of the tax arbitrage, where they can get a better deal in other parts of the world.

That is the absurdity of some of the arguments you have heard around this body.

So back to my fairly snarky comment: We get the joke. We understand there are many out there who are terrified of Republicans getting a win here. But I want to argue that this is not a win for Republicans. It is a win for our society because, if we start moving away from that 1.8 percent economic growth that our congressional budget has projected for the next decade, we have a fighting chance to financially keep our promises, to have a strong military, to have that money for our education, to have that money for healthcare research, and for you as an American citizen to see your salaries increase, see your ability to save, and know you have a brighter future.

Mr. Speaker, just as an idiosyncrasy, over the last couple months, I have been keeping a little bit of a notebook of many of the comments that have come from my brothers and sisters in this body, some supporting the tax bill and making claims, many opposing the tax bill and making claims.

I am going to make a mark in my calendar, 1 year from now coming back behind this microphone, and we are going to open up that journal and we are going to read what was said. Hopefully the American people at that time will understand this is political rhetoric and this is actually based in math. And that math, I am desperately hoping and desperately believing, is going to be great for our country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. NAPOLITANO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 4:30 p.m. and balance of week on account of death in family.

Ms. CLARKE of New York (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for the first series of votes today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 11 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, December 20, 2017, at 9 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3430. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting the National Security Strategy of the United States, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 3043(a)(1); Public Law 99-433, Sec. 603(a)(1); (100 Stat. 1075); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3431. A letter from the President, Institute for Defense Analyses, transmitting a report entitled, ''Report on Elements Contributing to Expenses Incurred by Contractors for Bid and Proposal'', pursuant to Sec. 824 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2017, Public Law 114-328; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3432. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Fiscal Year 2017 Federal Housing Administration Annual Management Report, pursuant to OMB Circular A-136, Sec. 1.6,; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3433. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Prineville, OR [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0616; Airspace Docket No.: 17-ANM-26] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3434. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Seward, NE [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0354; Airspace Docket No.: 17-ACE-8] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3435. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Multiple Restricted Areas; Vandenberg AFB, CA [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0985; Airspace Docket No.: 17-AWP-21] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3436. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Saab AB, Saab Aeronautics (Formerly Known as Saab AB, Saab Aerosystems) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0563; Product Identifier 2017-NM-021-AD; Amendment 39-19076; AD 2017-21-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3437. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Aerospace LP (Type Certificate Previously Held by Israel Aircraft Industries, Ltd.) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0693; Product Identifier 2017-NM-044-AD; Amendment 39-19074; AD 2017-21-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3438. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Aerospace LP (Type Certificate Previously Held by Israel Aircraft Industries, Ltd.) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0692; Product Identifier 2017-NM-043-AD; Amendment 39-19075]; AD 2017-21-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3439. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Dassault Aviation Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9500; Product Identifier 2016-NM-140-AD; Amendment 39-19072; AD 2017-21-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3440. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Embraer S.A. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0697; Product Identifier 2017-NM-041-AD; Amendment 39-19080; AD 2017-21-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3441. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0628; Product Identifier 2016-NM-207-AD; Amendment 39-19079; AD 2017-21-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3442. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; IPECO Pilot and Co-Pilot Seats [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0490; Product Identifier 2017-NE-13-AD; Amendment 39-19082; AD 2017-22-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3443. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0497; Product Identifier 2016-NM-209-AD; Amendment 39-19078; AD 2017-21-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3444. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rockwell Collins, Inc. Traffic Surveillance System Processing Unit [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0659; Product Identifier 2017-CE-014-AD; Amendment 39-19094; AD 2017-22-14] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3445. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0480; Product Identifier 2016-NM-204-AD; Amendment 39-19073; AD 2017-21-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3446. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0332; Product Identifier 2016-NM-164-AD; Amendment 39-19084; AD 2017-22-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3447. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Cisco, TX [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0620; Airspace Docket No.: 17-ASW-10] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3448. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Fort Knox, KY, and Louisville, KY [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9499; Airspace Docket No.: 16-ASO-19] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3449. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Lemoore NAS, CA [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0219; Airspace Docket No.: 17-AWP-5] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3450. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Bend, OR [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0391; Airspace Docket No.: 17-ANM-13] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3451. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Oskaloosa, IA [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0296; Airspace Docket No.: 17-ACE-7] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3452. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace, for Stevens Point, WI [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0143; Airspace Docket No.: 17-AGL-5] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3453. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Deblois, ME [Docket No.: FAA-2015-2891; Airspace Docket No.: 15-ANE-1] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3454. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0521; Product Identifier 2016-NM-189-AD; Amendment 39-19086; AD 2017-22-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3455. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Scottsboro, AL [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0557; Airspace Docket No.: 17-ASO-15] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3456. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0946; Product Identifier 2017-SW-045-AD; Amendment 39-19081; AD 2017-22-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3457. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-6429; Product Identifier 2015-NM-117-AD; Amendment 39-19083; AD 2017-22-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3458. A letter from the National Adjunct and Chief Executive Officer, Disabled American Veterans, transmitting the reports and proceedings of the 2017 National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, held in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 29-August 1, 2017, pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 1332; and 36 U.S.C. 50308; and 36 U.S.C. 10101 (H. Doc. No. 115—82); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed.

3459. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a memorandum of justification regarding the suspension of limitations under the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, pursuant to Public Law 104-45, Sec. 7(a)(1); (109 Stat. 400); jointly to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Appropriations.

3460. A letter from the Acting Secretary, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Office's Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report to Congress, pursuant to 6 U.S.C. 345(b); Public Law 107-296, Sec. 705; (116 Stat. 2219); jointly to the Committees on Homeland Security and the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. NUNES: Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. H.R. 4478. A bill to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 to improve foreign intelligence collection and the safeguards, accountability, and oversight of acquisitions of foreign intelligence, to extend title VII of such Act, and for other purpose; with an amendment (Rept. 115–475 Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. TAKANO:

H.R. 4680. A bill to ensure due process protections of individuals in the United States against unlawful detention based solely on a protected characteristic; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. ROYCE of California, and Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 4681. A bill to limit assistance for areas of Syria controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. LANCE, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. FLORES, Mr. CURTIS, Mr.

NORMAN, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. GUTHRIE, and Mr. KNIGHT):

H.R. 4682. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure internet openness, to prohibit blocking of lawful content, applications, services, and non-harmful devices, to prohibit impairment or degradation of lawful internet traffic, to limit the authority of the Federal Communications Commission and to preempt State law with respect to internet openness obligations, to provide that broadband internet access service shall be considered to be an information service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. REICHERT (for himself, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN):

H.R. 4683. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to revise the NTAP period under the Medicare inpatient prospective payment system and the pass-through period under the Medicare outpatient prospective payment system; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. JUDY CHU of California (for herself, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, and Mr. BILIRAKIS):

H.R. 4684. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, to publish and disseminate best practices for operating a recovery housing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CICILLINE (for himself and Mr. LANGEVIN):

H.R. 4685. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 515 Hope Street in Bristol, Rhode Island, as the ''First Sergeant P. Andrew McKenna Jr. Post Office''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. CICILLINE):

H.R. 4686. A bill to establish the National Commission on Economic Concentration to study the effects of economic concentration on competition, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LAWSON of Florida:

H.R. 4687. A bill to designate the health care center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Tallahassee, Florida, as the Sergeant Ernest I. ''Boots'' Thomas VA Clinic, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 4688. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to make land grants-mercedes eligible for assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. SMITH of Nebraska:

H.R. 4689. A bill to authorize early repayment of obligations to the Bureau of Reclamation within the Northport Irrigation District in the State of Nebraska; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

150. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Texas, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 45, urging the United States Congress to bestow on Doris ''Dorie'' Miller the Congressional Medal of Honor; to the Committee on Armed Services.

151. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Texas, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 106, expressing support for the development and construction of a coastal barrier to protect the Gulf Coast region of Texas from storm surges; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

152. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 7, supporting the recommendations of the United States Army Corps of Engineers to prevent Asian and other invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

153. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Texas, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 59, urging the Congress of the United States to pass a budget; jointly to the Committees on Appropriations and Oversight and Government Reform.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. TAKANO:

H.R. 4680.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 4681.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

H.R. 4682.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 ''necessary and proper'' clause.

By Mr. REICHERT:

H.R. 4683.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

''The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 1 (relating to providing for the general welfare of the United States) and clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress), and Article IV, section 3, clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States).''

By Ms. JUDY CHU of California:

H.R. 4684.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CICILLINE:

H.R. 4685.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 7

By Mr. ELLISON:

H.R. 4686.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

By Mr. LAWSON of Florida:

H.R. 4687.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

''Article 1, Section 8: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 4688.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. SMITH of Nebraska:

H.R. 4689.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 130: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 131: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 203: Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 291: Mr. BIGGS.
H.R. 431: Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 449: Mr. FASO.
H.R. 548: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 559: Mr. BANKS of Indiana.
H.R. 631: Mr. EMMER.
H.R. 719: Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. HOLDING, and Mr. JORDAN.
H.R. 757: Ms. BONAMICI.
H.R. 788: Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana.
H.R. 850: Mr. HOLDING, Mr. NORMAN, and Mr. WILLIAMS.
H.R. 930: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia.
H.R. 1040: Mr. SANFORD.
H.R. 1178: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan and Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana.
H.R. 1192: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. ROKITA, and Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana.
H.R. 1204: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia.
H.R. 1212: Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 1456: Mrs. DEMINGS and Mr. FASO.
H.R. 1478: Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.
H.R. 1494: Mr. LARSEN of Washington and Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 1587: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 1617: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1651: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 1710: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 1734: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 1825: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri and Mrs. BLACK.
H.R. 1847: Mr. HUDSON.
H.R. 1865: Mr. CALVERT.
H.R. 1910: Mr. PEARCE.
H.R. 1957: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 1987: Ms. BARRAGÁN.
H.R. 2150: Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. MENG, and Ms. JAYAPAL.
H.R. 2193: Mr. CURTIS.
H.R. 2234: Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 2276: Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 2315: Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 2319: Mr. BABIN.
H.R. 2328: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.
H.R. 2366: Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 2401: Mr. FASO.
H.R. 2569: Mr. DESANTIS.
H.R. 2591: Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.
H.R. 2670: Ms. GABBARD.
H.R. 2723: Mr. SCHWEIKERT and Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH.
H.R. 2948: Mr. POLIS and Mr. KIND.
H.R. 2995: Ms. HANABUSA and Ms. GABBARD.
H.R. 2996: Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. GOHMERT, and Mr. JORDAN.
H.R. 3033: Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 3314: Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 3349: Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 3350: Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. FLORES, and Mr. SHUSTER.
H.R. 3513: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H.R. 3542: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H.R. 3576: Mr. ROKITA.
H.R. 3711: Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, and Mr. ADERHOLT.
H.R. 3768: Mr. WALZ and Mr. MCEACHIN.
H.R. 3828: Ms. PINGREE, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SMITH of Washington, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 3841: Mr. ZELDIN.
H.R. 3887: Mr. DELANEY.
H.R. 4006: Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 4007: Ms. BASS, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. VELA.
H.R. 4022: Ms. ADAMS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. POLIS, Mr. HASTINGS, and Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.
H.R. 4040: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4068: Ms. BONAMICI.
H.R. 4096: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 4143: Mr. DEUTCH.
H.R. 4207: Mr. TIPTON.
H.R. 4209: Ms. BONAMICI.
H.R. 4222: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 4238: Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 4311: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia.
H.R. 4340: Mr. BIGGS.
H.R. 4392: Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. KIND, Mr. KILMER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mrs. LOVE, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, and Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana.
H.R. 4396: Mr. SCHNEIDER and Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 4438: Mr. ABRAHAM.
H.R. 4467: Mr. MITCHELL.
H.R. 4472: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 4516: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 4526: Mr. GROTHMAN and Mr. BABIN.
H.R. 4541: Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. WALZ, Mr. POCAN, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. RICHMOND, and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia.
H.R. 4565: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 4608: Mr. ISSA.
H.R. 4610: Ms. SHEA-PORTER and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.
H.R. 4620: Mrs. BLACK and Mr. ISSA.
H.R. 4622: Mr. NOLAN and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 4631: Ms. SINEMA and Mr. MEEKS.
H.R. 4656: Ms. BONAMICI.
H. Con. Res. 10: Mr. TIPTON.
H. Con. Res. 45: Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida and Mr. POE of Texas.
H. Con. Res. 63: Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. HASTINGS.
H. Res. 245: Mr. CLAY.
H. Res. 252: Mr. TURNER.
H. Res. 318: Mr. RASKIN.
H. Res. 466: Mr. HURD, Mr. DOGGETT, and Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.
H. Res. 587: Mr. WELCH, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. GARAMENDI, and Mr. KHANNA.
H. Res. 621: Ms. JAYAPAL.
H. Res. 661: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and Mr. MARINO.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII, petitions and papers were laid on the clerk's desk and referred as follows:

72. The SPEAKER presented a petition of Mr. Gregory Watson, a citizen of Austin, TX, relative to urging Congress to propose, pursuant to Article V, an amendment to the United States Constitution that would, in addition to congressional proposal, likewise allow an identically-worded suggested federal constitutional amendment, approved by the legislatures of at least two-thirds of the several states, as an alternate means of proposing future amendments and that would further provide for a same-day nationwide referendum as the exclusive method of ratifying any future amendments; thus repealing all references to a national proposing convention, and repealing all references to ratifying conventions conducted within the individual states, and repealing all references to state legislative ratification; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

73. Also, a petition of the Yates County, New York, Legislature, relative to Resolution No. 317-17, urging the United States Congress to enact, and President Trump to sign into law, H.R. 3576, the Second Amendment Guarantee Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2017 *No. 207*

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, fill us with reverence for You. Help us to remember that You are the one from whom we borrow our heartbeats. You continue to be the source of our peace and the center of our joy. May our reverential awe provide us with the foundation of true wisdom. Empower our lawmakers to make a positive difference in our Nation and world.

Lord, give them generous, righteous, and compassionate hearts so that they will transform discord into harmony. As they turn to You in humble, fervent prayer, hear our prayers, forgive our sins, and heal our land.

Lord, we thank You that You will never give us more to do than we can do with Your power.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. SASSE). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 165, S. 1519.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 165, S. 1519, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Congress is standing at the doorstep of a historic opportunity. Today the House will vote on the conference report on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the most significant overhaul of our Nation's Tax Code in more than 30 years. This major tax reform legislation will provide much needed relief to middle-class families and small businesses and will set America on a trajectory toward more opportunity and greater prosperity.

After the House votes this afternoon, the Senate will begin debate and will proceed to a vote on passage later this evening. The final text of this bill is the product of extensive open debate. It is a result of dozens of hearings on tax reform in recent years and an open amendment process. Then, the House and the Senate joined together in a conference committee that carefully reconciled the two Chambers' bills.

Now the time has come to vote. When Senators vote for the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, they will be voting for a bill that substantially cuts taxes for middle-class families. By reducing rates, it will let working Americans keep more of their paychecks and send less of their hard-earned money to Washington.

In addition to lower rates, middle-class families will benefit from a standard deduction that is almost double its present level and from a doubling of the child tax credit. They will benefit from the ability to deduct more of their medical expenses, increasing their tax savings during difficult times.

Despite what opponents of the bill have claimed, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act achieves all this while preserving charitable deductions and the adoption tax credit. It protects the exemption for university tuition benefits. A mortgage interest deduction remains, as does a deduction for State and local taxes.

The result is a comprehensive tax reform bill that does what we set out to do: take money out of Washington's pocket and put it back into the pockets of middle-class Americans who earned it. Consider a typical family of four who earns the median family income. A vote for the conference report is a vote to cut their tax bill by more than $2,000 next year.

After a disappointing decade of stagnant wages and shrinking opportunity under the Obama administration, middle-class families are counting on Congress to keep our promise and give them that much needed relief.

In addition to directly cutting taxes for American families, this landmark bill will also set America on a trajectory toward higher wages and better job opportunities by making our country a better place to do business. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act contains a number of provisions that will make it easier to run and grow a small business, to create jobs, and to invest right here in the United States.

The bill creates new tax relief for Main Street businesses. It makes it easier for American companies to bring their earnings back home instead of parking that money elsewhere. It eliminates incentives to shift jobs and manufacturing overseas and replaces them with new incentives to invest and expand operations here at home.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Printed on recycled paper.

To make America more competitive in the global economy, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act cuts our corporate tax rate from 35 percent—one of the highest rates in the developed world—to 21 percent. This is good news for workers. As more than 100 economists agreed in a recent open letter, ''the question isn't whether American workers are hurt by our country's corporate tax rate—it's how badly.''

Another expert put it this way in a recent op-ed: It is ''the consensus view of professional economists'' that ''lowering corporate income taxes would increase the wages of workers.'' Perhaps that is why reforming the corporate tax rate used to be a bipartisan goal. During the previous administration, prominent Democrats said they supported bringing our rate in line with our competitors overseas.

There may be a new occupant of the White House, but the need for reform has not changed. I hope our colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support this pro-growth, pro-worker policy.

It is no wonder that job creators are enthusiastic about what they will be able to accomplish when tax reform becomes law. I recently received a letter from the chief operating officer of a construction equipment dealer in my hometown of Louisville. This is a direct quote: ''We'll hire more employees and plan investments in our company that we weren't considering prior to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.''

This bill will also help Americans by repealing a punitive tax at the very heart of ObamaCare. For low- and middle-income families who are suffering under the individual mandate tax—including many in my home State of Kentucky—repeal means relief. If the health insurance plans available under ObamaCare are not affordable or not desirable, the blame lies with that failing law, not with Americans who are already struggling to make ends meet. It is unfair and illogical to penalize them further because ObamaCare is failing to meet their needs. By erasing this individual mandate tax, we will give Americans both tax relief and healthcare flexibility—two things that ObamaCare failed to provide.

There is one more element of this bill that deserves special attention. It provides the Nation, and particularly the people of Alaska, with a tremendous opportunity to develop the State's bountiful natural resources. In 1980 Congress set aside a particular nonwilderness area within Alaska's National Wildlife Refuge for potential development of its oil and gas resources. This bill is our chance to finally make good on that promise, enhancing our country's energy security and creating good-paying jobs in the process.

Unlocking the resources of this area will provide a boon to Alaska's economy, but more broadly, it will also advance America's standing as an energy superpower, helping to cut Americans' energy costs and strengthening our national security.

For too long, special interests have stood in the way of responsible development. The people of Alaska have shown time and again that resource development can go hand in hand with environmental protection, and surface development will be limited to just one ten-thousandth of the total land in the reserve. It is long past time to finish what Congress started almost 40 years ago and to begin reaping the benefits of responsible development.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will deliver historic tax relief to American families. It will help put our country on a trajectory toward more innovation and better paying jobs. It will repeal an unfair tax at the center of ObamaCare and will help America achieve greater energy security.

So this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. I want to commend the work of Chairman HATCH, Chairman ENZI, and Chairman MURKOWSKI to bring it within reach. I urge all of our colleagues to join me in voting to approve the conference report and complete this victory for the American people.

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.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12 noon, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The majority whip.

JOBS FOR OUR HEROES BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the House will pass a bill today called the Jobs for Our Heroes Act, which I hope will be quickly signed into law by the President.

This bill streamlines a process by which Active-Duty military, reservists, and veterans can apply for commercial driver's licenses. As the Presiding Officer knows, and as people may know generally, there is a shortage of people who can get a commercial driver's license and fill these well-paying jobs.

This bill will also allow States to permanently waive license requirements for current servicemembers and National Guardsmen if they have military experience in driving comparable vehicles. That way, members of the military will not have to go through the same old rigmarole twice, wherein they get trained in the military, then get out, and the civilian world ignores the fact that they had been trained and had gotten qualified in the military. This bill fixes that.

I am honored to have a broad range of bipartisan support for this legislation. One would hope something like this would. I thank Congressman ROB WOODALL, who played a key role in helping to get this bill through the House.

I hope, with this bill being signed into law, more members of our military will be able to utilize the skills they acquired while they were in the military to be able to qualify for well-paying jobs in our communities. We continue to use our best efforts to keep faith with our veterans who have done so much for all of us.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the second matter I would like to address is the historic vote that the House will take today and that we will take later on this evening on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

This bill will dramatically reduce taxes on American families and incentivize the creation of new jobs. It is a major victory for all Americans who want to know that Washington has their best interests at heart. It does exactly what we told the voters we would do in 2016, and it is important to keep our word. We are delivering tax reform in a way that is real, comprehensive, and substantial, and we are doing it through what we usually refer to as regular order in the Senate.

I know that ever since the Affordable Care Act was written in then-Democratic Leader Harry Reid's conference room and was brought to the floor, there has been a lot of concern about the way the Senate conducts its activities. Senator MCCAIN, who unfortunately will not be able to be with us today, has been a stickler for returning to regular order—by that, meaning introducing a bill, having it marked up and debated in the relevant committee—in this case, in the Finance Committee—then having it brought to the floor, where it is amended, and then debating it until we finally pass it. Then we go to a conference committee with the House and reconcile the differences between the Senate version and the House version. That is exactly what we did with this piece of legislation.

I have spoken at length about certain provisions in the bill before, but I want to make one point abundantly clear. For the American people, this represents the very best kind of Christmas gift we can offer them—one that will actually make their lives better and one from which they will benefit right away. This tax reform may not bear the ribbons and bows of a Christmas present, but the men and women who are trying to make ends meet will benefit from having lower taxes, bigger paychecks, and a resurgent economy that will produce more jobs and better opportunities.

I will refer to an article that came out in January of this year which cited

a shocking statistic, really. The statistic is, most Americans remain one misstep away from having a financial crisis. Fifty-seven percent of Americans don't have enough cash on hand to cover an unexpected $500 expense. These findings from this CBS News report shed light on how many households continue to struggle with their basic finances more than 7 years after the official end of the great recession of 2007. A typical American household still earns 2.4 percent below what it brought home in 1999. When people talk about less purchasing power and flat wages, that is what they are talking about.

At the same time, we know costs for essentials, such as housing and childcare, have surged faster than the rate of inflation, which puts even more stress on these household budgets. That is one of the reasons we will pass this conference report later on this evening—because we believe these families deserve to keep more of what they earn so as to make sure they don't go into debt when they suffer an unexpected financial expense of $500, like the 57 percent of the respondents to the poll said they would, which was reported by CBS News. That is why it is a big deal.

For example, a typical family of four who earns the median family income of $73,000 a year will receive a tax cut of $2,058, which is a reduction of nearly 58 percent. Now, that may not seem like a big deal inside the beltway, but to those families who are living paycheck to paycheck and who cannot deal with unexpected financial expenses, this will help them in a real and meaningful way.

Consider the single mother—or father, for that matter—with one child and an annual income of $41,000. That parent, that family, will receive a tax cut of $1,304.50, which is a reduction of nearly 73 percent. This may be shocking news to most people who are listening because all they have heard about is what is bad in this bill.

There are a lot of very good things in this bill, but it could have been made better if our Democratic colleagues had worked with us rather than resisted us at every step along the way. I guess they are satisfied with the status quo—the fact that purchasing power for the average family is actually 2.4 percent below what it was in 1999. The message I would like to convey is, we are not satisfied with the status quo. We think life can be better, and one way it will be better is to start with letting people keep more of what they earn.

For a married small business owner with an income of $100,000, he will receive a tax cut of $2,603.50, which is a reduction of nearly 24 percent. So you can see, across all incomes and among people in very different circumstances, each of them will benefit from the bill we will pass tonight and send to the President.

This bill also does something for which Barack Obama had argued in 2011, that of having a bipartisan consensus formed to cut the corporate income tax rate. I know people aren't necessarily immediately attracted to the idea of cutting corporations' taxes, but the fact is, America has the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world. What that means is, it is cheaper for businesses to move to other countries, to invest in jobs there, and to keep the money overseas that they earn abroad. By reducing it to 21 percent, as we do in this bill, we will basically have achieved the average tax rate in the industrialized world, and we will move from a worldwide tax system to a territorial one. This really is a bipartisan consensus move.

When our Democratic friends criticize us for corporate giveaways, we are embracing the very same reforms they have advocated in the past, whether it is President Obama, Democratic leader Senator SCHUMER, or the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator WYDEN. All of them have advocated reducing the corporate tax rate and making our corporate business tax more competitive because they recognize, as we all recognize, the fact that the status quo kills jobs and encourages businesses to move overseas. We want to grow jobs in America, along with investment, and encourage those businesses to come back home.

I daresay that all Americans from every walk of life will benefit from this stimulus to our economy. Janet Yellin, who was last appointed Chairman of the Federal Reserve by Barack Obama, said that in part as a result of this tax package, the Federal Reserve has raised its projection on growth of the U.S. economy from 2.1 percent next year to 2.5 percent—four-tenths of 1 percent. That is a big deal.

Every American will feel the benefit of that economic growth in terms of the wages they earn, the opportunities they have, and their ability to protect themselves against unexpected financial expenses, as I mentioned earlier.

What could someone do with $2,600 more in their paycheck? Well, you could install concrete countertops or laminate flooring in your house. When it comes to a cell phone—everybody seems to have a cell phone—you can pay your cell phone expense for 2½ years. You can go online at a Texas college and pay for your education for a full year. You can breathe a little bit easier in Dallas by having enough money to pay for 2 months of average apartment rent. You can drive down Interstate Highway 35 in Texas, knowing that almost 5½ months of an average car payment is taken care of. If you need a little dental work done, you can go to your dentist for a little tune-up and pay for that out of the savings you will achieve as a result of this bill.

Stories like these, stories of how busy, hard-working and multitasking Americans will benefit from our plan, simply leave me with confusion as to why our Democratic colleagues have simply refused to participate in this process and have blocked and dragged their feet every step along the way, trying to stop us from providing this relief, from keeping our promise to the American people. It seems in the process they have given up on the American dream, they have settled for the status quo, and they are even rooting for failure.

This bill's final passage won't wait for our Democratic colleagues to wake up. We are simply determined to get this win even without them because American families need more take-home pay, they need higher wages, they need greater job opportunities, and they need a competitive economy and the benefits it brings. American families should not have to settle for anything less, and we will make sure they don't.

There is one more aspect of the bill I want to bring up. Our tax reform plan strengthens our long-term energy security by opening up an area in Alaska to responsible energy development. At the invitation of Senator MURKOWSKI, I traveled to the North Slope of Alaska about a year or so ago, and I am amazed at the technology they were able to deploy in extracting oil from the North Slope. They literally have ice roads that don't exist except during the coldest part of the year in order to protect the environment and allow equipment to travel overland. Thanks to directional drilling, they are able to occupy basically a very small footprint and literally drill hundreds of wells in a multitude of different directions and pump the energy from that location. It creates jobs, it creates wealth, and it helps create energy security for the people of Alaska and for the United States.

I come from a State with a huge energy presence, and I understand the importance of developing our natural resources responsibly. Limited development with modern technologies will not ruin this area, as some of the critics have charged, because a very small portion of the acreage is allowed. It will provide jobs.

Let's not forget why we are doing this. One reason we are increasing our domestic energy production is because we want to make ourselves less dependent on foreign energy sources. It also helps lower the price at the pump for millions of hard-working Americans.

So I can't wait to vote on this bill later today, and I can't wait to hand-deliver to the President's desk this important bill this week and for him to sign it into law. We will all benefit from passage of this Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

I yield the floor.

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.

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

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

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, yesterday I went to Benito Juarez high school in Chicago, in the southwest part of the city, in the Pilsen neighborhood. It has a predominantly Mexican-American enrollment at this high school. It is one of my favorites. I have been there time and again for so many different events. It is full of life and full of some amazing young students and some great teachers and a great principal, Mr. Ocon. I was there 2 weeks ago for a mariachi band ensemble, training students across the city to be musicians in the Mexican tradition. There is so much life there.

But yesterday was not the happiest occasion. It was sad and worrisome. I met with about 20 of the students there, all of whom have been protected by DACA. DACA was President Obama's Executive order that was issued in 2012. That Executive order said that if you were brought to the United States as a child, an infant, a toddler, a young person, and grew up in this country undocumented; if you had no problems of any serious nature with the law; if you finished your education; if you went through a criminal background check and paid a fee, you would be protected and be able to stay in America 2 years at a time to go to school, to work, whatever your aspirations may be.

Under President Obama's Executive order, 780,000 young people came forward, and the 20 I met at Benito Juarez were among them. They got the protection they needed to legally get a job. For a lot of these young students, that is a critical part of their lives because, being undocumented, they don't qualify for any Federal assistance to go to college. If they want to go to college, they have to save up for it, and they have to find the money and work for the tuition and other expenses. So getting a job is a very important part of it.

These young people, as they went through the DACA process, knew that they were safe from being deported. That is a fear which many of us can't even understand, but it is a real fear for many people in this country who are here undocumented. So for these young people, they have that chance.

On September 5, President Trump announced he was ending the DACA protection program as of March 5 of next year, putting an end to the protection these young people have. As their DACA expires, they will be vulnerable to deportation. They will reach the point where they can no longer work in America.

The end of DACA as we know it will dramatically change the lives of thousands of young people. It will change the lives of 900 of these DACA-protected young people who volunteered to serve in our military—currently serving in our military, willing to risk their lives for a country that will not give them legal status. Imagine that for a moment. If they had to prove that they really cared about America, what more could they do then to put their lives on the line? They have done it, 900 of them. When DACA goes away on March 5 of next year, they have to leave the military service. That is the end of their opportunity to serve America. Many of them are in the military because they bring special skills and special capacities to lead. We will lose them.

It will mean that 20,000 of these DACA-protected young people, when it goes away for them, will no longer be able to teach—20,000 teachers across America. I met one of them yesterday, Katherine Galeano. Katherine, whom I had met before, is a special-ed teacher. Her family originally came from Nicaragua. She told a heartbreaking story about what happened 10 years ago. She was in high school. She was taking a shower in the morning before she was to go to school. There was a knock on the bathroom door. Her mother was crying and screaming: ''Come out. Come out.'' Katherine came out to see her father being handcuffed. They were deporting him to Nicaragua. He was gone. That was the last time he saw her and she saw him—10 years ago. As she told the story, she said that her mother tried to make it as a single mom with her kids here in the United States and finally gave up and went back to Nicaragua, leaving Katherine to raise herself, to pay her own way through college, to get a teaching certificate and teach special-ed in the city of Chicago. As of March 5 next year, Katherine is finished teaching. It is over. DACA is gone.

When I met with these students yesterday, you can imagine what they were worried about. They are worried about themselves and their future. They are worried about their families. They are worried about having turned over all this information to the government when they signed up for DACA which can now be used against them and their families. That is what they are worried about.

Many of them, I am sure, reflect on the fact that this could be their last Christmas in the United States of America. If that seems overly dramatic, then you need to meet them and talk to them and understand the reality of their lives. That is what they face.

While President Trump did prospectively eliminate the DACA Program, he issued a challenge to us. He said to Congress: Now do something. If I am going to eliminate this Executive order, what is Congress going to do in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives? Will you pass a law to deal with this challenge?

He said that in September, and here we are in the middle of December having done nothing—nothing—and the clock is ticking. It is a clock that means an awful lot to thousands of young people across America, including those at Benito Juarez high school in the city of Chicago.

There are people who want to get this fixed, Republicans and Democrats. We need to come together and get this done. There is no excuse for delay. We know what needs to be done. We need to give these young people a chance.

I introduced the DREAM Act 16 years ago here in the Senate, and the DREAM Act said to these young people: We are going to put you on a path to legalization and a path to citizenship. It won't be easy, and it won't be quick, and you will have to show us that you can be a productive part of America's future, but then we will give you your chance. These young people grew up in the United States of America, pledging allegiance to that flag, singing our national anthem, believing in their heart of hearts that this was home, but it really wasn't, legally. They were undocumented and illegal in America. Now the question is, What will we do to make that better, to fix it, to come up with a just solution?

Some of my Republican colleagues say: Well, you have to give us more than just fixing their problem; you have to give us some fix to our immigration system. I am not against that. I was part of a group of eight Senators who spent months together—four Democrats, four Republicans. We crafted a comprehensive immigration bill, which I am proud of. It passed on the floor of the Senate and was sent over to the Republican House of Representatives where they refused to even consider it. They would not bring it up for a vote. It died in the Republican House.

I know this immigration system in America is broken. I have talked about one specific piece of it this morning, but there are many aspects of it that are broken. The Republicans have said to us: Do something to make our borders stronger. Sign me up. I voted for that on the comprehensive immigration bill. Does that mean more technology, more equipment, making certain that it is clear that our border is going to be a real border that you cannot cross at will? Of course. I am prepared to do that, and many Democrats—maybe all the Democrats—would join in that effort. There are things that we can do to fix this system, but what we cannot do is ignore it. We cannot ignore what is happening to these young people, the threat to their future, to their families, and we can't ignore the reality that this is a basic test of who we are as Americans.

I stand here today as the son of an immigrant mother. My mom was brought to this country when she was 2 years old, and thank goodness my grandmother decided to put her on a boat, bring her from Lithuania to the United States. I wouldn't be here otherwise. That is my story, that is my family's story, and that is America's story. That is who we are. I cannot imagine my grandmother and grandfather, whom I never knew, making the decision to come to a country where they didn't even speak the language,

giving up everything and leaving it behind in their mother country of Lithuania to try a new country called the United States of America. That story has been repeated millions of times, and thank goodness it has. They not only brought strong backs and strong minds, but they brought with them a part of their DNA, which was a DNA of culture, courage, and determination, and I think that is part of who we are as Americans—and proud to be.

Let me tell you the story of one of these Dreamers, as I call them, or DACA young people. All of my speeches notwithstanding, these stories tell more about this situation than anything I could possibly say. This is Maria Rocha. I have told stories of Dreamers on the floor; she is 101, I believe, of the list that I have given. She came to the United States at the age of 3, brought from Mexico. Maria grew up in a rural town called Stonewall, TX. Her fondest memories of growing up in the Texas Hill Country include haystack jumping, armadillo chasing, and fishing in a lake. Later in her childhood, Maria's family moved to San Antonio. Maria was a very good student. She graduated from high school twelfth in her class. She played varsity soccer. She was recognized as a San Antonio Scholar Athlete of the Week during her junior year. At the same time, as she was going to school and playing soccer, she was working a job to help support herself and her family.

Maria was accepted at the University of Texas at San Antonio. While enrolled as a full-time student, she kept right on working. In fact, she juggled three different jobs. She was a housekeeper, a babysitter, and a personal assistant. She had to come up with $40,000 out of pocket to pay for college education. She didn't qualify for any Federal assistance because of her immigration status. So these young students in college are working harder than many others just to make sure they succeed.

In May of 2012, she graduated with a degree in interdisciplinary studies. After graduation, she decided to enter a program known as Teach For America. Almost everyone knows about this program, but they should know that this is a program in which college graduates volunteer to teach in some of the most challenging schools across America. Maria was one of those.

Today, Maria continues her career as a teacher. She teaches third grade in her hometown of San Antonio, TX. At the same time, she is pursuing a graduate degree in education, once again with no Federal assistance, no Federal loans. Without DACA, Maria would not be able to work and could be deported immediately. When asked what would happen to her without DACA protection, which President Trump eliminated as of March 5 next year, Maria only thinks of her students. Here is what she said: How are my students going to take it? What is going to happen to them? That is what scares me.

Nationwide, there are 20,000 DACA recipients just like her. With Teach For America alone, 190 of these undocumented students who have gone on to get degrees in college are teaching in the Teach For America Program. Currently, they are teaching 10,000 students across 11 States, with one-third of them in the State of Texas.

In a few weeks, Congress is going to face the reality of this DACA provision by President Trump coming into full effect. As of that day, she and others like her will start the clock ticking to lose their jobs, be legally unemployable in America.

Christmas is a special time of year for every family of Christian faith and those who observe it. It is a special time of year for my family. The real question though is, Can we leave this week, ignoring this issue? Can we go home and enjoy our Christmas without thinking for a moment of how young people like Maria may be facing their last Christmas in the United States of America? That is the reality of what she faces. So why don't we face this issue?

This is an empty Senate Chamber, which is usually the case, unfortunately. I wish it were filled—filled with a healthy, fulsome debate on this issue. Let's have our disagreements, bring them out. Let's work out our compromises. Let's do something that is really radical around here. Let's come together and legislate—Democrats and Republicans. Let's solve this problem. That is why we were elected, not to collect a paycheck and build a pension but to solve the problems facing America. This one is real, it is timely, and it is now.

Maria Rocha and 780,000 other young people are counting on us to do something. Let's not come up with excuses. Let's come up with answers.

I yield the floor and 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.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, as I come to the floor today, the Senate is approaching one of our most important votes, really, in years. The tax relief legislation that we will be voting on will be, I believe, great for America, great for the American people, and it will do a lot for the future of our great country. It has been a long process. There has been a lot of discussion, and there has been years of preparation waiting for today's vote.

The Finance Committee has held over 70 hearings on the subject over the last 6 years. When we were debating it on the floor, we had about 285 amendments offered to this legislation. There have been a lot of changes over the past few weeks to include as many good ideas as possible. After all that, it is understandable that there may be some confusion about what the legislation does. I want to speak today about the various ways that this legislation is good for hard-working Americans, like the people in my home State of Wyoming.

First, most people are going to pay lower tax rates. For a couple who makes between $19,000 and $77,000 a year, the rates are going to drop from 15 percent to 12 percent. So a family might see their tax bill drop by more than $1,000 just from this one part of the Republican tax relief plan alone.

The second thing I want to point out is that this legislation roughly doubles the standard deduction. It goes up to $12,000 for a single person who files and then to $24,000 for a married couple. Well, that is double. People will not have to pay Federal income tax on all of that money—none of it at all. It is a standard deduction of $24,000 for a family. So if we combine that with the lower rates—the lower rates and the higher deduction—it is even more money that people are going to be able to keep of their own money. Instead of having Washington spend it, they can spend it. They are not going to be sending it to Washington for someone else to spend it.

Mr. President, you know as well as I do that people are much better deciders about how their money ought to be spent, and they get a better value for their money than when they send it to Washington for Washington to spend it, supposedly on their behalf. It is not only that. Their taxes might be a lot simpler to figure out come April 15. We have lower rates, a higher standard deduction, and now it is simpler to figure out on April 15.

A lot of people are looking around trying to find deductions they can take and save a little money on their taxes. We have seen that for years—ways to find additional deductions. People save the receipts. Then they look at the receipts. They go through the box and find out what they spent, and how much they spent. They gather up their receipts and fill out extra forms.

Under this tax relief plan, they can choose just to take this much higher standard deduction and not have to spend all that additional time looking through the shoe box of receipts trying to find something they may have spent. This is going to make tax filing a whole lot simpler for lots of Americans.

How many people are going to benefit from this? Today about 70 percent of people who fill out their tax form choose the standard deduction. Under this plan, which doubles the standard deduction, we expect that maybe even more than 9 out of 10 Americans are going to be able to use this simplified way of filling out the tax forms. They

are going to see that it is really a good deal for them personally, individually, for them and their families.

Millions of people are going to save money and have an easier time filling out their tax form—their tax return—and they will save money. In the past, they had to pay somebody to prepare their taxes for them. They will not have to save the receipts and fill out the extra forms, and they will not have to worry that they are going to be audited by the IRS for trying to keep more of their hard-earned money. They will be able to keep more of their money and use their time doing something else that they actually enjoy doing instead of filling out forms and sending money to the Federal Government.

That is another way Democrats are trying to confuse people. They want people to think tax relief is somehow taking away options. It is actually giving them more options. That is what we are seeing here. It is expanding the standard deduction that a lot of people already use, and many more people will be able to use it under the Republican plan.

That brings me to another important point that I want to make about this tax reduction plan. We did work hard to keep a lot of the deductions that are important to some Americans. In some cases, we even made them better. For people who still come out ahead by itemizing their deductions—and there certainly will be some—there is another way that they can keep more of their money. People can still take a deduction if they donate to charity. People can still save money on their retirement savings through an IRA or a retirement plan at work.

If someone has children, we actually double the tax credit they get to $2,000 per child. They don't even have to itemize their taxes to get that $2,000 per child tax credit. It is just a straight tax cut on top of the other cuts they get under this Republican plan. They still get to set up an account to save for their children's education, if they like.

For people who have high medical expenses, this tax relief plan actually saves them more money on their taxes than the old way. Republicans understand that medical costs remain out of control in this country. There were a lot of policies that the Democrats and President Obama put in place that raised the cost of medical care for people all across the country. Republicans are working hard at getting rid of those policies and bringing down the cost of care across the country. Until we get that completely done, this tax relief plan makes it easier for people to deduct their higher medical costs.

So today someone can get tax relief if their medical expenses are more than 10 percent of their income, under the old law. We drop that threshold to 7.5 percent so that more people will qualify. That gives people additional relief while we keep working on ways to reduce the cost of care.

That brings me to another way that this tax relief legislation is going to save a lot of people money. The Republican plan effectively repeals—eliminates—the ObamaCare individual mandate tax. This was the outrageous tax penalty that made ObamaCare a mandatory program by sending the IRS after someone if they didn't have Washington-approved health insurance. You had to pay a tax. You had to pay a fine. People knew it was unpopular. It didn't matter to President Obama and the Democrats. They took it all the way to the Supreme Court to force people to pay a fine, a tax—to force them to buy ObamaCare health insurance, even though it wasn't right for them or their family and they couldn't afford it.

It didn't matter to the Democrats or President Obama. Oh no, you have to buy it. The insurance is too expensive. If you can't buy it, if you can't afford it, tough, pay the tax.

We are eliminating that tax completely. In my home State of Wyoming, over 16,000 people ended up hit with that fine, hit with that tax. Over $6 million was collected from the fine people in my State who couldn't afford ObamaCare insurance. On average, this ObamaCare mandate tax is about $700. The legislation says that tax will, in the future, be zero. It takes ObamaCare from being a mandatory program to turning it into a voluntary program. More than 6 million people paid that tax in the United States this past year. These people will now get a tax break. Under the Republicans, they will see this, and it will affect their lives and give them more money to spend.

It doesn't take away anyone's insurance, as Democrats have claimed. It just says that nobody should have to pay an extra tax just because they decide that overpriced ObamaCare insurance isn't right for them.

So those are just some of the ways this Republican tax plan legislation is good for Americans. It saves people money. It saves them time. It gives them more freedom. Together, it is about $1.5 trillion in tax savings over the next 10 years. It is money that families, small businesses, and large employers will not have to send to Washington. They can use the money any way they want.

It is interesting. Last week NANCY PELOSI was talking about this Republican tax relief plan. She said:

> This is who they are. This is what they came here to do.

She probably meant it as an insult, but she stumbled upon the real difference between Republicans and Democrats like herself. Republicans believe in cutting people's taxes and letting people keep more of their hard-earned money, because we believe hard-working Americans should be able to make the decisions about what money they save or they spend or they invest. It is their money. It is not the government's money, which is the way NANCY PELOSI looks at all of this in terms of ways she can then grow the government.

Republicans look at this and say: How can we give people more freedom?

That is what this legislation does. It is very simple.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

TRAIN CRASH IN TACOMA, WASHINGTON, AND REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, a tax bill is a fiscal document. It is a legal document. It is also a moral document. It involves choices, much as we make choices as families when we own a car that is unsafe or a house that has a front step that is about to collapse or when a college student needs money to pursue her education. A family can make choices. A parent can go to the casino and gamble and lose the money or spend it on luxuries that are unnecessary or unwise, and nations make those kinds of moral choices as well.

This tax document is a moral document. It involves choices. Will it make our country safer, rebuild our infrastructure and our national defense or, instead, in effect, squander resources of $1.5 trillion or more on a giveaway to the very wealthiest in our country? It relates directly to the tragedy that this Nation experienced outside of Tacoma, WA, just yesterday.

I want to extend, first of all, my thoughts and prayers to those families and loved ones who have suffered losses. The three deaths and injuries have taken their toll emotionally as well as physically. In these dark days, we are demanding answers.

Unfortunately, the National Transportation Safety Board is there, beginning its investigation. We know now that the train apparently was traveling three times the limit on speed, 80 miles an hour in a 30-mile-an-hour zone. That fact is absolutely stunning and scandalous, and the NTSB, no doubt, will present its results after its investigation.

I call on the NTSB to finish that investigation as promptly and quickly as possible. As responsible an agency as it is, it often works much more slowly than taxpayers deserve. I call on it to produce its investigation, not in months or years but in days or weeks. We need to know the answers as to why this catastrophe occurred. We now know with certainty, apparently, that the train was traveling too fast.

You may be forgiven for thinking it seems like deja vu. Didn't that happen also in Spuyten Duyvil, where four people were lost? Didn't it happen in Philadelphia, where eight were killed in 2015? Yes, again, three people were killed yesterday.

Three hundred people have been killed in these accidents since 1970, when the NTSB first recommended impementing this new technology. It

was new technology in 1970 called positive train control. Now it is old technology, but it still has not been installed in many of the Nation's railroads. The deadline for installing it was postponed from 2015—over my vehement protests and those of others on our side of the aisle in the Commerce Committee and on the floor of the U.S. Senate—until 2018. Even now, the railroads are seeking an extension to that time, saying that the resources aren't available.

Well, the costs of those 300 lives lost and of the crashes that have resulted from derailments and other kinds of very severe mishaps due to excessive speed are way in excess of the costs of installing positive train control since 1970, since 2015, and if it is postponed again, the costs will exceed the expenses that we saw in the system.

It is available now. It is fully ready for installation on railroads across the country. The resources aren't preventing its installation; it is the will and determination to do so.

The failure of Federal authorities to require and provide support for positive train control is a moral choice this Nation has made. It is not only about dollars and cents; it is about basic moral choices, and those choices are a factor in those three deaths outside of Tacoma, WA. We know excessive speed was a factor. We know positive train control slows down trains when they are going too fast in zones where the limit is 30 miles an hour rather than the 80 miles an hour that this train was traveling. Regardless of driver fatigue or distraction, regardless of any of the other contributing sources, positive train control is there to stop or slow down trains when human error may lead to crashes.

The new deadline is now 1 year away. If we do nothing else in this Congress, let us insist that this deadline be met without additional delay. Our failure to do so would be a moral failure.

The dollars and cents required to install positive train control and to repair our aging and decrepit roads and bridges involve investment.

To show you what is happening in Connecticut, very much like the rest of the country, we know that 78 percent of our roads are in poor or mediocre condition. That is a moral choice, not just a physical choice. It has the same kinds of consequences as failure to install positive train control. The cost per motorist annually is $864, which is needed for vehicle repairs from driving on roads that are in disrepair.

Now, as a result of this so-called tax cut, a lot of people in Connecticut are going to, perhaps, see a few crumbs, a few sweeteners—very minor deductions in their tax bill. It is nowhere near the $864 that they are now paying because of inadequate roads and bridges. That is a hidden cost. It is a moral choice because it not only creates costs in vehicle wear and tear, it also leads to crashes that, in turn, take lives and cause injury.

This legislation will put America in debt by $1.5 trillion. That is a moral choice because it shifts the burden of tax breaks and giveaways now to future generations. It also deprives us right now of funds that could be applied to infrastructure—rebuilding roads and bridges.

Lest you think the Connecticut situation is an anomaly or an exception, the grade for our Nation as a whole in infrastructure is a resounding D-plus.

I know this may seem to many of my colleagues like an oversimplification. Yes, it is, but it is an oversimplification with real facts that support it and with real consequences to the American people.

When the President of the United States suggests in a tweet, as he did yesterday after the Tacoma tragedy, that his infrastructure program will be ready ''soon,'' that is ducking responsibility. It is a moral choice because ''soon'' has meant delays, month after month, into the first year of his Presidency. He can take action today. He can disavow this shameful program that he has supported—the tax cut that slashes resources for the Federal Government—and, instead, decide that investment is the right course—investment in roads, bridges, rail, broadband, VA facilities, ports, and airports. That is a moral choice that this tax scam makes.

It is a tax scam with moral consequences in terms of inequality in this Nation. It tilts the benefits in favor of corporations and the wealthiest who will receive permanent tax cuts. It will hurt working families, students, public schools, firefighters, police officers, local government, and sick people, who will receive nothing but crumbs by comparison.

It will desperately hurt States like Connecticut. Our State and local taxes will no longer be deductible above set limits; $10,000 will barely cover and, in fact, will fail to cover many, many of the tax bills that formerly could be deducted. It will impose limits on mortgage interest deductions that will harm our real estate industry in Connecticut and many other States across the country.

Yes, there are crumbs and sweeteners, and they are temporary. They pale in comparison to the tremendous benefits that will go to corporations and the wealthiest.

It narrows our tax base, shifting the burden, in fact, from corporations to individuals. It makes the Tax Code more complicated, not less so. It grossly increases inequality, and it steals $1.5 trillion from our children and from us insofar as it deprives our national defense, as well as our infrastructure, of resources that are needed.

I am a member of the Armed Services Committee, and I remember very well the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mike Mullen, saying, ''The most significant threat to our national security is our debt,'' which surprised me at the time. For the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to say that the biggest threat to our national security is our national debt—how could that be? Well, having watched the National Defense Authorization Act year after year, constrained by resources that are now going to be less available because of this $1.5 trillion debt—and larger, probably—that is created by this tax plan, I better understand what he meant.

The Republicans are essentially pursuing two inherently irreconcilable objectives. The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, a man whom I respect as much as anybody in this Chamber, has called for an additional $430 billion over the next 5 years to build up our military and rebuild it. I can tell you without doubt that there is no way to increase defense spending by $86 billion every year, as the chairman has said we need, while slashing Federal revenue $150 billion every year. The math fails. It will not work.

So for my Republican colleagues to say that we need to rebuild, we need to invest in our national defense and in our military and in the skill training of our warriors is a fiction. It is blatant deception, and it is a disservice to the brave men and women who have enlisted and serve us in uniform now and others who will join them in the future. We cannot have the most advanced and strongest military in the world if we use the same tax code as the Cayman Islands.

This year, our country experienced a tragic loss of life—in fact, the loss of more than life, needlessly, preventably. Seventeen sailors perished on the USS *John S. McCain* and the USS *Fitzgerald*. Two of them were from Connecticut. I attended ceremonies in their honor. Those deaths are largely attributable to a lack of resources. There may have been other causes, but this tax bill is a moral choice about our military. The failure to invest in those ships, in the training and necessary rest that is required for our men and women in those positions, will be aggravated by the debt we see here.

Our national security is more than just military spending in the face of Russian cyber attacks in our elections, horrific hurricanes hitting Puerto Rico and Texas and Florida, and fires still burning in Western States. We know our military alone is not enough to keep us safe and secure. Those natural disasters and those challenges from our adversaries require investment as well, and, again, the loss of this $1.5 trillion to debt that will be paid largely by future generations is something that hobbles our ability to make our Nation safe and secure.

This tax scam is morally reprehensible. It cuts taxes for the wealthiest while jeopardizing programs that are essential to the safety and security of many in our Nation who are most vulnerable.

Under current law, the GOP tax plan will trigger $25 billion in Medicare cuts next year alone. With this self-inflicted

$1.5 trillion hole in our Federal deficit, we know what will come next: savage attacks on Social Security as well as Medicaid and Medicare. This assault on healthcare doesn't end with these programs. The repeal of the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate will raise premiums and eventually lead to $13 million—13 million—more uninsured Americans.

Republicans are sabotaging these critical programs that provide care to the most vulnerable Americans so those at the top can avoid paying their fair share.

What corporations benefit the most? There is a very simple answer. The ones that benefit the most with foreign cash that will be distributed almost certainly to their shareholders and to their CEOs are listed right here. In the red is the foreign cash, and the total is listed as well. They are the ones who are going to benefit. Apple has been singled out as the single largest beneficiary, but many other corporations around the country will benefit as well.

The picture that I think was most powerful in assessing how these corporations will use this money occurred when the President's chief economic adviser asked a room of CEOs: How many of you will spend these additional resources on creating jobs? There were no more than a few hands raised in that room. This money will go to shareholders.

These corporations have zero incentive to provide new jobs if there is no increase in demand and sales. The failure to provide real tax cuts—real benefits to middle-class families and to our working families—means that sales and demand will not lead to more jobs because there will be no increase in demand with the crumbs and pittance tax cuts that are complicated.

So Republicans, let me say finally, are borrowing $1.5 trillion, and they are putting it on a credit card.

Sometimes pictures are worth a thousand words. Here is the ''American Excess'' tax scam card. It will not buy you much because it is debt. With sincere apologies to American Express, the ''American Excess'' tax scam card can be used by our children—my children and your children—as a symbol of what they are losing in opportunity costs, including the roads and bridges and rail that remain unrepaired; the new schools and airports that are unbuilt; the national defense that becomes far less adequate because the investment can't be made; the government programs, whether it is Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid that are in peril—deeply in jeopardy because of this tax scam—and positive train control that can save lives and could have saved lives, in fact, in Tacoma when that train was traveling 80 miles an hour when the speed limit was 30. These opportunity costs are real. The choices to incur them are moral, and the debt that will have to be paid by future generations is equally real, and it is immoral.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

HEALTHCARE AND DACA

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, when you are the father of a 9-year-old and a 6-year-old during the holiday season, you spend an awful lot of time reading holiday stories, you spend an awful lot of time watching Christmas specials and Christmas movies on TV, and it is wonderful. I love it. I love getting to relive my childhood through the eyes of my kids.

If you remember all of these stories and specials, there is a familiar theme that runs through them, and it is a really nice theme for kids to hear. The basic idea in many of these stories is that Christmas, Hanukkah, the holidays we celebrate today, aren't about pageantry, and they aren't about pomp and circumstance or the presents or material things; it is really about celebrating each other. It is about sort of understanding what is important to us and who is important to us and using this little break we get at the end of the year to spend time with each other.

My youngest's favorite of all of these stories and specials is the iconic Doctor Seuss poem about the Grinch. It ends like this:

He hadn't stopped Christmas from coming! It came!
Somehow or another it came just the same!
And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling: ''How could it be so?''
''It came without ribbons! It came without tags!''
''It came without packages, boxes or bags!''
And he puzzled three hours, 'til his puzzler was sore.
Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before!
''Maybe Christmas,'' he thought, ''doesn't come from a store.''
''Maybe Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more!''

Maybe it is the most famous of all of the passages from Christmas stories explaining that premise; that this time of the year is a time in which we think about each other.

I hope we do that in the Senate and in the House over the coming days before we wrap up for the year because as we approach the Christmas season and as creatures of good fortune—those of us who get to serve in the U.S. Senate—as we begin to prepare to go home and share time with our family and our loved ones, we need to think about the crisis many families are in today and will be in over the holiday season if we don't choose to do some basic things here, attached to our responsibility as U.S. Senators.

We need to think about the position we are going to put people in because of our inability to act and to pass legislation that, prior to this holiday season, seemed relatively noncontroversial.

Christmas is about celebrating our love for one another. If we really do believe in brotherhood—if we really do believe that our role as U.S. Senators is to try to lift people up around us—then we need to understand that the debates around health center funding or the Children's Health Insurance Program or the status of children who were brought here by their parents at a very young age from another country aren't about politics. They are not about scoring political points. They are about people and what we will do to people as we head into the holiday season.

Adrianna Bigard is a single mom from Hamden, CT. For her, the CHIP program has been a lifesaver. She is doing everything we would ask a young woman to do. She received her master's degree in public relations from Quinnipiac University. She is now working as a public relations specialist. She has a young son—a 6-year-old, Carter—and she is a single mom. She gets a paycheck every week, but it goes out as quickly as it comes in. She is one of the millions of Americans who are working, who are playing by the rules but are living paycheck to paycheck.

She gets insurance through her employer, but when she was told how much it would cost to add her son to her coverage, she simply could not afford it. She literally did not have the money in her monthly paycheck to be able to pay for gas and for groceries, for rent and for coverage for her son. So the CHIP program was a lifesaver for her.

Her son now is enrolled in what we call HUSKY B in Connecticut, which is the name we use for our CHIP program. Without it, she says, things would dramatically change. If HUSKY goes away—if CHIP goes away—once all benefits, taxes, et cetera, are paid, I will not have enough money left in my paycheck to pay my rent.

That is what is consuming her this holiday season.

She just got a notice from the State of Connecticut telling her that on January 31, her son Carter will lose healthcare insurance, meaning on January 31, Adrianna will not have enough money to pay for her rent or she will have to leave her son uninsured. That will be her choice come January 31. That is a pretty terrible, awful way for her to spend her holiday season.

In northeastern Connecticut, I heard from a woman who works in homelessness, and she was telling an inspiring story of a gentleman who had been living the last 3 months in a tent and suffering deeply from severe joint pain, fevers, and weakness, and had no access to healthcare until he was connected with the local community health center. That local community health center was able to get him in for care to stabilize him and potentially save his life. Yet that community health center—it is called Generations, and it serves thousands of people in northeastern Connecticut—will lose 70 percent of its funding next year.

On January 1, many health centers in Connecticut will lose more than half of their funding, and they will shut their doors to thousands and thousands of people like this man who wouldn't receive healthcare but for community health centers.

In rural America, the slashing of community health center funding will be absolutely devastating because sometimes it is these health centers that are the only way for people to get care, particularly mental health care and addiction. Community health center patients are spending this holiday season trying to digest the news that they may be shut out from their psychiatrists. They may no longer be able to see their child's primary care doctor come January 1. A 70-percent cut is not something you can manage with efficiencies; it means an elimination of services.

Faye is from Norwalk, CT. She came to this country when she was 11. She now has DACA status. She, like so many other Dreamers, has done everything we asked. Faye went to school. She got an advanced degree. She is now holding down two jobs—one of them as a radiology scheduler, working in our healthcare system. She is working two jobs because she wants to have access to the American dream of home ownership, and she is saving and saving so that she can buy a house. Now she is faced with being deported to a country that she doesn't recognize. She has been in the United States for 19 years. She lived in Connecticut for 16 years. She is spending her holiday season—as are the other 800,000 DACA recipients in this country—fearing that her life as she knows it is going to end at the beginning of next year.

Christmas, the holiday season, is not about presents. It is not about those Christmas specials. It is about people. It is about recommitting ourselves to this uniquely American notion that we are all in this together and that we are weaker as a whole if individuals who live amongst us are in crisis, especially individuals who have done everything we have asked and have played by the rules. That is Adrianna and Faye—people who are going to have something taken from them and their loved ones and are going to be put into crisis because we will not do our job.

By the end of this week, we have to protect these Dreamers, we have to provide a permanent extension for health center funding, and we have to provide a permanent extension for children's healthcare insurance funding because it is our job and also because it is cruel to send all of these millions of families into the holidays with that kind of anxiety while we all sit around our holiday tables safe and sound.

My kids remind me over and over again about what they learned from these Christmas specials. Christmas isn't about the presents. It is not about the trees. It is not about the decorations. The holidays are about our commitment to one another. We can re-up on that commitment this week by doing the right thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas is recognized.

RECOGNIZING THE COMMISSIONING OF THE USS ''LITTLE ROCK''

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the commissioning of the USS *Little Rock*, a *Freedom*-class littoral combat ship. I was proud to celebrate this historic occasion with all who gathered for the commissioning in Buffalo, NY, this past weekend.

It is an honor to have one of the Navy's more versatile warships named after our State's capital city. The USS *Little Rock*'s logo features one of the most recognizable images associated with Arkansas—the Razorback. The University of Arkansas football team was given the nickname after the head coach at the time said the team played like a bunch of razorback hogs. I am confident this crew, known as the Warhawgs, will carry on that same work ethic. It has been more than four decades since the Navy had a ship named after the city of Little Rock, and we are thrilled that it will again be represented in the Navy's fleet.

Saturday marked the first time in the history of the Navy that a ship was commissioned alongside her namesake. This special occasion brought together members of the original USS *Little Rock* and those like LT Robert Dyer from Mountainburg, AK, who is a member of the current crew.

During its time as a light cruiser and then as a guided missile cruiser, the original USS *Little Rock* and its crew were vital to defeating the growing threats of its time. The new USS *Little Rock* is just as critical to our Navy's sea power. This ship and the strength and resolve of the Warhawg crew are the future of the Navy, offering unique capabilities to defend against evolving threats around the globe.

There are things this Chamber and our colleagues in the House of Representatives can do to ensure that the Navy has the resources to stay ahead of the threats our adversaries pose to us and our allies, and that begins with passing individual appropriations bills. As Congress continues discussions for fiscal year 2018 funding, it serves as a reminder that continuing resolutions are an inefficient method to keep the government operating. We should be approving individual appropriations bills instead of relying on continuing resolutions.

The starts and stops in the budgeting process impact the Defense Department and the Navy significantly. They certainly slow down the already long timetable to achieve the goal of a 355-ship fleet. Continuing resolutions negatively impact our military ratings and take our eyes off the focus of eliminating wasteful spending. They hinder our Navy's leaders' ability to plan and purchase equipment in support of its missions. They restrict the Navy from starting new programs or eliminating old and unneeded ones.

Earlier this month, Navy Secretary Spencer said the service wasted $4 billion since 2011 because of continuing resolutions. This could have gone a long way toward growing our fleet. Instead, it is gone. A continuing resolution means that the Navy is operating on the previous year's budget level and last year's priorities. It means delays in shipbuilding and ship repair. It also means reducing training opportunities, flying hours, and steaming days. That forces more requirements onto the operational fleet, which is already stretched thin after decades of constant worldwide deployment. Secretary of Defense James Mattis has said that the longer the continuing resolution, the greater the consequences for our force.

Funding the government is the basic responsibility of Washington. It is an obligation that my colleagues and I on the Senate Appropriations Committee take very seriously as we craft the appropriations bills, set priorities, and make difficult decisions on how to spend taxpayer dollars.

We must return to a process in which we debate and pass annual spending bills in order to provide much needed predictability to our military leaders, as well as other agencies of government. We can make this happen by returning to regular order and passing individual appropriations bills. I can't say that enough. We owe it to our servicemembers, their families, and all Americans. We owe it to the crew of the USS *Little Rock*.

Admittedly, Little Rock is not the first place most people think of when you mention the Navy. Our State doesn't border an ocean. But now the State capital will once again have a place on the high seas. This is a tremendous honor for the city of Little Rock, and I know the ship and its crew will make Arkansas proud.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the clock is ticking ever closer to the end of the year. We still need to fund the government by Friday. We still need to lift the spending caps equally for defense and urgent domestic priorities,

such as combatting the opioid crisis, improving healthcare for veterans, and building rural infrastructure. We must extend the FISA program and shore up pensions for over 1 million Americans. We still need to reauthorize CHIP and end the sabotage of our healthcare markets. We have had a bipartisan deal on a stabilization package for months now. It is a product that should have been easy to include in the end-year deal. After all, it is the product of bipartisan negotiations between Chairman ALEXANDER and Ranking Member MURRAY, two of our most effective Senators. But now, because the Republicans are repealing the individual mandate in their tax bill, the Alexander-Murray deal will not have its intended effect. Even worse, Speaker RYAN has just said the agreement will not pass the House unless the Hyde language is attached to it—another eleventh hour partisan demand on a bill that has already been negotiated in the Senate. What should have been an easy addition to the year-end package is getting more difficult by the hour because of Republican demands.

We still need to pass disaster supplemental funding to aid storm-stricken parts of our country—California, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, as well as Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. The disaster supplemental bill coming out of the House, while it has much better funding levels than the administration's proposal, still does not treat Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands fairly. It does not provide for cost-sharing waivers, and it doesn't include enough funding for resiliency, mitigation, Medicaid, or drinking water infrastructure. It is a step in the right direction but not good enough.

I would reiterate my plea. Texas and the Texas delegation have constantly criticized government funding. All of a sudden, now that there is a disaster, they want money. Fine. Yet what about that $10 billion rainy day fund? Let Texas spend that. I guarantee you that if it were in a blue State, some of our friends from Texas would be calling for it—the very same people who opposed aid to Sandy, the very same people who have relished putting State and local deductibility in the bill. Well, what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Let Texas dip into its $10 billion fund before it gets FEMA money. That is what seems fair and right, particularly for those who don't want to see Federal Government spending increase.

Of course, last, but certainly not least, we still need to protect the Dreamers—young people brought into this country through no fault of their own, many of them who know no other country but ours. These are people who are in our Armed Forces—over 800—who are going to our schools, who are working in our factories and offices and stores. They, like everybody else—like our ancestors—want to be Americans. They contribute to America. They help America.

Yet there are people on the other side of the aisle who have this nasty immigration attitude that affects the Dreamers and everybody else. It is so un-American. It is so against the statue with the torch in the harbor in the city in which I live. It is so against what the American people believe. Eighty percent want to help the Dreamers. Yet we are stymied so far, and 1,000 Dreamers are losing their status each week.

On all of these things, the time to act is now. Bipartisan negotiations continue to seek a compromise to ensure DACA protections as well as to provide additional border security. We Democrats are all for that—real border security that makes a difference. We should strive to reach a deal as soon as is humanly possible.

If we are not able to reach a global deal by this Friday on these many issues, there will be a temptation to do a short-term funding bill with some of these items but not others. That won't work. We should be doing all of these things together instead of in a piecemeal, week-by-week fashion. Our Republican friends cannot pick and choose what they want and do what they did on the tax bill and do what they did on the healthcare bill in saying that Democrats are not welcome to be part of the deal—because this one ain't under reconciliation.

We want to work in a bipartisan way, but a bipartisan way means just that, not Republicans deciding on their own and telling us that we should just be for it. The best way to get a good, bipartisan result, which by the Senate rules is necessary for spending bills, is for us to work together.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I will have further comments on the tax bill that I will deliver on the Senate floor late tonight after the conference report, but I just want to say that this bill will be an anchor around the ankles of every Republican. It so helps the wealthy and the powerful corporations, and it does so little and even hurts many in the middle class. It is a loser.

In a CNN new poll, a majority of Americans oppose the tax bill. When did you ever hear that Americans are against a tax cut bill? Well, you are hearing it now.

It is because our Republican friends are listening to the thousands of really greedy multibillionaires who want their taxes cut, even though they are doing great, and don't want to share those benefits with the middle class even if they make millions of middle-class people pay more.

The Republicans will rue the day that they passed this tax bill—will rue the day—because it is so unfair to the middle class. It so blows a hole in our deficit. It so threatens Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. They will rue the day.

SPECIAL COUNSEL MUELLER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we have a lot of business to get to this week, but because the topic is so important, I would like to address Special Counsel Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in our elections and the Trump campaign's potential involvement.

Over the past several months, the investigation and the FBI have been the target of a smear campaign by Republicans, in the media primarily—in a media outlet that is hardly regarded as down the middle, in a media outlet that just seems to ask ''how high'' when President Trump says to jump.

Now it has been joined, quite naturally, by several Republicans here in Congress. Their intent is not to push back on the special counsel's findings or to introduce exculpatory evidence on behalf of Manafort, Gates, Papadopoulos, or Flynn, who have been indicted or convicted. Their intent is not to make an argument about the substance of the investigation at all. Their intent is to discredit the investigator and the investigation itself, by falsely painting it as biased or partisan. That way, whatever its findings are at the end of the day, they have created a permission structure to dismiss them.

When you are afraid of the result, you attack the process. When you are afraid of the message, you shoot the messenger. That is what is happening right now with the escalating rhetoric in the rightwing echo media chambers. The commentators at FOX News have actually called Mr. Mueller's investigation a coup—an outrageous charge that has been repeated by a Republican Congressman on the floor of the House. That is how overblown this rhetoric has gotten.

Mr. Mueller is one of the most trusted and respected public servants in America. He has served administrations of both parties. He was first appointed by a Republican and was installed as a special counsel by President Trump's pick for Deputy Attorney General, Republican Rod Rosenstein. As everyone in America knows, he is as straight a shooter as one comes. Impugning his motives and calling his investigation a witch hunt or a coup is, frankly, hysterical.

I regret even repeating those ridiculous comments because there is not a shred of evidence to back them up—not a shred. If any of these critics had evidence, they would pursue their claims in court, but, of course, there is no evidence. So, instead, they wage a warped campaign in the press, fueled by an avalanche of trumped-up allegations and disinformation.

What are they so afraid of?

We all know why. The special counsel's investigation is an important one for our democracy. We have to get to the bottom of what happened in last year's election no matter who ends up on the short end of the stick when those results are announced: How was

Russia able to wage a successful information campaign to influence our election? To what extent were any members of Trump's Presidential campaign coordinating with that foreign attack on our democracy for political benefit?

These are vital questions that every American should know, and it is an outright disgrace that our Republican colleagues have not joined in in asking for this—so many of them—being as partisan as can be and putting their party over country. If Russia continues in these types of investigations, woe is America—woe is America.

Rather than this concerted campaign to sully the investigation and the FBI, President Trump and his allies should be encouraging them to do their job, to do it right, and to do it thoroughly. The stakes are too high and the topic too serious.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Jennifer Gillian Newstead, of New York, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays, and I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, all time is yielded back.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Newstead nomination?

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 88, nays 11, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 320 Ex.]

YEAS—88

Alexander	Burr	Coons
Baldwin	Cantwell	Corker
Barrasso	Capito	Cornyn
Bennet	Cardin	Cortez Masto
Blumenthal	Carper	Cotton
Blunt	Casey	Crapo
Booker	Cassidy	Cruz
Boozman	Cochran	Daines
Brown	Collins	Donnelly
Duckworth	King	Rubio
Durbin	Klobuchar	Sasse
Enzi	Lankford	Schumer
Ernst	Leahy	Scott
Feinstein	Lee	Shaheen
Fischer	Manchin	Shelby
Flake	McCaskill	Stabenow
Gardner	McConnell	Strange
Graham	Menendez	Sullivan
Grassley	Moran	Tester
Hassan	Murkowski	Thune
Hatch	Murphy	Tillis
Heitkamp	Murray	Toomey
Heller	Nelson	Udall
Hirono	Perdue	Van Hollen
Hoeven	Peters	Warner
Inhofe	Portman	Whitehouse
Isakson	Reed	Wicker
Johnson	Risch	Young
Kaine	Roberts	
Kennedy	Rounds	

NAYS—11

Franken	Markey	Schatz
Gillibrand	Merkley	Warren
Harris	Paul	Wyden
Heinrich	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 5 minutes.

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

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, there are many reasons to vote against the tax bill. A new one has come to light in examining these 1,100 pages, and that is with regard to Puerto Rico and what it does to Puerto Rico.

It ought to be enough that $1.5 trillion is borrowed in order to finance a huge tax cut for multinational corporations, with incentives to send American jobs overseas. That ought to be enough, and it ought to be enough that compared to that, there are just crumbs for the hard-working, middle-class families, but there is more.

In this tax bill, indeed, CBO has said that 13 million people will lose health insurance as a result of something that was done to the Affordable Care Act.

Now, if all of that were not enough, and if you care about the people on the island of Puerto Rico who are reeling from two storms that hit them—a good part of the island still doesn't have electricity and still does not have potable water—and who were already in economic straits to begin with and wanting to keep jobs on the island so people don't have to flee—lo and behold, in the tax bill, what is given to American mainlanders is an increase in the child tax credit from $1,000 to $2,000 per child and making that refundable for low-income people up to $1,400 per child—that increase to help poor, working families with children was not given to Puerto Rico.

That doesn't make sense, and it is just another reason why we should vote against the tax bill.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:52 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein, equally divided, until 3 p.m.

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

Mr. INHOFE. I also ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of the remarks of the Senator from Virginia, I be recognized for such time as I may consume.

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

The Senator from Virginia.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague, the Senator from Oklahoma.

I rise to talk about the tax debate that the Senate is currently having. I wish to highlight some of the reasons why I think this bill is bad and, frankly, focus on the missed opportunity that we are about to embark on when we could have found a much better project.

Let me tell you a story from when I was mayor. I was mayor of Richmond. I know my colleague from Oklahoma was mayor as well. I had a city council colleague who introduced a seemingly benign bill. It was a bill to limit the number of dogs and cats that anybody could have at their residence.

Now, pursuant to the city rules, we had to post this resolution in the newspaper for a couple of weeks so that citizens could read it, and we had a public hearing where any citizen who wanted to speak for or against the resolution had the opportunity to do so. Then, the city council members debated, and then we had a vote. It turned out to be a little more controversial than the council member originally contemplated.

When I was mayor, the minor little debate in the Richmond City Council about the number of pets you could have at your residence received more openness and transparency and discussion and debate than the vote that we

will have within a few hours or days about the entire Tax Code of the United States.

Instead of doing a bill openly and deliberately, with a lot of public input, and ultimately reaching for a bipartisan result, we have moved hastily, in secret, and in a partisan way. In my view, that is the reason why the end product is going to be so discouraging.

We had a vote in the Budget Committee to move this tax bill forward. It was interesting. We actually voted before we discussed it. The bill was on everybody's desk. The chair decided that we would vote, and only later would we talk about it. That would never have been done at a Richmond City Council meeting.

We had a full audience of citizens who wanted to be heard, and they were not given an opportunity. That would not be done at a Richmond City Council meeting. Some of the citizens started to sort of protest and get angry, get mad, and shout. When that happens in a committee meeting, I cringe because it is a violation of the decorum I expect. But what choice do they have? This is only a tax reform that affects the entire American economy, every American family, and every American business, and they feel shut out of the process.

The first version of this bill that was live was released to the public in the Senate on Thursday, November 9. The current version, which is the fifth version of the bill, was only released last Friday night, 4 days ago. So this bill to completely rework the U.S. economy moves from introduction to passage over just 41 days with multiple versions, often with handwriting in them and handed out at the last minute before votes.

The last time this body did comprehensive tax reform in 1986, the Senate had 36 days of public hearings over 10 months. This plan has had zero—zero public hearings. When the Finance Committee refuses to allow a hearing, when the Budget Committee forces a vote before the members even have a chance to express their opinions, is this really what the Senate wants to be known for? The stakes couldn't be higher.

I think in the end it is highly unlikely, but I still hope at the end we might decide to do this the right way and not the wrong way, because when you approach the process the wrong way—quickly, secretively, in a partisan way, without public input or hearings—you get a bad bill. This bill, in my view, is a bad bill.

The benefits in this bill overwhelmingly accrue to folks who are at the top end, who frankly don't need your help. Eighty-three percent of the tax plan's benefits go to the top 1 percent earners in this country because of giveaways like increasing the estate tax threshold and altering the alternative minimum tax.

If you make over $1 million, you will get a collective tax cut of $36.9 billion just in 2019. Those who make over $1 million will see their taxes go down by that much.

Massive tax cuts go to foreign individuals who own stock in American companies. Just in the first year, about $48 billion go to foreign individuals because of their ownership of stock in American companies. To the contrary, millions of middle-class people are hurt.

By 2027, on average, every income group below $75,000 will face a tax increase, and 92 million households—the combined population of probably 20 States—earning under $200,000 will face net tax increases in this bill. That is over half of all households in the country.

The working poor get hurt especially. The working poor who have the most to lose and the least margin will get hurt. By 2025, this bill would reduce the after-tax incomes of households with incomes below $40,000, while it would boost the after-tax incomes of households with incomes over $1 million.

I want to assume in charity that the hurting of the working poor and the helping of folks at the top is a result of haste rather than design. We could take the time and get this right.

These analyses that I just indicated are done by the nonpartisan CBO, whose director is from the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, which is widely known as a very conservative economics department, and also by the Joint Committee on Taxation, and the Tax Policy Center. All of the analyses come to virtually the same conclusion: The bill dramatically increases the deficit to the tune of $1.4 trillion over of the next 10 years. It will lead to millions of people falling into the ranks of the uninsured. The CBO says 13 million.

For my own Commonwealth, there are a number of provisions that are particularly harmful. We are one of the top five recipients, or claimants, of the deductibility for State and local income taxation. Virginians are going to be hurt because of the reduction of the historic tax credit.

Why couldn't we work together? Why couldn't we work together to try to do something that would be right, as President Reagan and Congress did in 1986?

Now, 16 Democrats and 1 Independent stood up a few weeks ago, and we said: We are ready to work with Republicans on tax reform. You have former Governors who have done bipartisan tax reform. You have former tax commissioners who have worked on tax issues. We said: We are ready to work with you to make this better.

Every one of us in that group has worked on bipartisan tax reform. I have done it as a mayor, and I have done it as a Governor. I know how to do it, and I have ideas, but nobody was interested in a single one.

The late Friday night that we voted here, I put an amendment on the table to show my Republican colleagues our good faith and saying: We will work with you. I stood up, and, of course, I was only given a minute to make an amendment. The process said that even though it is the entire American economy, you only get 1 minute. I stood up, and I said: I can't fix the bill in 1 minute, but I can do a couple of things. I can reduce the deficit impact by $1 trillion, and I can make every middle-class tax cut that is temporary in this bill permanent. I can do those two things—permanent middle-class tax cut and reducing the deficit by $1 trillion—if you will agree with me to do the following: Don't touch the AMT or top individual rates and reduce the corporate tax rate, not to 20 percent but to 25 percent—from 35 to 25.

Thirty-four Democrats voted for tax reform for the reduction of the corporate tax rate from 35 to 25, making middle-class tax cuts permanent, and reducing the deficit by $1 trillion, but not a single Republican—not a single one—would vote to make the middle-class tax cuts permanent and reduce the deficit. We still want to work on it. We could still make it better.

As I conclude, I will just note, again, that it was notable that when President Reagan did tax reform as President in 1986, this didn't get 50 votes or 50 votes plus a tie-breaker—51 votes. In this body, the greatest deliberative body in the world, the Reagan-era tax reform got 97 votes because they took the time to have the hearings and hear from the public, and they took the time to incorporate great ideas no matter the party of those who offered it.

President Reagan said, as he was embarking on that: ''It should not be a partisan debate, for the authors of tax reform come from both parties, and all of us want greater fairness, incentives, and simplicity in taxation.'' He was right then, and that remains true, and yet this is a process that is not incorporated—either the thoughts of the public or the thoughts of the Democratic minority.

I will say this, as I close. The GOP is not measured by who it says its hero is. Most of my GOP friends have posters of President Reagan or pictures of President Reagan. They talk about him as a personal hero, but you really are not measured by who you say your hero is. You are measured by whom you act like. This is not a President Reagan-era tax reform. This is not the way President Reagan would have done tax reform.

This is a President Trump bill. A last-minute change in this bill—a very important last-minute change that only came in at the very end—would directly benefit President Trump and his family by further exploiting a loophole to give real estate developers more money. This was on top of giving him relief on the estate tax and the alternative minimum tax. At the last minute, there was one last change made that was specifically designed to help President Trump make even more. No, this is not a Reagan-era tax reform

bill. This is purely a product of President Trump.

It follows what he does: Say one thing and do another. Claim to help the middle class but actually hurt them. Say it is not going to help me or wealthy people when it actually does. I am not surprised by the President, but I am surprised at many of my colleagues here because we could have worked on something and not have missed an opportunity that would have been far better for the American economy. It is still my hope that we will.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. First of all, Mr. President, as to my very good friend from Virginia—and he is a very good friend—I think he needs to reread this bill.

Now, I am older than he is and most of the people around here, but I do remember the Reagan tax cuts. This is a Reagan tax cut.

I listened to the other side and a lot of the liberals on the other side, because there is a difference between Democrats and Republicans, and we understand that. But they come out and say: Oh, it is always class warfare. It is always that they are doing this for the rich. The rich are going to get richer. Well, that is not the way this worked out.

There is a group called the National Tax Foundation. The National Tax Foundation did an analysis of this, and they did it State by State. In my State of Oklahoma, the average family of four will get an increase in their take-home pay of $2,000. Now, where does it come from? There is the standard deduction, for example. The Senator talked about this being for the rich. This isn't for the rich. The standard deduction actually goes from $6,000 to $12,000. If you are married, it is from $12,000 to $24,000.

There is the child tax credit. We are all concerned about the child tax credit. Several Republicans wanted to do even more than that. Right now, as the law is, it is $1,000, but it is going to be increased after this is over, after we vote. After we have a major tax reduction, that child tax credit will go from $1,000 to $2,000 per child. That is a huge thing. That is not for the wealthy.

I listen sometimes when they talk about how this is going to increase the deficit. I have to tell you, though, that I remember very well. In fact, I remember so well. I have given speeches over time. Reagan reduced taxes twice. One was in 1981 and one in 1986. In 1986 and 1981, the total amount of revenue that came into the Federal Government was $469 billion. He had a huge reduction in rates. Yes, the top rate went down from 70 percent to 50 percent, then the others went down in accordance with a similar percentage.

Now, what happened to that was that, while the total amount that came in before the tax cuts was $469 billion, afterward, it was $750 billion. The same thing happened in 1986. In 1986, the total revenue that came into the Federal Government was $569 billion. At the end of that period of 10 years that they were measuring, it was $1 trillion.

Now, the problem is, the other side is always saying that our deficits increased during that time period. Yes, they did, but I have to say this: It was not because of Ronald Reagan, it was because the House and the Senate were run by liberal Democrats, and as fast as the increase in revenue came in, they were spending not just the increase but even more.

So that is one of the differences now. I anticipate that we are going to have a conservative House and Senate for the years to come, and we will just have to wait and see what is right.

I do agree with my friend from Virginia, though, in one respect; that is, he and I both had the hardest job in the world. You never know what a hard job is until you are mayor of a major city. There is no hiding place, and if they don't like the trash, it ends up in your front yard.

REMEMBERING DOUG COE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, that is not what I am here to talk about today. I would like to speak about someone who—I will put it this way: Way back in the 1950s, back when Eisenhower was President, three giants came to Washington, DC. Two of the three giants people know about and they have heard of and they are well known. One was Billy Graham. Oh, we remember Billy Graham still, right now, and the things he has done. He has done more for Jesus and for God. Every time I get a chance to see something on TV that is from one of his past rallies, I do so.

Another one who came, of the three giants who came, was Bill Bright. Some may not remember who Bill Bright was. He was the founder of the Campus Crusade for Christ. He was the guy who actually started—people are not aware of this in the general public, but we actually have events two times a week; one is a Prayer Breakfast and one is a Bible study. Bill Bright was the one who started that. So everyone has heard of Bill Bright and the Campus Crusade for Christ.

The third giant who came in no one has heard of, and his name was Doug Coe. This is Doug Coe. Doug Coe came with the other two giants, and he really changed America. He died last February 21. I purposely, for an obvious reason my colleagues will find out in a minute, waited until now to talk very much about him.

You see, people think of Doug Coe as having been someone who was a great diplomat, he had political influence and all that. There is an article written not long ago, and I will read this to you because he did things like that. He did it second only to his real mission in life.

The article goes like this:

> The extent of Coe's influence in American politics is [real]. . . . important figures have acknowledged his role on the national and international stage. For instance, speaking at the 1990 National Prayer Breakfast, President George H.W. Bush praised Coe for his quiet diplomacy.

I don't ever remember in the years I have known him that he ever raised his voice. He was always a quiet diplomat.

> [Doug Coe] was a behind-the-scenes player at the Camp David Accords in 1978, working with President Jimmy Carter to issue a worldwide call to prayer with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. In 2000, Coe met with the top economic officials of Pakistan as a ''special envoy.'' Coe met with President George H.W. Bush as he hosted a luncheon with Iraq's ambassador to the United States in the mid-1980s. In 2001, Coe helped arrange a private meeting between two warring leaders.

By the way, I was there so I remember this firsthand. That was the President of Congo, Joe Kabila, and the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame. I was there during the National Prayer Breakfast, and he had these two Presidents of warring countries in there to talk to them in the spirit of Jesus. That is when everything broke down, they became friends, and they signed a peace accord. That was Doug Coe.

> Coe was a member of the large United States Congressional and ministerial delegation which accompanied then First Lady Hillary Clinton to the 1997 funeral of the founder of the Sisters of Charity, Mother Teresa. He is mentioned by John Ortberg in his book, ''If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat.''

He talked about how the book was partly about Doug Coe. He was the guy who had a great influence in bringing medicine and releasing political prisoners in Kenya. We all remember that episode.

So here we have a guy who was bringing warring powers together. He was solving serious problems with the country. Yet that wasn't even his mission.

I know I will lose credibility when I say this because people will think it is impossible. A few people here know it is not impossible because they heard it once before; that is, Doug Coe has actually taken his mission, which is the Jesus mission—by the way, Time magazine listed him among the 25 most influential evangelicals in America, but, anyway, I will lose credibility when I say that, in effect, Doug Coe has been to every country in the world. The reason I know this—I thought we had him one time because Zanzibar is actually—people think it is a separate country next to Tanzania. He never was in Zanzibar, and I was. Then we found out he was right, and I was wrong; that was not a separate country.

Anyway, he has had this Jesus mission since actually the late 1940s.

I want to just mention that I hope and pray my kids and grandkids, when it comes time for me to cash out, will be as respectful and as loving as his kids and grandkids were at his funeral. We called it a celebration, not a funeral. One of his grandkids, Sam Wagner, talked about a trip he and his

grandpa took to Nepal. Sam recalled how Doug not only met with dignitaries, but he also met with the young kids carrying machine guns who had shut the city down.

Justin is a grandson. He recited the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 and said that Doug reminds him of the little boy in that story. Just as the boy brought his loaves and fish to Jesus, Doug brought all he had to Jesus.

Doug used to ask his grandson the question: If you give Jesus all of your love, what will happen? You will not run out of love for other people. Rather, Jesus will make your love enough for the whole world.

That is a grandson. Gosh, I would like to have my grandsons feel that way.

Melissa, a granddaughter, at the very last of the celebration I am referring to, stood up and said: I want you to leave this service talking about Jesus because Doug would certainly have been disappointed if you left talking about him.

So, anyway, we have people like that. We had famous people at that meeting, by the way. One was Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner. The first time she met Doug, he talked like he already knew her well and like she already knew Jesus well, even though she had only recently accepted Jesus into her life, but Barbara Skinner is a very liberal Democrat, a wonderful person, and she jokingly said that Doug didn't understand gender issues because most of his fellowship members were men, and he would say to her: We brothers have to stick together.

Doug made Barbara pray for Ronald Reagan at the National Prayer Breakfast when Ronald Reagan was President. Even after she told him she didn't know enough Scripture to pray for Republicans, Doug challenged her to confront her skepticism of people of different beliefs, and she did.

You know, he had a way of getting things done that other people didn't. One of the well-known people who was there at the celebration was Sam Nunn. We remember Sam Nunn. He was a very well-known U.S. Senator. He is one who really concentrated on rebuilding our national defense when it needed to be rebuilt. He would talk about Doug Coe. He said Doug formed small fellowships and prayer groups in the House, in the Senate, at the Pentagon, at the executive branch, the judicial branch, and he also formed groups globally all over the world. He started many diverse fellowship groups throughout Japan and injected them all with Jesus. Jesus was it with Doug.

Sam told a story about playing golf with Doug. Doug was a good golfer. He was talented. He made bets with the people he played golf with, and if they lost, they would have to—it wasn't a money deal—they would have to memorize a Bible verse or go on mission trips. Doug always wins.

I always will remember what Sam said. Very quietly, in a quiet voice, he said: Doug Coe was a sermon we saw. If we looked closely, we also saw a glimpse of Jesus.

Another guy who is very well known to all of us here—known worldwide—is this guy named Ward Brehm. Ward Brehm enjoys talking about Doug Coe. He is the one who repeated something that George H.W. Bush said a long time ago. He said: Doug Coe has more friends who are heads of State than I do. This is the President of the United States talking.

President Bush also said—one of his favorite quotes: ''Doug Coe was the most famous person that nobody has ever heard of.''

Well, anyway, Ward Brehm was telling a story, and he said: In an early conversation about Africa, Doug once asked me: If you were God, how would you help all of those poor people in Africa?

My mind went totally blank, and I stammered: I don't know.

Doug said: We are not in a hurry. Just think about it for a while.

Ward Brehm said: So I did. I thought about it for a while, and my mind was still a blank. So, finally, in frustration, I said: I am not God so I don't know what I would do, but you seem to know so you tell me, if you were God, how would you help the poor people in Africa?

Doug Coe said very quietly: I would change the hearts of their leaders.

This is what Doug did. He didn't just change the hearts of leaders, he changed the hearts of leaders around the world—every country in the world. One man did that. I don't know how that is even possible.

Another person who was—had a different kind of expression is Lee Atwater. Not many people remember Lee Atwater. He was well known in Republican circles. He actually was the chairman of the Republican Party a number of years ago. He was a talented, charismatic guy. He played guitar. He sang. Everybody loved him. He was arguably one of the best political mechanics around at that time.

Something bad happened to him. He got leukemia. He knew he was going to die, but he wasn't sure—he said: I am going to die. I have to be rational about this thing. I don't know who God or Jesus is.

So, on Friday, March 16, after a White House breakfast, Lee struck up a conversation with the President's secretary. I remember her, Patty Presock. She suggested that he call Doug Coe. She was suggesting that Lee Atwater call Doug Coe. At that time, he was working with Members of Congress on the National Prayer Breakfast.

Eleven days later, Lee arrived at the Cedars in Virginia overlooking the Potomac, which served as the headquarters for Doug Coe's Fellowship Foundation. Now, using a cane, Lee Atwater, nearing his death, walked into the main house and sized up his 60-year-old host. He said: I have been in this city for many years now, and I never heard of you. Who are you, anyhow? He said that to Doug.

Doug said: Well, we have many mutual friends all over the city. I have heard about you for a long time.

Lee Atwater said: What have you heard?

Doug replied: I have heard that you are a real S-O-B.

He didn't say S-O-B, he said the real words, and their dialogue began at that time.

So from then until August, Lee was deteriorating, and one August day, Lee asked Coe to come to his hospital bed in an emergency. He was dying, and he wanted to find out, What is this deal about Jesus? What is this deal about God? He said that when he arrived, Lee looked at him with his best piercing glare, and he said: This Jesus business, is he God or isn't he God? Tell me. Some say he is God, some say he is man.

Doug replied: This is something you have to decide for yourself, but let me just tell you a little story.

Lee gave Coe his full command and focus.

Doug Coe said: You are big on the Golden Rule. Now, let's just say that you are the most powerful figure in the universe.

This is Doug Coe talking to Lee Atwater.

You are the most powerful person in the universe, and you could say, let there be a star or a planet and, boom, it exists; or you wanted to create elephants and, boom, there are elephants or cows or human beings. Anything you wanted, you had all the power, right? You understand that? So you are sitting up on a cloud somewhere, looking down on Earth, and you see these cows grazing in a field, and you decide that you want to be a real companion to those cows. Now, what would you do?

All of a sudden, that picture of God becoming man had a clarity of an index card summary. He said: I got it. I got it, he shouted. Don't tell me any more. Don't tell me any more. It is very clear. And he died.

Doug had a way of saying things that nobody else did.

The last one I will mention—this is significant to me because I happened to be with Doug at the time the statement was made.

President Museveni is the President of Uganda. Like many of the Presidents in Africa, he is one who came through the bush and fought his way up, and he has been, I think, an excellent President.

Doug has told him Jesus said: ''I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me.''

This always bothered President Museveni.

The President said to Doug Coe: Look, we can go out into the bush. We have villages. They have never heard of God. They have never heard of Jesus. Are you saying that there is no way they are going to get to Heaven?

Doug told President Museveni a story—that he had actually experienced this revelation. When he was in

the Gobi Desert several years ago to visit Mongolian sheepherders, he told them that he had a friend who was a shepherd. In fact, he told them that his friend is the greatest shepherd who ever lived. His friend knows all of the flock, even the names of each sheep. If one of the sheep gets lost, the shepherd leaves the flock to search for the one lost sheep. The Mongolian sheepherders were amazed as Doug told him about this shepherd.

The next day the Mongolian sheepherders told Doug that during the night they had decided to follow this shepherd, but they wanted to know his name. Doug said that his name was Jesus. They told Doug that they had always known about him, but they never knew his name, and President Museveni understood what he was talking about.

Doug Coe had a way of explaining things that other people didn't. I was particularly blessed because for 20 years I met with Doug every Tuesday for an hour at 5 o'clock. I was a recipient of all the grace he had in the political philosophy of Jesus. I call it that; Doug didn't call it that. It is all scripturally based. Acts 9:15 says: What did Jesus say to Paul on the road to Damascus?

He said: Take my name. Take my name to the Kings.

Doug spent all those years in every country in the world, taking his name to the Kings. Acts 2:42—that is the genesis of the small meetings we have. Not many people are aware of them. We are here in the U.S. Senate every Wednesday morning, and we meet in the Spirit of Jesus. We have been doing it ever since Doug started this many years ago. It is all scripturally based. It is Acts 2:42. We get together, eat together, pray together, fellowship together, and talk about the precepts of Jesus together.

All of that was happening, and I would say that he died—but not until he quietly spoke of Jesus to every country around the world. I can say that Doug is going to have a very Merry Christmas.

OUR 58TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, there is one last thing I want to say that is on a little different subject. Today is a very special day. Today, a little girl named Kay and I got married a long time ago. These are our kids and grandkids. Today is December 19, which is our 58th wedding anniversary. I want to say to Kay: I love you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first to my friend from Oklahoma, happy 58th anniversary. That is wonderful. You have a beautiful family. Every year, I enjoy getting the Christmas card with the picture of your beautiful family on it. It is a wonderful milestone to celebrate today.

DACA

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I am rising today to join my voice with so many others to support young people whom we call Dreamers. These young people were brought to the United States as children, sometimes as babies. For many of them, this country is the only home they have ever known. I should say up front that we need comprehensive immigration reform for our security and our economy.

Our Nation's immigration system is broken, and it hurts families, workers, businesses, and farmers each and every day. But targeting these young people who have come to our country through their parents—their parents bringing them as children—does nothing to solve the larger issues that we need to address in the Senate and in the House.

To remind everyone, to be eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, which we call DACA, young people have to have entered the United States before their 16th birthday. They must be attending school, have graduated or earned their GED, or have been honorably discharged from the U.S. military, and they must not have been in trouble with the law. Those are pretty good principles for all of us—following the law and working hard. When anyone does that, they should know that our country has their back.

Those who were approved for DACA were given a legal status to remain here and a work permit so that they could work and contribute to our country. We made these young people a promise, and we need to keep it. I feel very strongly that whether it is our veterans, our people in the military going to war who are protecting us every day, who are serving our country—we made them a promise that they would have healthcare, among other promises, to make sure that veterans are not at the back of any line.

When someone works all their life—they work 30 years, they pay into a pension, and they assume that pension is going to be there—that is another kind of promise. This is also a promise that was made to young people. If they worked hard and followed the rules and stayed out of trouble and contributed to our country, either serving in the military or going to school and working, they would have the right to be here and be able to contribute to our country.

Nationwide, we know there are about 800,000 young people who are covered by DACA. In Michigan alone, we have over 10,000 young people—10,000 young Dreamers—working hard and going to school, contributing to our economy and our quality of life in Michigan. Many of them have DACA status.

Those are some of the numbers; however, we are not talking about numbers here. We are talking about people's lives. We are talking about 10,000 young people in Michigan who are attending colleges, starting businesses, creating jobs, buying homes, serving in the military, and raising American children of their own. They are proud to be here. These young people aren't numbers; they are our neighbors.

In Michigan, we care about our neighbors. One of these young people is named Nara. She shared her story with me, both last week and again today. I am so pleased that she and other wonderful young people are in town today to share their stories.

Nara was born in Poland. Her parents faced intense discrimination because of their different backgrounds; one was from Poland and the other was from Mongolia. In 2000, when Nara was only 4 years old, she and her mom were granted a visa to come to the United States.

Nara excelled in school. She graduated from high school with honors and attended the University of Detroit Mercy. She also found ways to give back, leading service trips around the country and volunteering for organizations, including the Humanitarian Alliance of Michigan, World Medical Relief, and Children's Hospital of Michigan. Earlier this year, Nara graduated with a bachelor's degree in biology and a minor in leadership. She was awarded one of Detroit Mercy's highest honors, presented to the undergraduate student who best exemplifies the mission of the university—leadership and service.

Another one of our wonderful young people is Juan. He was brought to the United States by his parents when he was a 1-year-old. He was just a baby. He has known no other country. When Juan was in high school, he tried to enlist in the Marines to serve his country. He longed to serve the country that had given him so many opportunities. His plans changed, however, when a recruiter told him that he would likely be deported after he had served his country. Instead, Juan got a job, hoping to save up money for college. The DACA Program allowed him to get a job permit and a better job. Today he is a prelaw student at Wayne State University. He hopes to one day become an immigration lawyer.

Juan said this:

> I believe in America. . . . I was raised here. I love this country. . . . This is my home.

Nara, Juan, and so many other young people are great examples of why we need to pass the Dream Act. We need to extend DACA as soon as possible. I would love to see it happen right now, today. Young people are waiting, have been waiting, and are in horrible situations because they don't know what is going to happen. These young people have done everything right, and they don't know whether they are going to be ripped away from their family and sent to a country they may never have been in. They want to be here, contributing to America. They want to earn their degrees, start businesses, raise families, and give back to their communities.

We need comprehensive immigration reform. That is for sure. But first, we need to pass the bipartisan Dream Act

as quickly as possible. These young Dreamers have done nothing wrong. They have done everything right. They have done everything they have been asked to do. It is time to make sure our country stands up and keeps its promises to them. That is what our neighbors would do.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority leader.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT—CONFERENCE REPORT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 1.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) would have voted ''yea.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 321 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Strange
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young

NAYS—48

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

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The motion was agreed to.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed having been agreed to, the Chair lays before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 1, which will be stated by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1), to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of December 15, 2017.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, we stand today on the precipice of the most sweeping change to our Nation's tax system in over 30 years. This is a historic moment, as this distinguished body begins final consideration of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act—tax reform that will help boost America's economy, create more jobs, and leave more money in people's paychecks.

The last time we considered tax reform similar to this magnitude was 1986. To help remind us how much our country, its economy, and the people have changed since that time, let's review some of the events of that year.

In 1986, the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at 1,895—sure that 20,000 would never be broken, and it wasn't until after the last election. It now stands at over 24,000.

A gallon of gas cost just 89 cents. Today it is close to $2.50. We still used land lines to phone our loved ones. Iconic movies such as ''Top Gun'' and ''Aliens'' opened. Americans were watching TV shows like ''Dynasty'' and ''Hill Street Blues.'' The Associated Press chose NBA star Larry Bird as one of the Athletes of the Year.

President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Tax Reform Act of 1986, which ushered in deep tax rate cuts for American families and an overhaul of our complicated Tax Code. When he signed the bill, Reagan commented on the length of the journey and noted that some people thought it would never happen.

Today, too, some have asserted that tax reform either cannot or should not happen, but as our strongly optimistic President said in 1986—and as I continue to believe—the American people ''haven't made this the freest country and the mightiest economic force on this planet by shrinking from challenges.'' Reagan noted:

This country was founded on faith in the individual, not groups or classes, but faith in resources and bounty of each and every separate human soul. Our Founding Fathers designed a Democratic form of government to enlist the individual's energies.

For that reason, I want to remind my colleagues about the hard work that brought us here. It is a journey that has been years in the making under the leadership of both sides of the aisle. It is one we started and will finish for the benefit of the American people and the health of the U.S. economy.

I am proud of the work of the Finance and Budget Committees, and I have had the honor to play a role with both. The Finance Committee held more than 70 hearings on how the Tax Code can be improved and streamlined to work better for all Americans.

Almost 3 years ago, Finance Chairman HATCH and Ranking Member WYDEN convened bipartisan tax reform working groups to analyze challenges of our outdated Tax Code and develop policy recommendations for comprehensive tax reform. The conclusions reached by these groups helped identify the issues for reform and shape the contours of the legislation we are considering now. It is worth noting that the entire fiscal year 2018 budget reconciliation process has been open, transparent, and subject to regular order, starting with the passage of the Senate budget resolution.

The Senate Budget Committee marked up the bill over 2 days and accepted amendments from both sides of the aisle to make the resolution stronger. In fact, for the first time ever, the minority received a copy of the chairman's budget document 5 days prior to the start of the markup. According to many of my colleagues, it was one of the most transparent budget resolution markups in history.

The budget resolution—complete with the document reconciliation instructions—was then debated on the floor. This was an open floor process that allowed every Senator the opportunity to offer and vote on amendments to improve the resolution before its final passage.

Last month, the Senate Finance Committee held a 4-day markup before approving tax reform legislation designed to modernize our Tax Code. The markup lasted 23 hours and 34 minutes over the course of those 4 days. Of the more than 350 amendments filed, 69 were considered in committee. Amendments offered by both Democrats and Republicans were adopted.

Since then, both Chambers of Congress have passed similar versions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and over the past 2 weeks, conferees worked tirelessly to resolve and bridge the differences between the two bills and

come to an agreement on a final piece of legislation.

In this Chamber, the legislation reflects the outstanding work and leadership of Finance Chairman HATCH and Energy Committee Chairman MURKOWSKI in developing legislative recommendations that adhere to the budget resolution's reconciliation instructions, and I thank them for their efforts.

I also thank my Senate colleagues who earlier this month supported the Senate passage of the Tax Cuts and Job Act and whose advice and consent during the conference has shaped the final bill. The legislation is truly a reflection of the broad range and consensus of Members who engaged with this process.

Throughout my work on this bill, I have carried with me the many lessons I have learned from when I owned and operated a small business or when I worked as an accountant. I have been led by one singular purpose, to help improve the lives of millions of hard-working American families, especially the residents of my own State of Wyoming.

I am pleased with the outcome of our work because I believe it includes meaningful changes that will help individuals and families struggling to move up the economic ladder. The tax plan includes reforms that will help grow the economy, that will create more jobs, and that will simplify taxes. It provides American workers and families with an across-the-board tax cut and puts more money in people's pockets. It lets Americans have a greater say as to how to use their hard-earned money. The changes will help small businesses in our communities thrive and encourage the largest multinational companies to remain in the United States, investing profits here instead of overseas—not a bad wish list for Santa.

Under the plan, Americans will reap tax savings from reduced tax rates, tax savings from a higher standard deduction, which creates a larger zero tax bracket for low-income individuals and increases many people's tax refunds. It also includes a child tax credit that doubles in size to $2,000 to help struggling families and all this while preserving important deductions for medical expenses, charities, homeowners, and State and local taxes. Our farmers and ranchers will receive stronger protections from the reach of the death tax to help them more easily pass on their businesses to future generations—eliminating a double taxation.

Businesses small and large will benefit from a range of tax breaks, including lower tax rates, expanded opportunities to expense the purchase of capital assets, a new 20-percent deduction for many unincorporated businesses, and international tax reforms to give the U.S.-headquartered global companies a strong competitive footing in the global marketplace. These are changes you can take to the bank.

Now it is time for us to act. It is time for us to modernize our outdated Tax Code so our Nation can remain competitive in the 21st century economy. The code, as it now stands, hurts American workers and hampers economic growth.

Along with reforms to the code, this bill will also promote economic growth. For too long, some have accepted the presumption of a U.S. economy that will not grow as strongly as it has in the past. As a supporter of this bill, I reject that false narrative.

Better tax policy will boost the value of everything we produce, and this will mean more revenue for the Federal Government. I am tired of the accusations that Republican budget hawks—and that definitely includes me—are willing to throw in the towel and accept a $1.5 trillion deficit over the next 10 years. I am still a deficit hawk. Here is why. Claims to the contrary that this bill will go unpaid for are based on an incomplete analysis of the tax bill.

We have a Congressional Budget Office tasked with impartially evaluating any legislation we do. Unfortunately, its evaluations are tied to static scoring. That means it is evaluated without considering the underlying economic effects of these changes. Let me repeat that. The Congressional Budget Office is tied to static scoring. That means it is evaluated without considering the underlying economic effects of these changes.

The problem really isn't how much revenue we will have under the new bill. I believe it will increase revenue as the tax cut did in the 1980s. The problem is spending. We never make budget cuts. In Washington, a cut in the budget brings screams if an agency or program doesn't get as much as it requested, even if it gets more than it ever had before. That is not a budget cut, but that is how it works in Washington. If we continue this way, we will not ever get our spending in line.

For years, I have tried to institute the Penny Plan, where we just cut one penny in real cuts from where we have been. It gets lip service but not votes. It is a lot easier to give away money than it is to take away money, even pennies. So we need a new approach. We need to grow the economy. We need businesses to do well so more tax money will come in. We need individuals to make more so more tax money will come in. That has been done before with tax cuts. Unfortunately, when the tax cuts performed to provide more revenue, we spent twice what we brought in.

So here is what I have done as Budget chairman. A good economy brings in more tax money. Our economy has been limping along. Last year, it grew at a mere 1.6 percent GDP—which is private sector growth, not government growth. The norm for the United States is 3.2 percent private sector growth—not like we saw during the past 8 years when this growth remained below 3 percent. In fact, since this President got elected, the growth has been 3.2 percent already. In the fourth quarter of 2017, we may almost hit 4 percent. There is a lot of hope in America. Every tenth-of-a-percent increase in GDP brings in $273 billion in taxes over 10 years. If we could raise that anemic 1.9 percent to a mere 2.4 percent GDP, we can recover the deficit effect of the tax cuts. If we can bring up the productivity in the private sector—the GDP—to its norm of 3.2 percent, we will pay down significant debt over the 10-year window.

The Council of Economic Advisers and some 130 economists have agreed with me. They say the balancing point of 2.4 percent is way too low, and 3.2 percent GDP is much more reasonable. Some even predict 4 percent growth to our economy. That is how you can be a deficit hawk and cut taxes. You just have to bet America can do better. Actually, we are just betting that we can be as good as we used to be. Our American spirit should say: ''We can do a lot better than that.''

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will help our economy expand. It will provide tax relief to hard-working Americans and make changes to our Tax Code that businesses large and small need to boost the economy and create jobs.

Ultimately, we know increased revenues alone are not going to solve our long-term budget and debt problems because Washington's real problem isn't revenue; Washington has a spending problem.

I urge my colleagues today to finish the task before us. Let's pass this bill to make critical and long overdue changes to our Tax Code that will jump-start our economy. Our country needs it, hard-working American families need it, and they deserve to have the opportunity to make more choices about how their hard-earned money should be used.

In closing, I again remind my colleagues of the words of President Reagan:

> Let's not let this magnificent moment slip away. Tax relief is in sight. Let's make it a reality. . . . We can do it. And if you help, we will do it this year.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President and colleagues, today the Republican Party officially turns its back on America's middle class. Our constituents believe Congress must require multinational corporations to pay their fair share, ensure that the middle class has the chance to truly get ahead, and protect Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Instead, Republicans are doling out new giveaways to the multinational corporations, raising taxes on the middle class after a brief sugar high, and taking away the Medicare and Social Security guarantees for the future.

It takes hard work to muscle a tax plan this unpopular and destructive

through the Congress. Writing it is the easy part, especially when you are just checking off the far-right tax policy wish list. Normally, the hard part is sticking to your baseless talking points, ignoring the public outcry, and turning a blind eye to the loads of evidence that your plan is designed to fail.

This process has certainly been as far from normal as it can get. The bill comes at an enormous cost and represents a huge missed opportunity. For some perspective, the $1.5 trillion Republicans plan to borrow for their tax bill would fund the Children's Health Insurance Program for 915 years—915 years of a lifeline for families who are walking on an economic tightrope with CHIP. That is what you could get for the $1.5 trillion Republicans are borrowing to pay for their tax bill. Spent on infrastructure, it would build towering, new monuments in the tradition of the Hoover Dam, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Interstate Highway System. Aimed permanently at helping the middle class, it would give long-struggling Americans a meaningful chance to get ahead.

But this isn't real tax reform or a serious solution to the major policy challenges of our time; this is a stimulus plan for shareholder goodies and executive compensation. Today, Republicans are ignoring decades of evidence that trickle-down economics is a fantasy. Republicans have cut taxes bit by bit for multinational corporations and high-flyers, but we have seen wages stay flat. The benefits of those previous tax cuts never trickle down.

In this debate, Republicans seized on a talking point about workers getting a $4,000 average raise if the bill becomes law, but that figure is based on a made-up, revenue-neutral plan that was never on paper. It is fake math, plain and simple.

I want to issue a warning to the public today. Passing this bill guarantees years and years of instability in our Tax Code and painful, drawn-out battles over tax policy here in the Congress. Because of the pure partisanship and the recklessness of the process that went into drafting this legislation, the bill is already full of mistakes that are going to have drastic, unintended consequences.

Down on K Street, they are already working overtime to exploit new special interest loopholes. The giant pass-through tax loophole, which has been widely covered in the business pages, is just the beginning. There are going to be big new incentives for multinational corporations to ship jobs overseas, and with that, more factory towns and mill towns are going to go dark. Fewer Americans will have the kinds of reliable manufacturing jobs that support a family. There are going to be extraordinary new pressures on State and local finances, and that is going to hamper their ability to build new roads and bridges and schools. There are going to be new and annual fights over the stop-and-go tax policies. Around here, they are called tax extenders. And what they do is ensure a lack of the predictability and certainty we need for innovation and growth.

All the evidence says that many of the policies in this bill are going to be a nightmare to administer. This means that with this bill, tax cheats get a holiday gift and have the opportunity to create new rip-offs. What this means for the typical family who just wants to file and get a refund on time is that there are going to be more hassles because the government is going to have to devote more time to trying to catch the cheats.

The defining economic challenge of our time is guaranteeing that the middle class and those who strive to be middle class have a chance to get ahead. Our country is home to the world's most powerful economic engine, and it generates levels of prosperity that have never been seen before, but working families and the middle class have been on the outside of the winner's circle for generations. The Republican plan isn't an answer to that challenge. In fact, it almost certainly makes the problem worse.

At a time when the middle class needs fundamental, permanent reforms to give them a chance to get ahead, the best—the best the Republican plan offers is a sugar high. The fact is, it will not be long before the sugar high wears off and tens of millions of hard-working Americans will find themselves paying higher taxes—higher taxes—as a result of this bill. Corporations, on the other hand, reap the benefits of permanent tax breaks and a loophole-ridden system that, in my view, just begs to be gamed.

The trail of broken promises that Republicans have left behind in this process is long and unforgettable. The President said his tax bill would not benefit his family or people like him. That is untrue. The Treasury Secretary said there would be no tax cut for the upper class. He was happy to have that called the Mnuchin rule. That is untrue. Republicans in Congress said the principal feature, the main feature of their plan, would center on a middle-class tax cut. That is untrue. Republicans said their bill would make the system dramatically simpler. That is untrue. Republicans said their bill would allow families to file their taxes on a postcard. That is untrue. Republicans said their plan would pay for itself. That, too, is untrue.

Even many of the promises Republican leaders made to their own colleagues have been broken, but there is one that they are not trying to hide. The deficit hawks have flown back to town, and they are already stirring up a battle over entitlement reform, and they are going to look at a variety of health programs and programs that are a lifeline to millions of Americans.

Our people are not thrown off by the Washington lingo. They know that when Republicans say they are coming after entitlement reform, they have the knives out for Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, anti-hunger programs, education funding, and more.

Our distinguished colleague from Wyoming, Chairman ENZI, was talking about how dynamic scoring would take care of things and that it was just off base to be concerned about these deficits because dynamic scoring would make everything turn out fine. The reality is that all of the independent analyses have shown that this bill comes up way short in terms of projected revenue. The Tax Foundation, for example—which is not exactly a leftwing operation—says the Republicans were hundreds of billions of dollars short. What the Joint Committee on Taxation said is that the Republican plan was $1 trillion short.

Let's put it in context. Remember that Steve Mnuchin said that this plan would not only pay for itself but that it would leave $1 trillion left over. Yet both the Tax Foundation and the Joint Committee on Taxation said that this bill comes light years away from paying for itself.

I say to my colleagues, it didn't have to be this way.

I see the distinguished chairman of the Finance Committee on the floor.

As I have indicated, Democrats believe that the Tax Code is a rotting mess and has to be fixed. For years, there has been bipartisan interest in getting tax reform done right. Seventeen Democratic Senators came together, even in a last-ditch effort to try to bring some bipartisanship into the process, and laid out ideas for some common ground. I commend that group, led by our colleague from West Virginia, Senator MANCHIN, and our colleague from Virginia, Senator KAINE. I have written two comprehensive, bipartisan tax reform bills, first with Senator Judd Gregg and then with a member of the President's Cabinet, Dan Coats. The majority leader always likes to talk about how nobody on this side is interested in bipartisanship. When Democrats laid out their principles, the first thing we said was how important it ought to be that we focus on bipartisanship. That letter was shared with the Republican leadership. Then you have the group of moderates. Then you have the actual bills that were written. So this idea advanced by the Republican leadership that there was no interest in bipartisanship does not resemble reality.

By the way, a lot of Senators here know that we have a pretty current example—the 2015 tax bill. It is kind of a model of what you can do. Both sides had good ideas. Bipartisanship is not about taking each other's dumb ideas; anybody can do that. But in the 2015 bill, my colleagues on this side said that the earned-income tax credit ought to be expanded, and we wanted the child tax credit and the American opportunity tax credit.

The Republicans, led by my distinguished colleague, Senator HATCH, had

some pretty good ideas too. They wanted to make the research and development credit permanent and the expensing provisions, which are so important for farmers and rural communities, and they had some ideas on business incentives. So we said: We are going to find some common ground here. We are going to take good ideas from both sides.

The tragedy of this bill is that Republicans wouldn't build on the good work of the 2015 tax legislation, where good ideas were accepted from both sides. This time around, there was zero outreach from Republicans on this issue. There was not one moment when Republicans actually shared even a piece of paper or a document about ideas that might bring both sides together. In fact, we can go all the way back to November 2016. They were still putting the voting machines back into storage when the first whispers began about tax reform happening through a completely partisan process.

Now, in coffee shops across America, most folks are not talking about budget reconciliation. Budget reconciliation is Washington lingo for saying: We aren't going to do this right; we are just going to make it our way, partisan, with no effort to try to bring people together. And after those whispers in November of 2016, within days, Chairman ENZI, the chairman of the Budget Committee, and my good friend, Senator HATCH, the chairman of the Finance Committee, and everybody is on board.

Then, the majority leader, in December of 2016, made it official: We weren't going to build on the history of successful tax reform, which required bringing both sides together; the majority leader said that we are going with reconciliation and partisanship. Reconciliation is a full-on rejection of the history of successful tax reform, and it is a full-on rejection of bipartisanship. It is the majority saying to the minority, as was the case: We just don't want your ideas because we don't need your votes. When you look at the way this debate played out, it is obvious that has been exactly the approach my Republican colleagues have taken.

The administration's first tax outline, which was shorter than your typical drugstore receipt, didn't contain an ounce of Democratic input. Then, what we had with the Republicans were the closed-door meetings of what they called the Big 6, a Republican-only group who turned their outline into a framework for a bill. The framework they released, which was roughly the same size as your typical drugstore receipt, still reflected no Democratic ideas.

Everybody knew that if we did it this kind of way, the public was going to catch on. They were going to see this as a con job and they were going to catch on that this is going to give the middle class the shaft, so they decided that they just have to move at the speed of light. That is what the House did.

Here in the Senate, the Republicans dropped their plan late at night, just before the Veterans Day weekend, and the Finance Committee was supposed to start the process of voting on it a few days later.

There was a whole new bill introduced in the middle of our markup that turned the tax bill into a healthcare bill—a healthcare bill—with a fresh attack on the Affordable Care Act. There was another set of last-second changes introduced literally minutes before the final committee votes happened. The bill makes $10 trillion in tax policy changes, and there was never a single hearing on the specifics of the legislation.

Let me just repeat that. I want the public to know that. There was never a single hearing—not one—on the specifics of this legislation.

We are going to hear on all points a push by my colleagues on the other side to say that there were 70 hearings. Well, sure, there were people who would come in from time to time and talk about issues. There wasn't one hearing—not one—on the specifics of the legislation.

On the Senate floor, the Republicans played hide the ball for days until they dropped the final version of their bill late at night on a Friday. Two full days of debate had already passed, and the final bill was a mystery.

I stood here hour after hour asking where the bill was—an economy-transforming bill, a tax hike on tens of millions of middle-class Americans. Yet Republicans kept it hidden until the very last second. When it was revealed to the public, we saw my colleague, Senator DURBIN from Illinois, holding it up with illegible notes scrawled in margins. It wasn't anywhere near enough time for any Member of this body to read the bill and grasp each of its provisions.

Even the conference committee was an exercise in reckless partisanship. News reports said that Republicans had agreed to a final bill, but they were empty-handed at the only official conference meeting. So what was going on at this so-called conference meeting? This was, I guess, a reality show version of a conference committee. The conferees were supposed to ask questions about out-of-date plans from the other body, in the Senate, when the actual, final bill was still locked behind closed doors.

The chairman didn't allow any motions or any amendments. Just like every other step in the process, this was a sham debate, and now the bill is a few hours away from passage.

I close with this: This bill has the power to reshape the American economy in far-reaching and unforeseen ways. It has the power to send families into economic hardship. It has the power to threaten this country's ability to uphold the special promises of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. And this bill was written in the shadows, written in the dark, with billions and billions of dollars' worth of changes tumbling out at the last second, the result of special interest influence and hushed conversations in back rooms.

There were no public hearings on the specifics of this legislation, and people wonder why the American people oppose it. Republicans have chosen to ignore them. They have chosen to ignore them. What is happening is un-Democratic. It is wrong. I am here to say that this vote will not be forgotten.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, the Senate will soon vote on the conference report for H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. I have waited a long time to give this final statement in support of tax reform legislation.

(Disturbance in the Visitors' Galleries.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Sergeant at Arms will restore order in the Gallery.

The Senator will suspend.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, this fellow has a very interesting way of trying to get his point of view across. It shouldn't be done here in this august body.

Let me just start again.

The Senate will soon vote on the conference report for H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. I have waited a long time to be able to give this final statement in support of tax reform legislation.

I have been in the Senate for a little while. I have been party to a number of major legislative achievements, like the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the creation of the CHIP program, the Child Health Insurance Program, and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, to name just a few. These are landmark bills, and I have had a lot to do with them.

The legislation before us is as important and as far-reaching as anything I have been privileged to work on. It is beyond gratifying to see the Senate reach this point, and I look forward to finally seeing real tax legislation signed into law.

I apologize for this type of intemperate action and mouthing off inside of this august Chamber. People feel very deeply about these things on both sides of the issues.

Passage of this important bill will be historic. It is the combination of years of work by people in both parties, in both Chambers, and on both sides of Pennsylvania Avenue. Many of us in this body have been waiting for years for this opportunity, and millions of Americans outside of this body have been waiting even longer.

It is no secret that our Tax Code is broken. Members of both parties have acknowledged this. If you walked across the country and asked Americans of all backgrounds and ideologies, you wouldn't find many who would be willing to defend the status quo. I don't think you would find anybody.

There is one apt phrase my good friend Senator WYDEN uses to describe our Tax Code. He calls it ''a dying carcass.'' Indeed, our Tax Code is dying and rotting. It has hampered job creation, wage growth, investment in the United States, and it has chased American companies to foreign shores. I don't know how it could be more harmful than it has been. It has also given foreign companies a leg up on U.S. businesses in the global marketplace, leading to a record number of foreign takeovers and inversions. The bill before us will address these problems and help us turn the ship around.

Our legislation will reduce the corporate tax rate to 21 percent—something that is long overdue—the lowest level in the modern history of the United States, placing our country slightly below the average of industrialized countries. These changes will once again give American companies a competitive edge and bring more businesses back home instead of losing them the way we have been.

Hundreds of economists have said that our bill will boost economic growth, and numerous companies have indicated that once our bill becomes law, they will invest heavily in expansion and job creation right here in the United States of America.

In addition, as the Joint Committee on Taxation has made clear, reducing the corporate tax rate has distributional effects that go beyond the companies themselves, their high-ranking officers, or even their richest shareholders. In fact, JCT—the Joint Committee on Taxation—estimates that workers bear 25 percent of the corporate tax rate and other economists have found that this number can reach as high as 75 percent. This means that no matter how you slice it, Americans will see their wages go up when corporate tax rates go down.

Further, over the last few decades, we have seen a massive expansion of pension and retirement assets, much of which are invested in corporate stocks. While many of my colleagues like to decry any business from merely earning a profit, the truth is that the continued rise in corporate profits has significantly expanded the wealth of middle-class workers and taxpayers who have continually set aside funds for the future.

A representative from the Tax Policy Center testified before the Finance Committee in the spring of last year. At that hearing he stated that 37 percent of corporate stock ownership was held in retirement plan accounts—37 percent. That was the largest share of overall stock ownership, and that statistic syncs up with the distribution tables put out by the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation.

For all of these reasons, lowering the corporate tax rate has been a bipartisan goal for over a decade now. I have said it before: Presidents Clinton and Obama, Senators WYDEN and SCHUMER, and most of the other Democrats on the Senate Finance Committee have at some point in the recent past endorsed a significant reduction in the U.S. corporate tax rate.

Our bill will achieve this bipartisan goal and place our country well within the mainstream among our international competitors. This is a good thing—not just for businesses and rich stockholders but for working, middle-class families as well.

Let's be clear. This bill's chief focus is about helping the middle class. I know there is a tendency among some in this Chamber to act and speak as though all money in this country inherently belongs to the government. I won't speak for everyone, but those of us who have worked on this bill tend to think differently.

Aside from business reforms that will grow our economy, increase wages, and create jobs, our bill will lower individual tax rates across the board, allowing hard-working Americans to keep more of their money. In our bill, we also nearly double the standard deduction for individuals and married couples. This feature will significantly reduce the burden of tax filing for millions of middle-class families and decrease even further the overall tax liability of millions more. For the first time in more than 30 years, nearly every American will get more money back by just filing out an EZ form. This, without a doubt, fulfills our goal of simplifying the Tax Code.

For individuals who are concerned about being able to itemize—again, we believe the number of people with this concern will decrease dramatically under our bill—we retain a number of key provisions that benefit many in the middle class. For example, this historic legislation will allow individuals and families to continue to claim deductions for State and local taxes, up to $10,000 a year. It will keep in place, with relatively minor adjustments, the deduction for mortgage interest. And Americans who itemize and want to deduct their charitable deductions will be free to do so. This has made America great, and it has helped us at the same time to be more charitable. We are also expanding the child tax credit with this bill, doubling it from $1,000 to $2,000 per child and making the credit far more refundable than ever before. The adoption credit will stay in place. The deduction for medical expenses will still be available. Credits and assistance for students and their families will be untouched. We have made all of these changes and, when necessary, preserved current law, with an eye toward helping the middle class.

I know a number of my colleagues like to argue that this bill will have different results. Let's look at the numbers.

Under this bill, a typical family of four, earning the median family income of $73,000, will see their taxes go down by more than half—about 58 percent. That number means something more than just a simple percentage; it means that an average American family will be able to keep $2,058 more of their own earnings next year. That is a mortgage payment, a downpayment for a car, or several months' worth of groceries.

What about a single parent? Under our plan, a single parent with one child, making $41,000, will see their taxes slashed by nearly 73 percent. That is almost a three-quarter reduction in tax liability. That means a savings of more than $1,300 over the course of a year. That could be a month of daycare expenses, multiple car payments, or a family vacation.

These are things that matter to American families, and they well should. But our friends on the other side have been so caught up in partisan politics that they decided to ignore the Americans who will benefit from this legislation. I think it started with the election of President Trump and the retention of Senate control by Republicans. Their base protested, occupied, and disrupted the transfer of power from President Obama to President Trump. Here on the Hill, the ''resistance'' was in full effect right off the bat, with a coordinated effort to stall nominations in committee, which included unprecedented boycotts and refusals to meet with nominees. It has only gone downhill from there.

While we heard words from our friends on the other side about participating in tax reform, their actions showed otherwise. I don't know how they can stand here and make some of the arguments they do. Unprecedented process demands were made. Resistance was the plan, and that plan was carried out. Now we hear about massive tax cuts for the very rich and huge breaks for corporations, but these claims fall apart when you look at the facts.

Again, this isn't unchartered territory for my friends on the other side. Accusing Republicans of hating the poor and loving the rich is one of their go-to moves. I have seen it for over 40 years. Every time you turn around, there is one of their go-to moves, and it has nothing to do with reality. I do think they are getting more desperate and vicious in their attacks because they regret their own decisions to sit out of this endeavor. That is precisely how it happened. Our colleagues were apparently so preoccupied with denying President Trump and congressional Republicans any success, they chose not to engage and instead to sit in the peanut gallery throwing out baseless attacks.

As I have said literally dozens of times over the past few years, I wish the Democrats had joined us in this process, put aside their ultimatums and preconditions, and helped to advance policies that they have claimed to support for years now. But we are where we are, and while the bill before us includes a number of ideas and proposals Democrats have supported, we are prepared to pass it without their

votes, if that is what it takes. There have been some Democrats who have worked with us, but they have been few and far between.

Once again, this is a historic bill. I am proud of the work we have done in the Finance Committee, here on the floor, and in conference to get us to this point. I again invite our friends on the other side to also support the bill. I am proud of our colleagues who have put in so much effort to get us here. I am proud of the staff on Capitol Hill who have labored day and night to assist in this endeavor.

As I said, this legislation has been years in the making. I urge all of my colleagues to support the conference report and help us send it to the President's desk. You will not regret it. Those who support this will not regret it.

I think we ought to get rid of this hatred for Donald Trump that currently exists in this country and in this body. I think we should give the man a chance. He hasn't even been President for a year yet. Give him a chance. Even though he hasn't been President for a year yet, we have had some amazing changes in this country for the better, and I think we could have many more.

What really interests me is that Donald Trump, 6 or 7 years ago, was working with Democrats as well as Republicans. He offered to work with the Democrats on these matters, and they have not taken up the offer. Instead, it is as though they are still bitter because he beat their candidate for President.

I would like to have us get over that type of petty politics and see what we can do to work together. Heaven knows, on the Finance Committee, I believe we have good Democrats on that committee, as well as good Republicans, and I think we can work together. I have to say, I don't think we have as well as we should, but I think we can, and I am hopeful that we will.

This is an important bill. It is a bill that really does need to pass. It is a bill that will help this country. It is a bill that will help the middle class. In fact, it is going to help everybody, but it will certainly help the middle class most of all.

I hope our colleagues put aside their petty politics on both sides and come together to support this bill, which literally can help save this country an awful lot of pain over the next number of years and give the government the kinds of resources that it needs to be able to do what the Federal Government needs to do for its people. I think we can.

People in this body know that I have spent years here. I am the most senior Republican. I have been here longer than any other Republican that I know of, and I have the legislative record to back it up—a record that has included working with Democrats almost every step of the way. I am offering to make sure we work together, but I haven't seen it on the other side. Can they get over the bitterness they have?

We heard this loudmouth in the Gallery who has no good sense and a total lack of etiquette and a total lack of respect for this government and this Senate. If I were on his side, I would be humiliated because he was just a big loudmouth who didn't mean a doggone thing. Unfortunately, I think there are more people like that who are so bitter that they will raise these types of issues without really trying to work together.

I am one who has a reputation for working together. I am chairman of the Finance Committee. I have enjoyed my work with the distinguished Democratic leader on the Finance Committee, Senator WYDEN. I care for him. I care for the other Democrats on the committee, as well as all of our Republicans. We work pretty well together. It is getting harder and harder to work together when all we see are screaming and shouting because they can't get their way because they are no longer in the majority. I hope they get over that, and I hope they start working with us. If they will, we can do an awful lot of good things for this country, and we can bring people together across this whole country—people who right now are divided because they don't know what to do. They see us screaming and shouting around here and a total lack of willingness to get together. I would like to change it. I am open to changing it.

This bill that we have is a very, very important bill, and we need to pass it. My friends on the other side need to realize that, and I hope we will get some of them to vote for it. They know it is right. Deep down, they know it is right. It might not be everything they like themselves. It is not everything I myself would like. But it is a doggone good bill, and it is something that could really help this country pull out of the mess that it is in.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, am I next?

I see the distinguished Senator from Washington on the floor. I ask unanimous consent that after I speak, she be recognized to speak.

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

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to commend Senator ORRIN HATCH. I listened to the debate over this bill not just today but for the better part of 3 years I have been a member of the Finance Committee. I have never heard a more dignified, deliberate, intelligent delivery on any subject than we all just heard from ORRIN HATCH on the tax bill. Regardless of your politics, regardless of where you are from, it is good to know that America has dignified statesmen like ORRIN HATCH to take the tougher issues, simplify them, get people to join hands, work together, and pass what is right for the American people. I am glad the American people are going to get to see that over the next couple of days.

I publicly want to thank Senator HATCH for all he has done and all I know he has done in Washington during the last 3 years. In the 3 years on this committee, I have seen us—Republican and Democratic committee and subcommittee alike—work on every facet of the Tax Code to try to simplify changes down to doable amounts and doable jobs. I have seen everybody have input. I have seen everybody work together. Sure, we have had differences. Senator HATCH has always kept the mainstream there, kept his hand on the tiller, and saw to it that we never lost sight of doing what we need to do, which is to reform our Tax Code.

I want to commend Senator HATCH and Senator ENZI, as well, for the work they have done on the Budget Committee to get us to this point and the unsung heroes that all of us know about, our staffs, whom we cannot do without. Jay Khosla and Mark Prater on the Finance Committee have been outstanding and have made this thing work, and I commend them for their work. On my staff, I could not have done what I have done without Amanda Maddox, Trey Kilpatrick, Monica McGuire, and Jay Sulzmann, who have all worked hard to see to it that we made the right decisions for the right reasons for the people of Georgia.

I am very proud to be a part of this Senate today and of what is going to prove to be a historic day in the future. There are a lot of naysayers saying that this is not going to work. There are a lot of people who have come up to me today and have asked questions that have bad connotations to them. Yet I want, for just a minute, to talk about what I think this tax bill really means for the American people—for the folks who voted for me to represent them—and for what is going to happen in the years ahead.

I had a reporter stop me today while I was coming up to the floor.

He asked: Senator ISAKSON, where are you going to find the $1.478 trillion that you all are costing us by passing this tax cut?

I said: First of all, we have not lost the money. Second of all, that is a static score. Third of all, I will be willing to bet you that we will take in a lot more money because of our having a dynamic economy than we will ever lose with a single tax cut.

There are some people whose thought process is one of tunnel vision. They can't see outside the blinders. They don't understand that tax policy drives economic decisions.

There are companies that in the last few years had been thinking about leaving America because of our tax rate that are now deciding to stay because of the new change. Don't underestimate the power of the territorial tax change that this makes for American business.

A lot of CEOs who go to their annual stockholder meetings for C corporations in America have to go with a

game plan to raise the return on their stocks in order to have people invest in their companies. Unfortunately, the easiest way to raise the return on their stock today would be for a domestic American company to move their headquarters out of the United States to Ireland or to some other place that had a lower tax rate. If you put more money on the table for the stockholders, it will be bad for the country, bad for your company, and bad for the American people as jobs leave America.

Now that we have a territorial system that we are going to, there is an incentive to stay in America if you are located there and to come to America if you are not. We are not going to have any more fast food companies that are buying doughnut makers in Canada and then moving their headquarters to Canada to get a lower tax rate. We are going to have a lot of new companies that will think about becoming doughnut makers and will do it right here in the United States because the new tax system we will have will be fair and equitable for economic development and building growth.

On the personal side, you really cannot argue with doubling the standard deduction. You can't argue with doubling of the child tax credit. You can't argue with simplifying the tax process itself and the filing of taxes. You can't argue with lowering rates—having seven different rate categories that are all lowered. You can't really argue with all of that because you know that is better for the American people and their pocketbooks in the short run, but in the long run, it will be better for them and their children and their grandchildren in terms of employment.

I have eight grandchildren. My oldest just graduated from college, and the youngest is 9. In the years ahead—and I hope that I will get to see a lot of them—they are going to get jobs, and they are going to work. They are going to raise their families.

What we have done today is going to make it easier for them to find employment for their kids, opportunity to develop businesses, and peace of mind because they will live in a country that will be vibrant and true.

For those who want to ask what we are going to do about the money that we are giving up, I don't deal with static scoring; I deal with dynamic scoring.

When I ran a company for 25 years, I made investments where I knew I had a place to grow. I made business decisions where there was positive growth ahead if I made the right decision. This Tax Code—this change in the Tax Code, this opportunity that we have—does all of those things.

Do I know exactly what is going to happen? No, but I am willing to bet—and I have bet my vote already in committee and will later on tonight on the floor of the Senate—on the American people and the American worker and the American entrepreneur. I will bet on their taking advantage of a tax code that is fair to them and that gives them a chance to expand their personal opportunities. I will bet on them that they are willing to move forward with a better tax code for all of the country. I will make my bet on them that they will want to see to it that their children and their grandchildren will have the opportunities that they have had as well.

I thank Chairman HATCH for what he has done in the last 3 years to make this opportunity come about.

I thank the distinguished Senator from Washington and the Senator from Alabama, whom, unfortunately, we are losing in the next few weeks, for what they have put in this legislation. I thank them for what they have done in their looking out for their people.

Did we make any mistakes? Maybe, but you never make mistakes when you are trying to do the right thing. You never make mistakes when you are trying to do a good thing. You never make mistakes when you take a risk because when you take a risk, at the end of that rainbow is a reward. When you take a risk in lowering taxes, the greater reward is more jobs, more opportunity, and a better America for our children and our grandchildren.

I thank Senator HATCH for his work and for all that he has done to make America a better country and, in particular, for giving us the chance today to make our tax system fairer for all of the American people.

May God bless him.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak about this legislation.

At the outset, I thank my colleague from Georgia and the Senator from Utah for their work on the affordable housing tax credit. The Senator from Utah said: Let's work together. I stand ready to work with him on affordable housing in the future, and, hopefully, with the Senator from Georgia, we can make progress on what is a crisis in America.

I come to speak in opposition to the legislation before us today, the tax reconciliation bill.

One of the requirements of the legislation that I most ardently oppose is including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil and gas development.

Basically, this bill pays for the tax cuts for corporations and millionaires by raising taxes on the middle class, undermining healthcare, and requiring oil drilling in one of our Nation's most iconic national wildlife refuges.

Everyone should understand that a vote for this reconciliation bill is a vote that will go to the biological heart of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and require drilling. I believe that opening up the Arctic Refuge to oil drilling is being done as a supposed revenue raiser to offset the soaring costs of this tax bill for corporations and the wealthy, but the process that it went through is a sham.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that drilling for oil in the Arctic Refuge will raise less than $1 billion over 10 years. This doesn't even meet the $1 billion reconciliation instruction, and it certainly doesn't represent a serious offset to the huge deficits in the bill. To put this in perspective, less than seven one-hundredths of 1 percent of the $1.5 trillion increase in the national debt will be from this policy in this legislation.

Drilling in the Arctic really has nothing to do with serious budgetary policy, but it has everything to do with evading regular order to pass something that could never pass in the regular order of the legislative process.

In addition to drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, this bill would sell 7 million barrels of oil from our Nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve. A portion of that sale is simply to meet the reconciliation instructions—that is to say, to make this bill work. Yet the sale of oil from our petroleum reserve would also provide a $300 million windfall to four States—Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. So this bill is selling off oil in order to pay for oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I do not believe that that makes sense.

Under this sham process, the bill will turn one of our Nation's wildest and most pristine areas into an oil field. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is the largest refuge in our Nation and is one of the crown jewels for us in the United States for wildlife refuges. I believe it is a U.S. Serengeti.

We received a letter from Jane Goodall, who basically said:

> Around the globe so many indigenous people have been harmed in the name of ''progress''—let us not add one more tragedy to the list. We have other sources of energy.

I ask unanimous consent that the entire letter we received from the Jane Goodall Institute be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE,
Vienna, VA, November 14, 2017.

DEAR UNITED STATES SENATOR: It seems that each day brings ever more dire news about what we humans are doing to harm our planet, the animals that share it with us and, by doing so, harming ourselves also. You have an important opportunity to make a difference both now, and for future generations, by voting to oppose oil development in one of the world's most spectacular wilderness areas—the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

This Refuge is a truly wonderful place—nearly 20 million acres of pristine and ecologically significant habitat. There is compelling scientific evidence as to why it is truly important to protect this place. For one thing, it provides key breeding habitat for the millions-upon-millions of birds that migrate there from six of our planet's seven continents. It is also a calving ground for the 200,000-strong Porcupine caribou herd. And it is one of the most important denning habitats on earth for polar bears. Moreover it plays a significant role in helping to protect us from the onslaught of climate change.

But the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is more than that. Its very wildness speaks to our deeply rooted spiritual connection to nature, a necessary element of the human psyche. The Gwich'in people understand this and call the area ''The Sacred Place Where Life Begins''.

If we violate the Arctic Refuge by extracting the oil beneath the land, this will have devastating impact for the Gwich'in people for they depend upon the caribou herds to sustain their traditional way of life. Around the globe so many indigenous people have been harmed in the name of 'progress'—let us not add one more tragedy to the list. We have other sources of energy.

And so I beg you: Please use your voice and your vote as a U.S. Senator to protect the Gwich'in people and the American treasure that is the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

America has helped lead the world in the conservation of wildlife and your voice has been so meaningful in this regard, your example so powerful. Please take this opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to the natural world and to future generations and stand with me to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Please vote against oil development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Sincerely,

JANE GOODALL, DBE, PhD,
Founder—the Jane Goodall Institute, & UN Messenger of Peace.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages the refuge, describes it as ''the only conservation system unit that protects, in an undisturbed condition, a complete spectrum of the Arctic ecosystems in North America.'' It is home to an incredible diversity of wildlife—47 different species of mammals, including polar bears, grizzly bears, wolves, Dall sheep, moose, musk ox, and caribou. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge also provides important habitat for over 40 species of fish and more than 200 species of migratory birds.

So why would we want to destroy this refuge?

It was first established by the Eisenhower administration. Congress later protected this amazing Arctic area and its ecosystem in order to protect the wildlife and protect the habitat because of its incredible diversity. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is really known as the ''last great wilderness'' in our country, one of the great, last wild places, but this legislation turns that on its head.

It would make oil and gas development one of the statutory purposes of the Wildlife Refuge, and under this legislation, this Refuge would become the only Refuge where oil and gas development is required by law. It opens up the entire 1.5 million-acre coastal plain for oil and gas exploration and requires the leasing of at least 800,000 acres. It requires the leasing of areas with the highest oil and gas potential, no matter the consequences for the wildlife or the environment.

The bill requires that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge be managed as a petroleum reserve, which is unprecedented, and it undercuts managing the Refuge for wildlife.

The bill includes no clear requirements to comply with environmental laws or to protect wildlife. Its sponsors, however, say that they are not preempting environmental laws and that, in fact, laws like the National Environmental Policy Act will ''fully apply.'' Yet this bill undercuts those assurances of compliance with environmental laws by adding oil development as a purpose of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Adding oil development as a purpose is contrary to the purpose of a wildlife refuge.

The purpose of a wildlife refuge is to protect wildlife and to make sure that the managers of wildlife do so in a sound fashion.

At every other wildlife refuge in the country, development within the refuge is only permitted to the extent that it is compatible with protecting wildlife. This bill tries to waive one of the most important management protections that applies to every other national wildlife refuge—that development must be compatible with protecting wildlife. They have to do this because they know that oil and gas development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is not compatible. It is just the opposite.

It is important to note also that this bill does not provide any energy security. There is no prohibition in the bill against exporting oil from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and in all likelihood, much of the oil will be exported.

In addition to opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to development, the bill also requires the sale of 7 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to give $300 million, as I mentioned earlier, to several States—Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

So at the same time as we are being told that we must ruin a national wildlife refuge because we need the oil, we are selling oil out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. It does not make sense for America. It just doesn't add up.

The impact of oil and gas exploration in the wildlife area and the danger to our wildlife cannot be overstated. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's coastal plain and nearby waters are designated as critical habitat for polar bears, which are listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Female polar bears head to the Arctic Refuge's coastal plain so that they can create snow dens, where they give birth to their young. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has a higher concentration of polar bear denning habitat than any other area on Alaska's North Slope.

The refuge is also the summer calving grounds for the porcupine caribou herd. This herd's range extends into Canada, and we actually have a treaty between both of our countries to protect this herd. The almost 200,000-member herd has an annual migration of hundreds of miles—and in some cases, thousands of miles—wintering in the south of the Refuge.

I think that this herd of caribou is so important because scientists say that it has an entirely different kind of migration pattern than other caribou in Alaska, that it has been adept at dealing with the adaptation that comes along with climate change.

Why not, instead of ruining their habitat, study and understand this migration that has been studied since the 1950s? It has been part of our national investment in understanding wildlife. It has been supported by both Democratic and Republican administrations, to understand the science and background of this caribou herd. These caribou are an important food source for many Alaska Natives but in particular the Gwich'in people who live south of the Refuge. Wildlife biologists argue that the risk to the caribou herd and to those who rely on them could be quite significant.

So why are we doing this? Why are we doing this?

The last few years have been a difficult budget situation in Alaska. Relying on oil for 90 percent of the budget, I agree with many others, is unsustainable. Every dollar the price of oil per barrel drops, reduces the State budget by $30 million, or close to 1 percentage point per dollar. The general revenue fund in Alaska dropped over 80 percent after 2012, and that situation caused Alaska's $4 billion deficit projection last year. Difficult choices had to be made about taxes, savings, spending, and what the State government should do. Thankfully, their economy hasn't collapsed, but in the last big oil-driven recession in the 1980s, Alaska's banks failed, housing prices collapsed, and 15 percent of the population left.

Why am I bringing this up? Because the good news is today's Alaska economy is more diverse than it was 30 years ago. I know this because I talk to my colleagues and because we are interacting in a lot of ways in the Pacific Northwest.

Alaska is well known for its tourism. Two million visitors to Alaska spend $1,000 per person in the State, supporting a $7.3 billion outdoor industry. My colleagues here may not realize what my colleagues from Alaska and Washington know, and that is that the State of Alaska and Washington have a lot of interdependence. A recent study found that 113,000 jobs in Puget Sound are tied to Alaska's economy, and this number has doubled in the last 30 years.

What are those jobs? One-quarter of those are in the seafood industry. Almost 1,000 commercial-vessel owning fishermen who work in Alaska's fisheries are part of the trade between us. The Alaska trade accounts for one in five containerized shipments through the Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma. Another 14,000 jobs are tied to passenger transportation to Alaska, including 430,000 cruise ship passengers who come through Puget Sound every year. That is just one way of saying the Washington-Alaska economies are tied

together, and as a hub for Arctic commerce, I have worked with my colleagues Senator MURKOWSKI and Senator SULLIVAN on issues such as new Coast Guard Arctic icebreakers that are so needed for the future. I have supported more funding for demonstration programs for renewable energy and microgrids in an effort to help the local economy. I feel the same way about rural broadband across the Nation, and we want to make sure we are deploying and helping with everything we can to bring more connectivity to Alaska, but I really question how opening the Arctic Wildlife Refuge is a solution to these problems.

Even under CBO's aggressive view, if leasing occurs in the Refuge, it will be many years before Alaskans see any significant revenue. So my colleagues should be aware that doubling down on oil by sacrificing one of the great wildlife refuges will not, in my opinion, help close Alaska's budget deficit, and it will not help them diversify for the future.

This Arctic Wildlife Refuge is too special, too important. It is one of the crown jewels of our National Wildlife Refuge system. We should be preserving it. We should not be destroying it. We should not be turning it into an oilfield.

I am reminded that many people over many decades have fought for this great area of our country, to maintain its environmental stewardship, starting with Olaus Murie, who went there and did great explorations and convinced many people here in this Washington that it was something so special and worth preserving.

After decades of his scientific exploration in Alaska, Olaus testified in 1959 in support of creating the Arctic Wildlife Refuge. He said: ''We long for something more, something that has a mental, a spiritual impact on us. This idealism, more than anything else, will set us apart as a nation striving for something worthwhile in the universe.''

So what is setting us apart today? Some very short-term gains. In 100 years, when this economic tax bill will long be forgotten, the question will be whether something important in the universe still exists in the Arctic wildlife area. We didn't create the Arctic Coastal Plain, but I can state this: We cannot recreate it. What we are doing today is taking a step toward destroying it.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this reconciliation bill. Do not sacrifice the Arctic Wildlife Refuge to oil development. Don't take one of the great, wild, pristine places on this planet and turn it into an oilfield. We can do better as a nation. I know we can do better as a region, and we can do better with a better Arctic strategy for our Nation's future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, thank you, and I thank the great Senator from Washington State for her leadership on this incredibly important issue.

If this tax bill weren't terrible enough, it goes after one of the most beautiful places on Earth, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is nothing more than a Big Oil polar payout. This isn't about drilling oil; it is about drilling for votes. This isn't about crude oil; it is the crudest of politics.

We now have 41 cosponsors of my legislation with Senator BENNET to permanently protect the Arctic Refuge by designating it as a wilderness. That is enough to sustain a filibuster, and that is precisely why they are circumventing the normal legislative process by including it as a rider on a tax bill.

In reality, drilling turns this pristine wilderness into an industrialized wasteland. The Coastal Plain is the biological heart of the Arctic Refuge, and allowing oil and gas drilling would drive a stake right through the heart of it.

We are currently sending nearly 1 million barrels a day of American crude oil overseas, but Republicans and the their oil industry allies are saying we need to allow drilling in the wildest place left in America so we can export even more oil to China and other foreign nations. It is an abomination. It is a disgrace. Drilling in a wilderness area in order to send oil to China—it is a disgrace. If the Republicans persist in passing this monstrosity of a tax bill and pass this Big Oil polar payout, they are the ones who are going to be left out in the cold in 2018.

If the Republicans want to see what real wilderness looks like, they don't need to travel to the Arctic Refuge, the wilderness is about to come to them. They are about to be sent deep into the political wilderness if they pass this tax scam legislation.

If the Republicans are successful in ramming through the Arctic drilling rider in the dead of night, we will never give up. We will keep fighting because the Arctic Refuge should forever be the home for caribou, not crude; bears, not barrels of oil; sandpipers, not pipelines. We will never stop fighting.

They may win tonight in the dark of night, but this fight is not over. This is a crime against the environment which is being committed here tonight. We do not have to sacrifice this wilderness. We are exporting oil out of our country—exporting it. We don't have to go here. Export more oil, and that is where it is going? It is just wrong.

Just remember that this is all a part of the so-called Republican reconciliation process. Now that we have the final product, that process is being exposed as the giant con game it truly is. The key phrase in reconciliation is ''con.'' It is a con job. The whole thing is nothing more than a masquerade, a Trojan horse in order to get a tax cut for the upper first percentile. It is a con job.

The polling in our country says the American people are not buying it. They are seeing right through it—through all the political noise, all of the incredible distractions, all the red herrings. The American public knows this is a tax break for the wealthiest people in our country and not for the middle class. Republicans are not even trying to hide what they are doing anymore. They are moving ahead with reckless speed to pass this disaster of a bill in the middle of the night, so that is why we will all be back here in a few hours, yet again, voting in the dead of night on a 500-page bill that has no hearings, no amendments, no real debate because that is the only way you can get a tax break for the upper first percentile and the wealthiest corporations in the country while trying to market it as a tax break for the middle class, when they know it is not. They know it, by the way. They know what they are doing.

It is the height of irony that we will be here tonight ramming through legislation before the Senator-elect from the State of Alabama can be seated. Just 8 years ago, Republicans called on Democrats to stop progress on the Affordable Care Act until Senator Scott Brown was sworn in. They said at the time: Stop progress. Don't do anything. We need to wait for Scott Brown to show up. Back then, Democrats listened to those calls, but when DOUG JONES gets elected, it is just put your foot to the accelerator, move as fast as you can, no hearings, no anything, and Alabama will not be represented with their new Senator out here. Back then, Democrats actually listened to those calls, and today our concerns are completely ignored by the Republicans, all so they can continue playing their con game on the American people.

The American people are waking up to the fact that they have been sold a bill of goods. They are seeing that this plan is simply a Trojan horse of giveaways to the wealthy corporations and Republican political donors.

What are some of those giveaways? Front and center is the massive cut in tax rates for megacorporations. We know this will not create jobs or trickle down to their employees because we have tried it before. In 2004, we gave a massive tax holiday for huge corporations on the money they held overseas, but the 15 companies that benefited the most from those giveaways cut more than 20,000 jobs and decreased their research spending.

Mark Twain said: ''History doesn't repeat itself, but it does tend to rhyme.'' This tends to rhyme. The tax cuts in this bill are even more egregious. Corporate tax cuts flow to CEOs and stockholders. Those stockholders are not all American taxpayers. Foreigners hold 35 percent of U.S. corporate stock. That means the Republican tax bill is a giveaway of $48 billion to foreigners in 2019 alone.

Think about this. The Republicans can find $48 billion to give away to foreign shareholders but in the same bill raise taxes on millions of middle-class

families. By 2027, this bill will raise taxes on over 53 percent of American households. At the same time, a full 83 percent of the tax cuts will flow to the top 1 percent of Americans. So the more the American people see what is in this bill, the more they realize they will have to foot the bill, and the American people are saying ''No way.''

New polls today show that over half of the American public opposes this bill; two-thirds of the people recognize that the bill will benefit the wealthy over the middle class; and, according to the polls, the only thing more unpopular than this tax plan is President Trump himself. But the Republicans will push ahead anyway since this is all part of the bigger con game. When these tax giveaways pass, the deficit will explode by over $2 trillion.

Republicans aren't even waiting for those deficits to become reality before using them as an excuse to move to the next phase of the con game. They are already using future deficits to justify a brutal, vicious cut to programs for the poorest, for the sickest, for the neediest people in our country. Earlier this month, Speaker RYAN said, ''We're going to have to get back next year at entitlement reform, which is how you tackle the debt and the deficit.'' We know exactly what Republicans mean when they talk about entitlement reform. They mean taking a machete to the programs that working and middle-class families in America rely upon. Republicans want nothing more than an excuse to slash Medicare and make it harder for Grandma to buy her medicine. They want the ability to gut Medicaid because, in their opinion, healthcare is only a right for the wealthy. They want to cover their historical enmity toward Social Security so that they can steal benefits from every American who has paid into that system, and they are doing this because the modern Republican Party has a sacred obligation to their donors—to the Koch brothers, to the massive corporations that help fund their campaigns. They promised them tax breaks, and it will be average working families who will end up footing the bill. When the bill becomes due, the American people will not forget who sent it to them.

Here we are at the end of the year. We have truly important issues to address. We need to fund healthcare for 9 million children, ensure that community health centers can keep the lights on, secure the dreams of 800,000 young Dreamers, and combat the crises that American communities face from opioids and natural disasters. Sadly, we are doing none of those things. Instead, we are looting America's middle class to give away massive amounts of money to the rich, which will then create deficits, which will then have them going after Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security—Grandma and Grandpa, who built this country. That has always been their plan. They have an ancient animosity toward all of these programs, and now they believe they can leave them as debt-soaked relics of what they are today by creating this huge debt in this tax bill and then turning on the very programs for the very people who made this country what it is today.

I urge a ''no'' vote on this bill. It will go down in history as one of the worst single pieces of legislation ever to be considered by the U.S. Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, relief for Americans is on the way. This evening, we will vote on the first comprehensive overhaul of our Tax Code since 1986. In 1986, I was a young Senate staffer. I watched as that tax bill passed on the floor of the U.S. Senate. I was a 25-year-old staffer back then.

In a couple of weeks, my wife and I will welcome our third grandchild into the world, so it seems only fitting, after 30 years, that we go about the business of reforming the Tax Code because a lot has changed in this country. A lot has changed in this country in the past 30 years, but the one thing that hasn't changed is the Tax Code. Our Tax Code needs to be updated and modernized to reflect the times in which we live.

Since President Reagan signed the last overhaul into law, our Tax Code has ballooned into an unwieldy, complex maze that costs American taxpayers an incredible amount of time and money and acts as a drag on economic growth and job creation.

I will say that when I was elected to the Senate, I came here, as most of us do, wanting to do big things. We want to do consequential things. We want to do things that will impact the American people in a beneficial and a positive way, and that is certainly the case with tax reform. I sought to get on the Senate Finance Committee for that reason. The Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over tax, trade, healthcare, and issues that really impact and affect the American people's everyday lives.

In 2011, I had the good fortune of getting on the committee, and ever since that time we have been working aggressively, planning for this very day. The suggestion by our colleagues on the other side that somehow this cropped up all of a sudden, overnight, is absolutely inconsistent with the facts. Since I got on the Finance Committee in 2011, we have had no fewer than 70 hearings on tax reform and tax-related issues.

In 2015, the chairman of the committee, Senator HATCH, created five working groups. I was fortunate enough to chair one of those working groups. They were bipartisan, and they were tasked with looking at all aspects of the Tax Code, broken down into five different sections, and making recommendations for tax reform. We went about that in a very diligent way. We spent weeks and months developing ideas, reported those recommendations to the full committee, and those recommendations today serve as the foundation for the legislation we are considering. That was a bipartisan process, and the Democrats participated in that. A lot of the suggestions are bipartisan ideas. The foundation for this legislation frankly, in many respects, originated with those working groups that were worked upon by both Republicans and Democrats. So we stand here today with a piece of legislation that has a lot of bipartisan substance in it, even though the Democrats have refused to participate in the process.

We started out with two major goals on tax reform. One was to put more money in the pockets of hard-working Americans and to create a tax code that would foster economic growth and make American companies competitive again in the global marketplace. Those are the two goals. The bill before us today—the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act—succeeds on both fronts.

The bill provides immediate, direct relief for hard-working Americans, starting next month. It lowers tax rates for Americans in every income bracket. It nearly doubles the standard deduction, simplifying the code, meaning that fewer people will have to itemize. Across the country, it varies State by State, but, on average, less than one-third of the people across the country itemize today. Well, this will reduce that number even further. Less than 10 percent of the people in this country will have to itemize because of the doubling—or near doubling—of the standard deduction. It doubles the child tax credit and significantly increases the refundable portion of the credit, which will provide important additional help for low-income families, and it maintains the earned-income tax credit.

All of this means that American families are going to see a significant drop in their tax bills for next year. Just as a case in point, a family of four with a combined annual income of $73,000 per year will see a tax cut of over $2,000, and that represents a 58-percent reduction over what they are paying today under current law. If you are a single parent with one child and have an income of $41,000, you are going to see a $1,300 reduction in your taxes, which represents a 73-percent reduction over what you are paying today under current law.

So the idea, as has been advanced by the other side, that somehow middle-income taxpayers don't benefit from this is absolutely false. It is inaccurate because these are objective facts. A doubling of the standard deduction, a doubling of the child tax credit, and a reduction in rates mean that people in all income groups are going to see significant tax relief. Just to put a fine point on that, this is based on the latest analysis by the Joint Committee on Taxation. They assess and look at how these proposals will translate in terms of income groups and who gets impacted by that.

I want to point out that if you look at income by level here—different groups and their incomes—as you can see, every income group receives a significant tax cut. In fact, lower income Americans receive the largest tax cuts, and that, again, is according to the Joint Committee on Taxation. The point made earlier by my colleague from the other side was that somehow this was going to be a huge tax shift in terms of who is going to pay taxes after all this is said and done. Well, if you look at the tax burden—and by that I mean who pays taxes in this country, the share of taxes currently borne by each different income category—as you see from this chart, which is broken down by quadrant, 25 percent of the filers are in this category, 25 percent in this category, and 25 percent with $50,000 to $100,000 in income, and then the final quadrant of 25 percent is those making $100,000 and above. Well, if you look at those in the lower income categories—and this is according to the Joint Committee on Taxation—their share of the tax burden relative to what it is today is actually the same or lower. So those in lower income categories, those making $20,000 to $50,000 a year—and that represents about 25 percent of filers today—pay 4.3 percent of total taxes in this country. After implementation of the bill, they will pay 4.1 percent of total taxes in this country. Their overall tax burden will have decreased after passage of this legislation.

If you take the next category, from $50,000 to $100,000, they pay today, under current law, 16.9 percent of the total tax burden in this country. After this legislation has passed, they will be paying 16.9 percent of the total tax burden in this country.

What about those making $100,000 a year and more, which represents about 25 percent of all filers? Well, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation, on which these distribution tables are based, those in that income category who are paying today 78.7 percent of all the taxes in this country—after this is passed, they will pay 79.1 percent. So their overall tax burden actually goes up after this legislation is passed and enacted into law.

Interestingly enough, this is the most recent analysis by the Joint Committee on Taxation. This is the distribution table that they just put out. The category that has the biggest increase in terms of overall tax burden is those making a million dollars a year and more. Today they pay 19.3 percent of all the tax burden, all the tax liability in this country. After this is all said and done, they will pay 19.8 percent. So their taxes—those with a million and more—are going up under this legislation.

So this idea—they keep saying it on the other side, but just because they keep saying it doesn't make it true. The facts tell a completely different story. These are the facts. Again, I have come back to the point I made earlier; that is, let's put it into language that people in this country understand. When they do their taxes, they are going to see a doubling of the standard deduction and they are going to see a doubling of the child tax credit. If you are a family with kids in this country, that means that for every child you have, instead of getting a $1,000 child tax credit, you will get a $2,000 child tax credit. Couple that with the lower rates—and the marginal rates are going to be a 10-percent rate, a 12-percent rate—and where those kick in at different brackets, you are going to see a significant reduction in taxes across all income groups. That is just the reality. I think it is important that we at least, as we are talking about this subject, talk about it in terms of the facts.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act also preserves elements of the current Tax Code that have been working for Americans. Under this bill, homeowners and those aspiring to own a home will still be able to deduct their mortgage interest if they itemize on their taxes. Individuals who donate to charities, to churches, and educational institutions will still be able to claim those contributions as an itemized deduction. Working Americans will retain all the current options for saving for retirement, from individual retirement accounts to the various types of employer-provided retirement plans, like 401(k)s.

This bill also provides families with permanent relief from ObamaCare's burdensome individual mandate, which is a tax on lower income Americans. Under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Americans will no longer be required to buy health insurance that they don't want and can't afford or face significant financial penalties, which today disproportionately fall on those who make less than $50,000 a year.

This bill also restores the deduction for major medical expenses to where it was before ObamaCare. For this year and next, Americans facing the burden of significant medical expenses will once again be able to deduct any expenses that exceed 7.5 percent of their adjusted gross income. I hope that eventually we will be able to make that change permanent.

That is not all this is going to do. This is not just going to help Americans now; it is going to help them for the long term. It is going to give them access to the kinds of jobs, wages, and opportunities that will set them up for a secure future. How does it go about doing that? By rebuilding our broken Tax Code into a modern tax system designed for a 21st-century economy.

In order for individual Americans to thrive, American businesses need to thrive. Thriving businesses expand. They hire new workers. They can afford to offer those workers higher wages. But our current Tax Code has not been helping businesses thrive. On the contrary, it has been strangling businesses large and small with high tax rates and provisions that discourage growth and drive those good-paying jobs overseas. Plus, our outdated tax structure has left American businesses at a competitive disadvantage in the global economy.

This legislation changes all of that. This bill lowers tax rates across the board for small and medium-size businesses, farms, and ranches. It provides a 20-percent deduction on passthrough income, reducing the top effective tax rate on this income to no more than 29.6 percent. It permits businesses with gross receipts of up to $25 million to use the cash method of accounting and to expense their inventory costs. It allows businesses to expense new investments in machinery, equipment, and building improvements. And it expands the amount of startup and organizational expenses that new businesses can write off up front, freeing up cash flow to get the business up and running.

Accelerating businesses' ability to recover the money they invested in things like property, equipment, and inventory will encourage new business growth and help existing businesses—including farms and ranches—expand their operations, create new jobs, and grow the economy.

The bill also helps family-owned businesses, farms, and ranches by providing substantial relief from the death tax. I would have preferred to eliminate what I think is a confiscatory tax once and for all. But in this legislation, we double the current exemption to over $11 million, and by doing that, this bill will take a vast majority of family-owned businesses, farms, and ranches out of the tax's crosshairs. Too many of these businesses have wasted tens of thousands of dollars a year on costly estate planning simply to avoid the death tax and preserve that family business for another generation. That is money that these individuals would rather be investing in their businesses and their workers. This legislation allows these businesses to save critical capital for their businesses instead of forcing them to spend it to protect themselves from the heavy hand of the government.

In addition to improving the playing field for small businesses, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will boost our economy by lowering the tax rate for larger businesses. Right now, America's global businesses pay the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world. By reducing the corporate tax rate to 21 percent, this bill will allow American businesses to compete and win in the global economy. Just as important, this bill brings the U.S. international tax system into the 21st century by replacing our outdated worldwide tax system with a territorial tax system so that American businesses are not operating at a disadvantage next to their foreign competitors.

We haven't talked a lot about this, but one of the most important reforms in this bill is the changes we make to

the international tax system. This bill also eliminates the incentives in our current Tax Code that encouraged companies to shift jobs, profits, and manufacturing plants overseas. This bill makes it easier for American businesses to bring home foreign earnings to invest in growing jobs and paychecks in our local communities here in America.

Lowering the corporate tax rate and transitioning to a territorial tax system will boost wages, jobs, and opportunities for American workers employed by our Nation's global companies. It will also increase wages, jobs, and opportunities for workers at the countless small and medium-sized businesses throughout our country that make up the supply chain for America's global companies. That is a resounding win for American workers and businesses and for our economy overall.

As I said earlier, this bill is the product of literally years of work by Members of both parties. I am excited to be here as we get an opportunity to take this bill across the finish line later today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will keep over $700 million per year in Montanans' pockets. That is not a number that I calculated; that came right from the Montana Department of Revenue. And that is just for the individuals in Montana. That $700 million will be moved from Washington, DC, back to the people of Montana.

I can tell you something: Hard-working Montanans could use a pay raise. In fact, in Montana, we have some of the lowest per capita wages in the Nation. Contrast that with what is going on in Washington, DC. In fact, if you Google ''wealthiest counties in the U.S.A.''—I challenge you to do that. Take your smartphone and Google ''wealthiest counties in the U.S.A.'' and look at what you find. The top three wealthiest counties in America are suburbs of Washington, DC. In fact, 6 out of 10 of those counties are counties adjacent to Washington, DC. Montanans don't need to send an additional $700 million of their money back to Washington, DC. In fact, according to the Montana Department of Revenue, nearly 99 percent of Montanans will see a tax cut under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. On average, Montanans will keep approximately $1,600 of their hard-earned money each year.

Moreover, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act repeals once and for all ObamaCare's poverty tax—the so-called individual mandate. This tax has systematically penalized the low-income for not being able to afford health insurance. Frankly, repealing this tax is one of the most compassionate things we could do as part of this legislation.

Adding insult to injury, when you peel back what is going on with this poverty tax, 42 percent of those paying that poverty tax, that ObamaCare mandate tax, make less than $25,000 a year. In fact, 82 percent of the penalty payers paying this tax make less than $50,000 a year. Repealing this tax is the right thing to do.

At the end of the day, the question here is pretty simple: Who deserves more money? Who deserves more control? Is it right here in Washington, DC, or is it the American people? Is it the people of Montana? I think the answer to that question is pretty easy. I believe Montanans do. So I will be voting for hard-working Montana families so they can keep more of their own money. As we debate what we should do with the cash here in Washington, DC, whose money is it anyway? It came from the people of this country. It came from the people of Montana. I will be voting for Montana Main Street businesses, for the hard-working middle class of Montana so we can grow wages—some of the lowest in the Nation—and grow jobs. I will be voting to return some of Montanans' hard-earned money back to the people who sent it here in the first place.

Mr. President, I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, a few moments ago, my friend from South Dakota was speaking about the bill. He made one statement that I do agree with, and that is, just because you say something over and over again does not make it true. Unfortunately, much of what he said is just not accurate. The truth is that what we are seeing today, in an unprecedented way, is the looting of the Federal Treasury.

Today marks a great victory for the very wealthy campaign contributors who have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars over the years to the Republican Party. These billionaires will see a huge tax break for themselves at the same time as the deficit of this country is driven up by about $1.5 trillion.

Today is also a victory for the largest, the most profitable corporations in America, companies such as Apple, Microsoft, Pfizer, and General Electric, which, despite recordbreaking profits, will now see hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks.

At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, where the people on top are becoming wealthier while the middle class shrinks and 40 million live in poverty, this legislation—according to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center—will provide 83 percent of the benefits to the top 1 percent, while increasing taxes on 92 million middle-class households by the end of the decade. Let me repeat that. By the end of the decade, this legislation will provide 83 percent of the benefits to the top 1 percent and, incredibly, 60 percent of the benefits to the top one-tenth of 1 percent, while, at the end of the decade, 92 million middle-class households will be paying more in taxes.

Does anybody really believe that when we have such a massive gap in income and wealth inequality, we should be giving 60 percent of the benefits in this bill to the top one-tenth of 1 percent?

It says a lot about the priorities of the Republican Party when the tax breaks for corporations in this bill are permanent, while the tax breaks for working families expire at the end of 8 years.

Furthermore, I hope that every American is listening to what Speaker of the House PAUL RYAN is saying, and other Republicans, when they talk about how they are going to offset the $1.5 trillion in deficits they just created by giving massive tax breaks to the wealthy and large corporations. What RYAN is saying and many other Republicans are saying is that they are going to come back and offset that $1.5 trillion in deficits by cutting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. And if I am wrong on that assertion, I would hope that some of my Republican colleagues would come down to the floor and say that I am wrong, but I do not suspect that will be the case.

During his campaign for the White House, Donald Trump said over and over again to the American people, quote after quote, day after day, that he would not cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Well, I say to the President: For once in your life, keep the promises that you made, and tell the Republican leadership now that you will veto any legislation that cuts Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. I suspect we will not be seeing a tweet from the President on that issue.

Moving toward passing this very unfair piece of legislation, the Republican leadership—which controls the House and the Senate—will move soon to shut down the Congress and head home for a holiday break. After massive tax breaks for the rich and large corporations, they believe their work is done, and they are ready to head home.

Well, I respectfully disagree. Maybe, just maybe, before Congress adjourns for the holidays, we should start paying attention to the needs of the working families of this country, to the middle class of this country, and not just the billionaire class.

We need to address the crisis that faces some 800,000 young people who are currently in the DACA Program. Without the legal protections afforded by the DACA Program, these young people today are living in constant fear and anxiety that they may lose their legal status and, in fact, be deported from the only country they have ever known.

Imagine somebody who is 20 or 25 years of age, has lived in the United States virtually his or her entire life, went to school here, now has a job, now is in college, now is in the military, and because of Trump's disastrous attack on DACA, repealing DACA, 800,000 young people are worried about whether they are going to be able to even stay in this country.

The American people are very clear about how they feel about this issue. I believe just today there was a Quinnipiac poll that appeared on this very issue, and this was the question:

Which comes closest to your view about undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children? A) They should be allowed to stay in the United States and to eventually apply for U.S. citizenship. B) They should be allowed to remain in the United States, but not be allowed to apply for U.S. citizenship. C) They should be required to leave the U.S.

That was the question asked of the American people.

Here is the answer. Seventy-seven percent of the American people—77 percent—say that these young people should be allowed to stay in the United States and move toward citizenship. Seven percent say they that should stay in the United States but not gain citizenship. Twelve percent say that they should be forced to leave the United States.

Republicans, by overwhelming numbers, say that these young people, these Dreamers who have spent their entire lives in this country, who know no other country, should be allowed to stay in America and apply for citizenship. Ninety-one percent of Democrats say that, and 81 percent of Independents say that.

As we speak, young people are losing their legal status. We have to act on that and act on that now, before we adjourn for the holidays. Put yourself in the place of a 20-, 25-year-old person living in extraordinary anxiety. We have to act now to address those concerns. We have to do what the American people want us to do.

As I think most people know, the Koch brothers are the major funders of the Republican Party. They have probably given billions of dollars over the years. Even Charles Koch acknowledges that the right thing to do is to provide legal status for the Dreamers.

Let me quote from a recent op-ed in the Washington Post by Charles Koch and Tim Cook, the head of Apple:

The United States is at its best when all people are free to pursue their dreams. Our country has enjoyed unparalleled success by welcoming people from around the world who seek to make a better life for themselves and their families, no matter what their backgrounds. It is our differences that help us to learn from each other, to challenge our old ways of thinking and to discover innovative solutions that benefit us all. To advance that prosperity and build an even stronger future, each successive generation—including, today, our own—must show the courage to embrace that diversity and to do what is right.

We have no illusions about how difficult it can be to get things done in Washington, and we know that people of good faith disagree about aspects of immigration policy. If ever there were an occasion to come together to help people improve their lives, this is it. By acting now to ensure the dreamers can realize their potential by continuing to contribute to our country, Congress can reaffirm this essential American ideal.

This is from Charles Koch. He funds the Republican Party. They might want to listen to him as well.

But it is not just the need to address the crisis facing our Dreamers. As you know, community health centers providing health insurance, healthcare, for 27 million people have not been reauthorized or refunded. We have to address that issue, and we have to address it now.

Nine million children are in the Children's Health Insurance Program. While we are busy giving tax breaks to billionaires, we have not had time to reauthorize a health insurance program for the children of this country. We should be ashamed of ourselves.

We have disaster relief out there. Folks in Congress will go home to celebrate the holidays, and will light up our homes. In Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, they can't light up their homes because many of them still don't have electricity as a result of the recent disasters they have experienced. We need to do disaster relief. We need to do it now for the people of Puerto Rico, for the people of the Virgin Islands, for the people of Texas, and for the people of Florida.

There are 1.5 million workers who are about to lose the pensions they were promised, and those pensions, after a lifetime of work, will be reduced by 60 percent if we don't address the multiemployer pension plan crisis. We have to do that.

Over 40 million people in this country are dealing with student debt. They leave college deeply in debt. Many of them are in despair because of their financial situations—because of their outrageous levels of student debt. We have to address that.

We have an opioid epidemic that is killing people from coast to coast. We have to start investing in treatment and prevention.

We have 30,000 vacancies in the VA today. Our job is to make sure that every veteran in this country gets the quality healthcare he or she needs. They don't get it with 30,000 vacancies in the VA. We have to invest in the VA.

There were 10,000 people on disability who died last year while waiting for the Social Security Administration to act on their applications; 10,000 people died last year because the Social Security Administration is greatly understaffed—massive cuts to the Social Security Administration. The elderly and the disabled in this country are entitled to have prompt process when they apply for benefits. They are not getting that. We have to pay attention to that, and on and on it goes.

The bottom line is that the U.S. Senate should be doing more than providing 83 percent of the benefits in a tax bill to the top 1 percent. We cannot go home unless we address the very serious crises facing the working families and the middle class of this country.

With that, I yield to my colleague from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I thank Senator SANDERS.

I want to pick up for a moment on his eloquent points and then pose a question to him about what we will be doing here in a few minutes.

Senator SANDERS has eloquently spoken to the needs of the American people, our veterans, the Dreamers, the disasters. Those are bipartisan efforts. Mr. CRAPO and I want to fix the broken system of fighting fires.

Senator SANDERS mentioned children's health insurance. This bill borrows $1.5 trillion and is going to end up borrowing a lot of it from foreign interests. That would fund the Children's Health Insurance Program for 915 years. So what the Senator from Vermont is doing is saying: Look at all the constructive areas where we can really meet the needs of the people, and, instead, we are working on a tax bill that is going to betray the middle class. It is going to betray the middle class, and in my view, as the distinguished Senator from Vermont and I have discussed, this bill—this tax bill—is a textbook case of writing legislation in an undemocratic way, in a secret way, with provisions that were airdropped for lobbyists into this legislation in the middle of the night.

Senator SANDERS and I were part of the so-called conference committee last week where we didn't even have the relevant bill in front of us. We were asking questions about bills that really didn't exist.

Mr. SANDERS. If I could ask my colleague from Oregon a simple question—he is the ranking member of the Finance Committee. This is a bill that deals with trillions of dollars in our entire economy.

Mr. WYDEN. $10 trillion.

Mr. SANDERS. It impacts every person in America. Would he mind telling the American people just how many public hearings there were to hear from economists, to hear from the business community, to hear from labor, to hear from senior advocates, to discuss this rather long and complicated bill?

Mr. WYDEN. There was not one single hearing to discuss the specifics of the legislation before us today. The legislation before us today involves $10 trillion worth of changes in tax policy.

Our colleagues on the other side trumpet this idea that there were 70 hearings. I think what they are talking about is that over the years, people would come in and talk about this idea or that.

Mr. SANDERS. Talk about taxes in general——

Mr. WYDEN. Right, that is correct. But there was not one single hearing with respect to the specifics of the bill.

I would like to turn, if I could, to this work that my colleague—and I am happy to have partnered with him—has played such an important role in; that is, the consequences of all this reckless haste and secretive process, which he and I have been working on. In my view, it is really is legislative malpractice. We have a bill that is full of mistakes that are going to have unintended consequences, opening many new loopholes for the wealthy and crafty accountants and lawyers.

The Senator and I have been working to try to weed out of this legislation violations of what is called the Byrd rule, which, in English, basically means you can't stuff provisions into a bill that really don't deal with tax and spending. By my count, the Senator and I have already pushed that there are more than 20 Byrd rule violations that had to be corrected.

Before I ask my question, I just want to give people a little bit of the idea of the work the Senator and I have been doing over the last few days. Late Friday night, we were able to remove a particularly offensive provision that would have turned some churches in America into partisan, political organizations. Specifically, there was an effort here to overturn what is called the Johnson amendment, named after Lyndon Johnson, that barred churches from endorsing partisan political activity with political candidates. The way that the bill was written—and the Senator and I fought to get it struck and were successful—it would have turned churches and sham charities into political machines where they could be conduits for billions and billions of dollars in dark money.

Mr. SANDERS. Let me translate that into English. In other words, as I understand what the Senator is saying, billionaire campaign contributors could then legally put money into churches, which would then do the political work that they otherwise would have been doing.

Mr. WYDEN. Absolutely. I think we need to tell America about this because we have won this round, but the Senator and I are going to be back at this fight with our colleagues again. In effect, this would have been Citizens United 2.0. This would have been another version of the push to have unaccountable, dark money—billions of dollars poured into elections through churches and sham charities.

Turning to the question now of this evening, it looks to me as though we have now found several other Byrd rule violations that would seem to me to be further indications of rash and reckless legislating that does not serve the American people well.

So I would wrap up by asking my colleague from Vermont—and I want to tell him it has been a pleasure to work in partnership with him on this—aren't these Byrd rule violations that we have been going after and that you are going to discuss again tonight, aren't these just a textbook case of what happens when you legislate with reckless haste?

Mr. SANDERS. Absolutely. It is not only that mistakes are made; it is that when you don't open the doors to the American people, to economists, to mayors, to Governors, to businesspeople, and to leaders in the labor movement to see what do you want in tax reform—when you don't do that—and when you conduct your business behind closed doors, you end up with legislation that represents the needs of the billionaire class, which also makes a number of mistakes.

In that regard, I would tell my friend that this afternoon, the Senate Parliamentarian advised that certain provisions of the Republican tax legislation violate the Byrd rule, including a provision allowing for the use of 529 savings accounts for home schooling expenses; the short title—the Tax Cut and Jobs Act—and part of the criteria used to determine whether the endowments of private universities are subject to the legislation's new excise tax. These provisions may be struck from the conference report absent 60 votes.

With that, I raise the following points of order against the pending conference report:

That subsection 11000(a) violates section 313(b)(1)(A) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974; that subparagraph (B) of section 11032, starting on page 75, line 17 and all through page 76, line 9, violates section 313(b)(1)(D) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974; and that the phrase ''tuition-paying'' as it appears on page 309, line 12, and page 309, lines 14 through 15, violates section 313(b)(1)(D) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from Wyoming.

MOTION TO WAIVE

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, pursuant to section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and the waiver provisions of applicable budget resolutions, I move to waive all applicable sections of that act and applicable budget resolutions for purposes of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The waiver is debatable for 1 hour, equally divided.

Who yields time?

If no one yields time, the time will be equally divided.

The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I was proud to be a conferee for H.R. 1, the Tax Cut and Jobs Act, and I am pleased to join many of my colleagues in strong support of the conference report for it.

I think, really, the title says it all. This bill will deliver tax cuts and new jobs for hard-working Americans. I think it will be good for our economy, it will be good for jobs and for growth, and it will be good for families and our businesses.

As a starting point, we have tax reform—a huge and a complicated undertaking that really happens once in a generation around here. It has been 31 years since we have successfully reformed the Tax Code. I think we would all say it is long overdue.

This bill reduces taxes in every income bracket, letting Americans keep more of their money. It doubles the standard deduction to put even more money back in the pockets of hard-working Americans. It doubles the child tax credit, which is so important, making more of it refundable to help parents and our families. It helps our small businesses. In the State of Alaska, about 99.6 percent of the businesses in Alaska are small businesses, and it allows owners to do even more by being able to deduct 20 percent of their business income from their taxes. It also cuts our corporate rate, currently one of the highest in the world. We all recognize this is a move that is long overdue and one that will make us more competitive, help bring jobs back to this country, and increase investments in America.

I support tax reform, and I am also very proud to be the lead author of the second title, the energy title, in this bill, which I believe contains the single most important step that we can take to strengthen our long-term energy security and create new wealth—creating new wealth—rather than moving things around.

This has been long fight for us. It has been a fight that has been going on for about 38 years, give or take. It has been a multigenerational fight for some of us. What we are doing is authorizing a program for responsible energy development in Alaska's nonwilderness 1002 area. This is an area Congress specifically set aside for its evaluation for its potential for oil and gas.

I have put a lot of charts about Alaska up, but here is Alaska laid over the United States of America, just to kind of put in context what we are talking about here with the 1002 area. The area of ANWR itself is an area of about 19.5 million acres. It is the combined size of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, and New Hampshire, in this area, and in this portion of the State of Alaska. Contained within ANWR is additional wilderness acreage. There are about 7 million acres of wilderness contained in the ANWR area.

I also want to remind colleagues who say we need to keep this 1002 area in a wilderness status—let me tell my colleagues, the 1002 was never in wilderness, is not in wilderness, and that is not what we are talking about here.

We have 48 wilderness areas in the State of Alaska, with a total of about 56.6 million acres of designated wilderness in the State, but the 1002 is not wilderness. This is what we are talking about opening up for oil and gas exploration.

This is an area—this small area up here—that contains an estimated 10.4 billion barrels of oil. We know we can produce it safely. We know we are going to need this oil in the years ahead.

Now, some of my colleagues have suggested that somehow or other we don't need any more oil; that we are exporting oil now. Well, the reality is that world oil demand is rising; it is not falling. We need to bring more supply online, and we need to open up our most prospective areas. So, again,

when we have a small area that has enormous potential, why would we continue to deny that opportunity?

The International Energy Agency believes—and they stated it this year: ''Global oil supply could struggle to keep pace with demand after 2020, risking a sharp increase in prices unless new projects are approved soon.''

So to suggest that somehow, just because we are exporting oil, we no longer need to produce it, just doesn't make sense. Exports are making our markets more efficient, but they don't mean we are suddenly more energy independent or permanently energy secure. Making sure we are doing more where we have high prospects makes sense.

Our energy title also includes a bipartisan proposal from Senators CASSIDY, STRANGE, and KING that will increase revenue sharing for the gulf coast for priorities like coastal restoration and hurricane protection. Overall, the bill—our title—is projected to raise nearly $1.1 billion over the next 10 years. Once production begins in the 1002 area, we will likely raise tens, if not hundreds, of billions of dollars for the Federal Treasury. Again, this is new wealth and new prosperity at a time when our Nation needs both.

Those are not the only benefits this energy title will bring. We are also talking about jobs—creating thousands of jobs—in Alaska and around the country; jobs that pay high wages, put food on the table, and put the kids through college.

We are in a tough place right now in Alaska. We have the highest unemployment in the country. I appreciated the fact that my colleague from Washington talked about jobs and, in fact, noted that in the ties that bind the State of Alaska and the State of Washington, we do have a lot when it comes to sharing of jobs. I will remind my colleagues that when it comes to jobs, it is an estimated 12,000 Puget Sound jobs and $780 million in labor earnings that are connected with refining Alaska oil. So our jobs—our resource benefits not just us in Alaska but those around the country as well.

What we are able to do by accessing this 1002 area also will help us keep energy affordable, effectively providing families and businesses with an energy tax cut. That, too, is important in context with this tax bill.

We also protect national security by reducing foreign oil dependency, especially in west coast States. Ironically, California and Washington State, as they see less oil coming from Alaska, as our throughput is declining, what is happening is that, in order to keep their refineries going and their jobs continuing, they are having to import oil. Where is California getting more of their oil from? From the Middle East. Tell me how that makes any sense.

I appreciate that colleagues come to the floor with a passion about our State, but know that as Alaskans and as an Alaskan who is the author of this title, none of what we are doing in this effort to open the 1002 area will come at the expense of our environment or the local people. Some of the local people are here in Washington to watch the vote today. Hearing the voices of those who live there—there is a town, there is a village, there are people, there is a school, there is an airport in the 1002 area—a town, residents, community. This is not an area that is untouched, but it is an area we care about. We care about the people, we care about the land, and we care about the wildlife, but we know how to produce energy while protecting our environment. We have been doing it for decades, and we will continue to do it going into the future.

Thanks to new technologies, the footprint of our development up north is smaller than ever before. The amount of land that development pads occupy now on our North Slope is now 80 percent smaller than in the 1970s when we first began operation in Prudhoe Bay—80 percent smaller. At the same time, the subsurface reach from those smaller pads is going to be more than 4,000 percent larger than where we were in the 1970s—more than 4,000 percent.

What we are able to do is access more resources underground directionally in an area of 125 square miles. What the technology allows us to do is almost too hard for people to believe, and so they continue the same tired rhetoric we have heard for years. The fact is, we need less land to produce more energy than ever before.

We are going to take care of our land. We are going to take care of the people who live on our North Slope. We are going to take care of the environment, and we will protect the wildlife on the Coastal Plain. The Central Arctic herd of caribou increased sevenfold in the years since we have been producing in Prudhoe Bay. That is the Alaskan way. That is what we do there. That is why we have written our language to be fully protective, and that is why we do not waive any environmental review process or consultation requirements with Alaskan Natives in any way. In fact, the only thing that we limit here in this bill is surface development. In this area of the 1002, in this 1.5 million acres, this provision, title II, says that 2,000 surface acres will be open—one ten-thousandth of all of ANWR. That is all we are seeking to do, and we will do it with care and concern for the environment.

I have listened to colleagues say that we are destroying the Refuge, that we will turn it into an industrialized wasteland. I am offended, I am horrified, and it is wrong. It is wrong for those from the outside looking in, who have taken a nice trip into an area and said: This must be protected. Your jobs don't matter.

That resource that we rely on for jobs in my State doesn't matter; we will get it from somewhere else. Well, where are you going to get it from? Why not work with people who are going to care for the land, care for the people, care for the wildlife, do it with a level of commitment to a resource and to a cause that is strong and sound?

For those who come in and say they know best and their idea is to just lock it up, that is not right. For 40 years, Alaskans have stood up and said: That is not right.

We will continue in our effort to demonstrate to the rest of the country and the rest of the world how we are able to operate, how we are able to be responsible stewards of the environment, to produce jobs, to help Alaskan people, to help the country, and to help our allies. This is what we are asking for.

As I close my comments, I recognize that tomorrow is coming up on the shortest day. We have had some very short days in Alaska. It is pretty dark there right now. I was home over the weekend. With the passage of this bill and the long-awaited opportunity to access our resources in the 1002 area for the benefit of Alaskans and for the benefit of our country, the days ahead look brighter for all of us.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, tonight, the Republican leadership intends to force a vote on their tax bill. President Trump has called this tax bill historic. Indeed, it will make history, but not for the right reasons. It is a historic transfer of wealth from students, seniors, and working families to the wealthiest corporations and individuals in America and, indeed, throughout the world. Historians and voters will look at the way this bill was written, in a rushed and sloppy manner, without thoughtful debate—indeed, we have to send it back to the House of Representatives so they can vote again—and with a reckless and willful disregard for facts and independent analysis.

In forcing this massive restructuring of our economy through Congress, Republican leaders have permitted no real amendments and ignored every nonpartisan analysis of their bill that does not fit their worldview. As a result, this trickle-down tax bill is quite possibly the most fiscally irresponsible piece of tax legislation to have ever been railroaded through Congress over the objections of the American people.

Some will say: Wait, what about the Affordable Care Act? Let me remind you, the ACA was paid for. It had to get 60 votes. It was on the Senate floor for 25 consecutive days. There was a full committee process, and Democrats accepted many Republican amendments in the House and in the Senate. That is not the case with this historic bill.

The Trump tax will adversely affect my home State, Rhode Islanders, in so many ways. The temporary benefits will not cover the long-term damage

from this bill or offset the increased costs for things like childcare, education, healthcare, and housing. The reason the American people oppose this bill is simple—and they do oppose it—it forces the middle class to accept yet another Republican tax giveaway to corporations and the richest 1 percent with little or nothing for them.

It also gives trillions of dollars in permanent tax cuts to corporations while raising taxes on over half of American families over the next decade. In doing so, it gives $48 billion to the foreign investors who own roughly 35 percent of American company stock. That is right. Many of these tax benefits will go through corporations by either dividends or stock redemptions to foreign owners, amounting to $48 billion to foreign investors. That is not putting the American working man and woman first; that is putting them at the end of the line. It makes the Tax Code more, rather than less, complicated and very clearly incentivizes and rewards multinational corporations that send jobs and stash money overseas.

Moreover, special loopholes for passthrough entities will create a bonanza for tax lawyers and accountants and people figuring out ways to get out of paying their taxes. It will not help working men and women who come in and punch in every morning, work hard, and then go back to their families. It will not help them at all.

And there is not a single respected economist or tax scholar on the left or right who concludes that this bill simplifies the Tax Code and pays for itself—not one.

Republicans know all these facts. They have heard the public's objections, and they still plan to send this bill to President Trump for his signature. The President will try to tell the American people that his great political victory is a win for working people, but they see all the benefits going to his type of businesses—real estate passthroughs. In fact, at the last moment, the conference committee put in a special provision to make sure that real estate entities could benefit from this bill. That means President Trump's organization benefits from this bill.

It is not fair. It is not wise. It is not good policy. The American people know this instinctively. They look at what is going on, and they see this as it is—a giant gift to the wealthiest corporations and individuals at the people's expense in so many different ways.

The consequences of this legislation are going to be staggering and generational. We will not quickly overcome this historic mistake. The total abdication of fiscal responsibility in this bill is stunning. Adding trillions more to the deficit will put massive budget pressure on national defense, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and other vital programs that keep our commitments at home and abroad. These are the programs that allow us to keep faith with the American people who sent us here and also to ensure that we are moving toward a more peaceful and prosperous world. For future generations facing an economic crisis, or the challenge of their time, or cyclical economic downturns that we cannot always foresee, those future generations will look back on this unnecessary tax giveaway and wonder why today's Congress was so irresponsible.

In 2001, I was here, and I opposed the Bush tax cuts. At that time, however, we had an estimated $5 trillion surplus, and we didn't anticipate the 9/11 attacks. We were at a time where Russia was turning away from its Communist past to what we thought was a democratic future. China was just emerging as an economic power in Asia. It is a totally different situation today. We all know it. My colleagues on the other side know it. We are challenged by 16 years of war, which we have made no attempt to pay for, and we are putting our national security behind benefits for the wealthiest Americans that are enshrined in this bill, adding $1.5 trillion to pay for tax cuts for the most wealthy in this Nation and in the world.

Many of the recipients of our largesse—Republican largesse—this evening will not be Americans. As I noted, a significant portion of American stock in our companies is held by foreigners. When stock buybacks take place—and that is what corporations have announced they will do—a huge amount of these tax cuts will go outside of the United States, and not help our economy. Maybe it will help some people buy expensive yachts overseas and expensive French Impressionist paintings, but it will not help working people in Pawtucket, RI, or Cranston, RI—not at all. This is a bill that is full of loopholes that will be exploited for years to come. Indeed, we are already hearing rumors that we can expect more legislation to ''fix the bill.''

This would be different if we were talking about real tax reform—real tax reform that benefitted the middle class, real tax reform that raised the earned-income tax credit, real tax reform that benefited people who work every day, wage workers particularly—but this bill doesn't do that. Real tax reform comes as a result of an open and bipartisan process. It is ideally revenue-neutral, like the 1986 law under President Reagan, which took a bipartisan consensus, which made major reform, and which is something that was not only procedurally but economically sound.

I hope, going forward, that we can work together to prevent and undo the damage from this bill and enact real, responsible tax reform that boosts take-home pay, spurs job growth, closes loopholes, expands opportunity, and strengthens the long-term financial stability and security of our Nation. But that is not this legislation.

One final point—this Monday, the President announced his national security strategy, his overarching vision of what will make this country safe, secure, and strong as we go forward. Part of that national security strategy is to reduce the debt through fiscal responsibility. My Republican colleagues are about to increase the debt through fiscal irresponsibility. This national security strategy isn't even 24 hours old, and it is being abandoned. It is being abandoned before literally even the pen is dry on the paper. When it comes to tax cuts, national security places far to the rear, and we know what is going to happen. As this deficit grows—and it will grow much larger than the $1.5 trillion that is projected—it will squeeze out spending. It will squeeze out defense spending, despite the efforts on both sides to try to increase support for the military. It is impossible to create a deficit of this magnitude and not see the consequences both on the defense side and the nondefense side.

In fact, I am baffled because we have heard so much—particularly from my Republican colleagues—talk about the need to support our men and women in the field after 16 years of war. Why aren't we at least saying: If we are going to borrow $1.5 trillion, let's give it to the men and women in uniform. No. We are here tonight saying: Let's give it to the richest people in America and in the world. There is lots of rejoicing going on throughout the world tonight because when shareholders' stock is redeemed in the companies they own, they are going to be wealthier, and they are going to use that wealth not for America but for whatever reason they want. Again, is it a new yacht or a new painting?

I just hope that in the waning few hours of this debate, we can move the consciousness of colleagues and reject this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, we are nearing the finish line this week on providing Nevadans and all Americans the real tax relief that they deserve and that they have been promised. As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, I have been fighting every day for the Senate to stay in Washington—even 24/7—until the job gets done. Today, we are getting the job done. That is because I know just how critical middle-class tax relief is for the people in my home State of Nevada. Let me tell you why.

The majority of Americans are not only struggling to get ahead, they are struggling to just get by. It has been reported that nearly 8 in 10 Americans who work full time are living paycheck to paycheck. That is a slight increase from previous years.

If you live in Nevada, you are more likely to be living paycheck to paycheck than if you were to live in most other States. To put that into perspective, housing costs are reported to consume nearly a quarter of Nevadans'

paychecks. One report suggests that after the cost-of-living expenses are taken out of their paychecks, the average Nevadan has a little more than $700 left. During a recent telephone townhall, I heard from a teacher in Las Vegas who spoke about her stagnant wages. This teacher, like most Americans, has not seen a meaningful pay raise in years.

But right now, for many Americans, it is not so much about getting a raise as it is getting back to where they once were. In Nevada, the real median household income is $7,000 lower today than it was in 2007. Let me repeat that. In Nevada, the real median household income is $7,000 lower today than it was 10 years ago. At the same time, childcare expenses have skyrocketed. In this country, the average cost for an infant in center-based care can be as high as $17,082 per year. By the way, that is more than a semester at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. It is more than a semester at the University of Nevada, Reno. In Nevada, that means that the average single parent could spend as much as 36 percent of his or her annual income to send an infant to center-based care.

Given rising housing and childcare expenses alone, middle-class families in Nevada and around this country are having a hard time covering day-to-day expenses and planning for their futures. Nearly one in five Americans has nothing set aside to cover an unexpected emergency, while nearly one in three Americans doesn't have at least $500 to cover an unexpected emergency expense. So it is fair to say, in Nevada at least, that the recession has never really ended.

Under the failed economic policies of the Obama administration, Nevadans suffered through 8 years of historically low economic growth. Think about that. In those 8 years, the average economic growth was less than 2 percent. As a result, wages and workers suffered, job creation suffered, and middle-class Americans suffered.

We are now at a crossroads. We have a chance to change course. We have the opportunity to pass meaningful tax cuts that will lift middle-class families, our communities, and our economy.

If you are against this bill, you are satisfied with the anemic 2-percent economic growth that was ushered in by the Obama administration. You accept this dismal growth as the new normal, but I will never accept this as the new normal. I think we can do better. In fact, I know we can do better. We have already seen improvement since President Trump has taken office.

If you are against this bill, you are against giving small businesses the chance to actually get off the ground and hire workers. You are against giving them better opportunities to expand, to invest, to increase wages, and to hire more workers. I know that our small businesses employ nearly half of all U.S. workers, and I know that this bill will make it easier for them to continue doing what they do best, and that is creating jobs.

Lastly, if you are against this bill, you are against tax cuts for the middle class because that is what this bill is all about, and if you know that nearly one-third of Americans don't have $500 to cover an emergency expense, then you know just how important a few extra dollars per month are to them. I do, and that is why I have been fighting to get this bill to the President's desk.

Earlier today, I was pleased to see the House pass the conference report that reconciles our two tax reform bills, and I look forward to soon having the opportunity to vote in support of this pro-growth package that delivers critically important tax relief to America's middle class and small businesses—a pro-growth package that will help boost jobs, a pro-growth package that will increase wages, a pro-growth package that will drive growth in our local communities, and a pro-growth package that will give a Nevada family of four, making $85,000 per year, a tax cut of $2,254 or, roughly, a relief of 20 percent of its tax liability, according to the nonpartisan Tax Foundation.

Today, our small businesses and middle class suffer under an outdated and unfair Tax Code that crushes job creation and makes it harder for Nevadans and people all across this country to get ahead.

The fact is simple: After 30 years of disrepair and neglect, our current tax system needs to be fixed. Everybody knows that it doesn't work, that it is rigged against our job creators, and that it should be overhauled. These are the very problems our tax relief package helps to address.

I also recently spoke with an ambitious and hard-working Nevadan, an entrepreneur who started his own business while going to school full time. This young job creator brought up the enormous amount of money that he is paying in taxes, as well as how complicated it is to navigate the current system. He also spoke of an uneven playing field that tipped the system in favor of his foreign competitors. He wanted to know when Congress would deliver on reforms to boost the competitiveness of all American job creators.

Lastly, just this past weekend, I ran into a small business owner who said that he paid $160,000 in taxes last year. He said that $160,000 amounted to two pieces of machinery that he could have installed at his small manufacturing facility—machines that would have necessitated the creation of two highly paid jobs—jobs that would have been created but for our unfair tax system.

From their perspectives and from mine, Nevada has been waiting too long for a fairer, simpler Tax Code that they can enjoy. Nevadans, like most Americans, know how important passing this tax relief package is to our country's economy. Nevadans have seen the increased levels of economic growth under the new administration and know that this tax relief bill will add to it.

Let's talk about what this tax bill does and does not do.

This tax bill lowers individual tax rates across the board and let's taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned money.

This tax bill roughly doubles the standard deduction that is used by most taxpayers, which gives a massive tax cut to the roughly 90 percent of Nevadans who are expected to use it.

This tax bill includes my amendment to double the child tax credit—an increase of $1,000 per child over current law—which will go a long way toward addressing the skyrocketing costs of childcare in my State and across the country.

This tax bill also includes my amendment to make it easier for startups and businesses to give lower level employees ownership stakes in their companies' successes by awarding stock options.

This tax bill protects and expands the medical expense deduction for our Nation's most vulnerable, as well as preserves popular retirement savings options, such as 401(k)s and individual retirement accounts.

This bill does not change the tax treatment of the student loan interest. It does not change graduate tuition waivers. It does not change the tax treatment of employer-paid tuition or the teacher deduction.

It preserves the tax exemption for private activity bonds that are used to finance private projects with a public benefit. These bonds benefit a wide array of individuals and organizations, such as charter schools, and are of great importance to the homeschool community.

Overall, this tax bill accomplishes my three major goals of, one, creating jobs; two, increasing wages; and three, boosting American competitiveness.

Regardless of the tales that my friends from across the aisle want to tell you, this bill not only cuts taxes, but it also increases wages.

We have a prime opportunity today to provide real tax relief to Nevadans and other Americans who have been waiting for a fairer, simpler Tax Code, real relief that lets the middle class keep more of its hard-earned money and makes our Tax Code easier to understand. There is less paperwork and more money in people's back pockets. There is real relief that also produces more quality jobs, higher wages, and growth in our communities.

This tax relief bill is a positive step toward restoring Nevadans' faith in the American dream by providing tax cuts for middle-class families and jumpstarting job creation, higher wages, and economic growth.

I will continue to work with my colleagues in both Chambers to ensure that this desperately needed legislation makes it across the finish line to the

President's desk before the end of this week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the tax bill.

I am disappointed. You see, I am one of the many Americans who believe that we need to reform our Tax Code to benefit middle-class families. I also believe that we need to make those reforms in a commonsense, responsible way. Sadly, that is not the approach that was taken with this legislation.

From the very beginning of this effort, I have been willing to partner with Republicans or Democrats and with President Trump and his team. In fact, when President Trump unveiled his tax priorities in my home State of Indiana, I traveled with him on Air Force One. I wanted him to know that I was listening to his priorities and that I agreed with his stated goals of supporting the middle class and keeping jobs right here in America. I also wanted Hoosiers to know that I was committed to working with the President to reform our Tax Code in a way that helped Hoosier families and businesses.

After that trip with the President and in every meeting with the administration, including two meetings at the White House, my attending Vice President PENCE's speech in Anderson, IN, and in multiple discussions with top administration officials, I left feeling optimistic that we could work together to reform our Tax Code to achieve those goals we had agreed upon. I expected a proposal that was focused on cutting taxes for middle-class families. I expected a proposal that would help keep jobs in America and take away tax incentives from corporations that flagrantly outsource jobs to foreign competitors in foreign countries. Unfortunately, that is not the bill that the majority leader pushed through the Senate, nor is it the final bill that he and the Speaker of the House agreed upon.

The reasons I oppose this bill are plain and simple, clear, and make common sense. Instead of providing a tax cut that overwhelmingly benefits the middle class, this bill cuts taxes for the wealthiest Americans while it raises taxes on a majority of families who will be making less than $75,000 in the coming years. Instead of closing tax loopholes like the shameful one that allows Wall Street hedge fund managers to pay a lower tax rate than a Hoosier firefighter, than a Hoosier teacher, than a Hoosier policeman, or a Hoosier steel worker—imagine a hedge fund manager's tax rate being lower than that man's or woman's who is fighting a fire in Evansville this year. This bill preserves these giveaways. Think of that. It is outrageous.

Instead of protecting American jobs by adopting provisions from my End Outsourcing Act—an effort that President Trump has told me on numerous occasions that he is all-in on and supports—this tax bill does zero to claw back tax breaks and incentives awarded to corporations that later decide to outsource American jobs. It also retains loopholes that allow corporations like Rexnord and Carrier to continue deducting the moving expenses when they ship those American jobs to other countries. Imagine that. There is a tax deduction for moving expenses to ship American jobs to other countries. They left it alone.

Perhaps, there is no better example of an issue on which the President and I agree than preventing the outsourcing of American jobs. Right now in my home State of Indiana, nine companies have outsourced or will outsource the jobs of 2,200 Hoosiers. This is impacting moms and dads, sisters and brothers, wives and husbands, our neighbors, and our friends. This is our opportunity to stand up for American workers and make it clear that if corporations want a lower tax rate or special tax deductions, if they want the American taxpayer to invest in them, then, they must invest in American workers. That is the conversation I had with the President when we talked about our shared goals for tax reform, and these are the issues where I know there is common ground.

Gene Sperling, formerly the chief economic adviser to two different Presidents recently, wrote:

> If there is one thing the Republican international tax bill was advertised to accomplish, it was that it would favor locating jobs and profits in the United States. It does just the opposite—expanding the degree our tax system tilts the playing field against American taxpayers and American workers.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this article by Gene Sperling, recently published in The Atlantic, titled ''How the Tax Plan Will Send Jobs Overseas.''

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Atlantic, Dec. 8, 2017]

HOW THE TAX PLAN WILL SEND JOBS OVERSEAS

COMPANIES ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO SAVE A TON OF MONEY BY LOCATING FACTORIES ABROAD

(By Gene B. Sperling)

Despite Donald Trump's ''America first'' rhetoric, many suspected that the tax plan he would support would actually increase the incentives for U.S. multinationals to move both profits and operations overseas. I wrote about this inevitability a few weeks ago, before the details of the Trump-GOP tax plan emerged.

Now that the bill is advancing, it's clear that things aren't as bad as many feared. They're worse.

As discussed in the previous piece, Trump administration economic officials argue that by lowering the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 20 percent and moving to what is called a territorial system—mainly, companies pay taxes on foreign earnings only to the foreign nation where those profits are booked and never owe anything to the U.S. no matter how low the foreign nation's tax rate is—would lead to more jobs and profits staying in or coming back to the United States.

Yet, it is clear that a territorial system could have just the opposite impact: It could give a permanent preference to foreign income and lead companies to shift more profits to tax havens knowing that they could permanently avoid virtually all taxation on such profits. One crucial safeguard against that perverse impact is to apply a strong minimum tax on the profits of U.S. multinationals in each country (a ''country-by-country'' minimum tax). If a U.S. company had to pay a minimum tax of, let's say, 19 percent (as President Obama had proposed), even if they engaged in complex tax planning to book $100 million in profits in zero-tax Bermuda, they would have to pay $19 million in U.S. taxes to ensure the 19 percent minimum tax was enforced. Under such a country-by-country minimum tax, you can run, you can shift profits to tax havens, but you cannot hide from paying a 19 percent minimum no matter where you are. Under this type of true minimum tax on foreign earnings, U.S. multinationals would have little incentive to engage in the ongoing race to the bottom.

As discussed in my previous Atlantic piece, the GOP plan was rumored to use only a 10 percent minimum tax, and to make it worse, would make the minimum tax determination based on the average of a company's total global profits. What was problematic about this design was that it not only encouraged companies to move profits to tax havens, but it actually encouraged them to simultaneously move jobs and operations such as manufacturing to industrialized countries that had typical tax rates and to shift more profits to tax havens. Why? Because if you had $100 million of profits in Bermuda facing no tax, you might have still had to pay $10 million in U.S. taxes to meet the new global minimum tax. But if you moved a factory to Germany that made $100 million and paid 20 percent in taxes there, you could still pay zero on your profits in Bermuda because the average taxes paid on your global profits (from both Bermuda and Germany) would be the global minimum rate of 10 percent. This perverse design means the more a U.S. multinational shifts jobs and operations to industrialized nations with similar tax rates to the U.S., the more it can get away with shifting more and more profits to tax havens.

So how did it look in the fine print? As several tax experts including the Tax Policy Center's Steve Rosenthal, Brooklyn Law School's Rebecca Kysar, and Reed College's Kimberly Clausing have written, it is even worse than anticipated on at least two additional grounds. First, it turns out that the Republican idea of a minimum tax is that it only taxes what you make over what they think is a ''routine'' profit, deemed to be 10 percent in the Senate bill, on ''tangible'' investments (think factories and equipment, including for manufacturing). As Rosenthal notes, ''because 'routine' returns are not subject to U.S. tax, this definition of 'routine' returns could give U.S. firms a perverse incentive to shift more tangible assets to lower-taxed overseas locations.'' That means, under the GOP bills, if you shift less profitable operations to a tax haven you would pay zero taxes on those operations as long as you are only making 10 percent a year—whether that is $10 million or $100 million—while you would pay 20 percent if the operations were located in the United States. So, the ''minimum'' tax is really a much lower rate than 10 percent, and would essentially be an invisible, non-existent tax except on highly profitable operations and income from intangibles.

Second, this limitation to only excess profits encourages even more shifting of operations and jobs overseas through complex efforts to blend different income streams.

How? Profits from ''intangibles'' like patents do not receive the 10 percent exemption for ''routine'' returns, so the minimum tax is seemingly designed to at least capture those well-known cases where major technology companies shift intangibles to low-tax nations and book their profits there. If a company does that and earns extraordinary profits, a global minimum tax would capture some piece of that. But again, here is where the GOP bill's global ''averaging'' actually creates the incentives to move jobs and operations overseas.

Let's say a U.S. multinational has highly profitable intangibles located in a tax haven that earn $50 million in income without any tangible investment. If the company has no other foreign profits or operations, then that income would face a mere $5 million in U.S. taxes from the 10 percent minimum tax under the GOP plan. But if the company decides to build a new $1 billion factory overseas that earns profits of only 5 percent ($50 million) from the factory, the company will not pay a penny in U.S. taxes on its income from the factory or the intangibles. Why? Because when you add the income together, the $50 million from the intangibles plus the $50 million from the new factory, it equals the ''routine'' profit of 10 percent on the $1 billion of new tangible investment, which will allow it to completely avoid paying taxes on any of the above mentioned profits.

This shows how deeply the tax plan fails when it comes to incentives to shift profits and operations overseas and to curtail the obsession of major multinational companies with international tax arbitrage that has nothing to do with innovation, productivity or job creation. Indeed, the ability to blend income from intangibles and routine profits, and from investment in higher tax nations with tax havens with zero taxes, leads to a worst of all worlds scenario: an even greater corporate focus on international tax minimization through a careful mixture of shifting profits and operations overseas.

If there was one thing the GOP international tax bill was advertised to accomplish, it was that it would favor locating jobs and profits in the United States. It does just the opposite—expanding the degree our tax system tilts the playing field against American taxpayers and American workers.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, the majority leader's bill before us today continues the same broken tax system that incentivizes companies to move jobs to foreign countries, hurting more American communities and undercutting thousands of working American families.

In Indiana, we know there is no such thing as a free lunch. In the Hoosier State, we work hard and we expect everyone else to pay their fair share. The tax bill we are considering cuts taxes for corporations and the wealthy by asking some middle-class families to pay more and by making healthcare more expensive for millions and millions of Americans.

According to the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, if we account for budget gimmicks, the cost of this bill could reach $2.2 trillion—not billion but trillion dollars.

Here is what that means. This means our kids' and our grandkids' paychecks, the hard-earned money they make in the years ahead, will be sent to China to pay for tax cuts that will be given today to the wealthiest people in America. Our kids and our grandkids will be paying the bill for this tax cut that puts money in the pockets of the very, very wealthy. That is almost beyond belief.

We need tax reform that actually benefits Hoosiers who go to work in the dark and come home in the dark. These are the folks that I run into at church or who stop by my office or I see at the gas station or at the diner. They look me in the eye, and they tell me they are working hard to make a decent living, to pay the bills, to raise their families, and to have a shot at retiring with dignity. They are not looking for any handouts. They simply want a good-paying job and a fair shake. Unfortunately, this bill is a significant missed opportunity to provide relief to middle-class families and to protect American jobs.

From the very, very beginning of this debate, I have engaged in a good faith effort to exchange ideas and priorities for what we would like this tax bill to look like and to work together in a bipartisan manner. I worked to improve the bill that my colleagues have rushed through in a largely closed and partisan process. That includes my support for Senator RUBIO's effort to expand the child tax credit for hard-working families, for which I give him much credit.

Our country is stronger when we work together and when we pass legislation that focuses on the middle class and on regular families and that leaves a better future for all our children. Sadly, that is not what this bill would do. This bill raises taxes on many middle-class families, makes healthcare more expensive, does not address outsourcing, and significantly increases our national debt.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today we have the opportunity to pass the most sweeping changes to our Tax Code in more than 30 years. This historic moment is long overdue, and my constituents in Iowa will benefit from it.

Since the last tax reform effort in 1986, the Tax Code has grown out of control in both length and complexity. All told, taxpayers spend over 6 billion hours annually just complying with the dictates of the Internal Revenue Code. Moreover, our outdated corporate tax system puts American companies at a competitive disadvantage as they try to compete in the 21st century global economy.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will make good on our commitment to provide significant tax relief to middle-income taxpayers both in my State of Iowa and in the entire United States, while making the Tax Code simpler, fairer, and, obviously, more pro-growth.

The bill provides significant tax simplification for the vast majority of tax filers. Most taxpayers will find that they are better off simply by taking the standard deduction. No longer will they have to spend hours sifting through receipts and forms to determine what they can and cannot deduct.

Middle-income taxpayers can also expect to see significant tax cuts. A median income family of four could see their tax bill reduced by over $2,000. This is relief that families will see almost immediately, as less tax is withheld from their paychecks. This tax relief stems from many pro-family and pro-middle-class income tax provisions in the legislation.

First, there is the nearly doubling of the standard deduction. For families, this means the first $24,000 of their income will be exempt from tax altogether. As a result, a significant number of lower income Americans will be removed from the tax rolls entirely.

Second, the middle-income tax brackets are significantly lowered and expanded to include more taxpayers. This includes reducing the current 15 percent bracket to 12 percent, and the 25 percent bracket to 22 percent.

Third, the tax bill specifically recognizes the costs associated with raising a child by doubling the child tax credit from $1,000 to $2,000. Furthermore, to ensure that lower income families with children are able to benefit from this expansion, the refundable portion of the tax credit is increased from $1,000 to $1,400.

While my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have attempted to claim that this tax bill is all out to help the wealthy, I want to make very clear that this is simply not true. This is evidenced from the features of the bill that I just discussed, but, also, if you need more evidence, look no further than the distribution analysis of the bill by the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation of the Congress of the United States. According to the analysis of the Joint Committee on Taxation, on average, every income group will experience a tax cut, with the largest percentage tax cuts going to the middle-income groups. Moreover, the tax bill would make the Tax Code more progressive, with taxpayers earning more than $1 million shouldering a larger share of the tax burden than they do under current law.

The bill also enacts much needed tax relief for job creators. It provides a significant deduction on business income for small businesses, effectively lowering the top tax rate to under 30 percent. All small businesses down to the smallest family-owned corner store and the family farmer stand to benefit from this provision. As small businesses are responsible for creating the majority of new jobs, this is a key provision promoting economic growth and job creation.

Additionally, the bill lowers the statutory corporate rate down from the highest in the developed world to 21 percent. The highest rate in the developed world at 35 percent makes our current corporate tax rate on American companies the highest of those industrialized nations and puts us at a

competitive disadvantage globally, costing American jobs.

Moreover—and this is important for the John Deere workers in Waterloo, IA, or in any other corporation—economists generally agree that a significant portion of the corporate tax falls on workers in the form of reduced wages. Estimates of this burden of the corporate tax on workers ranges from a low of 25 percent to a high of 70 percent. While the exact amount may be debated by economists, one thing is very clear. A corporate rate reduction will result in bigger paychecks for hard-working Americans.

These business tax reforms are crucial to getting our economy growing. We can't continue to settle for the anemic growth of less than 2 percent that we have experienced since 2010. Lower tax rates, coupled with greater expensing of depreciated equipment under the bill, will encourage new capital investments that are necessary to increase productivity, generating both higher wages and higher growth.

The bill before us signals the faith we have in the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of the American people, rather than putting our faith in government to grow the economy. We do this to get our economy on the right track, and this legislation will put us on the right track. In all, tax reform will put more money in the pockets of middle-class Americans, make U.S. industry and workers more competitive, and get the economy growing again after 8 years of stagnation—the most stagnation in any decade since World War II.

This is a historic opportunity to help Americans from every walk of life. I look forward to joining my colleagues to pass this once-in-a-generation tax bill and have it signed into law before the new year.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, little more than a month ago, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was unveiled in the Senate. Just a few short weeks later, we are on the verge of passing a colossal bill, publicly available for just 4 days, that makes sweeping changes to every aspect of our economy. We are moving so fast that the American people would be forgiven for thinking we were addressing a national emergency; yet fires are still blazing in California, power in Puerto Rico is still not fully restored, and victims around the gulf of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria are still struggling to pick up the pieces and rebuild. There are indeed national emergencies we should be addressing, but instead of doing so, Republicans in Congress are focused first on passing tax cuts for corporations and billionaires—tax cuts that will add an estimated $1.5 trillion to the deficit.

The process that led to the bill we are voting on today has been fundamentally flawed from the outset. From the beginning, this bill has been written behind closed doors by Senate Republicans. No hearings were ever held on this bill, denying the American people an opportunity to add their voices to the debate. When the Senate voted on its version of this bill in the dead of night, Senators only received the text a few hours before the vote, and even then, the text was hastily put together, with scribbles written into the margins. We discovered that lobbyists knew more about what was in it than those of us who had the responsibility to vote on it. No wonder that it was loaded with last-minute special interest giveaways.

There is serious doubt this bill will benefit the middle class, as Republicans claim. What we do know is that it will result in millions of fewer insured Americans and higher healthcare premiums for millions more. At the same time, corporations will receive a windfall in permanent tax cuts that will bust our budget for decades to come. Even more appallingly, it includes special provisions that will directly benefit the President and some Members of Congress. It doesn't end there. Republicans have yet to address the $1 trillion in cuts to Medicare, Social Security, and other programs vital to the American people, which will be spurred by the passage of this bill. This bill cynically and surreptitiously sets the stage for those slashing cuts.

This is a bill that cheats our future for the sake of a tax-cut windfall for the 1 percent. It does absolutely wonderful things for the wealthiest taxpayers, like the President, his cronies, and his family. If he wants to dispute that, he should finally release his tax returns and prove to the American people that the ''Christmas present'' the President talks about will not, in fact, benefit his bottom line.

What we do know is this bill does not advance the common good. It offers little but crumbs on the table and coal in the stockings of hard-working Americans, while the wealthiest individuals and corporations reap the rewards of this bill, with the false promise of trickle-down benefits to everyone else. The wealthiest are doing just fine, and big corporations already are pulling in record profits, which they are not investing but salting away. More than 400 millionaires have urgently told Congress that they don't need more tax cuts.

Republicans will continue to claim that their bill represents serious tax reform, but the public isn't fooled. Poll after poll shows that the American people see this bill for what it is: a betrayal of the middle class and a betrayal of American values. They have seen enough of trickle-down economics to know that the benefits never flow to them. At the end of the day, it is clear that this bill was never really about the middle class; it was about the Republican donor class.

I wish we had gone down a different path, one where both parties worked together to provide real relief to the working families we all represent. It belies the storied history of this institution to rush through such a sweeping bill, through an arcane process of reconciliation intended to secure the lowest possible number of votes to succeed, without the benefit of public opinion, or even public review.

After one of the least productive sessions of Congress that I can recall, Republicans are so desperate for a win that they will mortgage away our future. This bill is not tax reform. This is a cartoonish caricature of what real tax reform should look like. It is dishonest to its core. It is cynical, and it can only breed more cynicism by the public. It is bad policy, it is indefensible policy, and it is wrong.

It is said that every generation has a responsibility to leave our Nation better, brighter, and stronger for the generations that follow. This tax bill accomplishes none of those goals.

I strongly oppose—I reject—this conference report, and the crass, partisan path that brought us here.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, as in many other industries, the insurance sector, both property/casualty and life, have become more globalized than any time in history. Disasters such as 9/11 transformed the property and casualty industry. The life insurance industry has followed, with an increasing amount of insurance risk transferred to affiliates and nonaffiliates around the globe.

This business model is impacted directly by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which moves the United States from a mostly global international system, where we tax American companies and individuals on their worldwide income, toward a territorial system. Under the new system, companies are to be taxed in the United States on the income derived here and are to be taxed on their foreign earnings by the nations in which that income is derived.

What we are seeking to do here is to encourage enterprises to start in the United States, to expand in the United States, and to bring as many foreign operations home as they can while remaining not only competitive, but innovative leaders in creating new products and services. The new 21-percent corporate rate will help do just that. However, this bill does not take us fully to a territorial system. The bill applies a minimum tax on certain payments to foreign affiliates. At 21 percent, the U.S. can compete with virtually any nation in the world, but if some nations have a corporate rate of, say, 5 percent or less, then the new system will incentivize companies to move their operations overseas, so the bill includes a minimum tax. It is called the base erosion antiabuse tax.

The first year, the base erosion tax is essentially a minimum tax of 5-percent tax without deduction for certain payments made by a U.S. company to its foreign affiliates. Starting in 2019, that minimum tax increases to 10 percent.

We do not want companies moving mobile assets around the world to find the lowest corporate tax rate. However,

I do not think we should be taxing enterprises on payments that never actually leave the U.S., but instead are obligations that are combined with obligations from the foreign affiliate to the U.S. parent. That is where clarification is needed as to how this base erosion tax will work in the context of U.S. insurance policies that are reinsured overseas.

Under current law, reinsurance is already subject to a gross premium excise that serves as an antibase erosion tax of sorts. Adding the base erosion tax on top of that could be detrimental to these U.S. insurance companies. However, how the base erosion tax is computed may be determinative of whether the tax is tolerable. I believe that, with respect to reinsurance, the base erosion tax was intended to apply only on net payments actually made.

Under certain forms of reinsurance that are commonly used in the life insurance industry, called modified coinsurance or funds withheld coinsurance, underlying investments are retained by the U.S. insurer, which is subject to tax on the earnings from the investments. Under these arrangements, the reinsurance payments are taken into account for purposes of the base erosion tax only when the U.S. insurance company actually makes payments to its foreign affiliate.

My understanding of the conference report is that it intended to limit the base erosion payment to the net amount paid to the foreign reinsurer, taking into account the amounts owed by the reinsurer to the U.S. party. That result is consistent with one of the fundamental principles underlying the Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017: Assets generating income should be taxed where those assets are sited. In determining the amount of base erosion payments, the amount of premium paid to the reinsurer must be offset by any return premium, ceding commission, reinsurance recovered, or other amount received the insurance company with respect to the reinsurance for which such premium is paid to the reinsurer. Moreover, this treatment is consistent with the regulatory accounting regime imposed by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

Consistent with those principles, base erosion payments do not include amounts paid to a foreign affiliate that are subject to U.S. income tax. For example, payments to a foreign partnership by a U.S. taxpayer that the foreign partnership certifies are effectively connected income are not base erosion payments. The income has not been shifted offshore, and there has been no erosion of the tax base.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today we are voting on the motion to adopt the conference report on H.R. 1, the Tax Reconciliation Act. I will be voting against adoption of the conference report.

I have long called for tax reform. We should bring down the business income tax rate. We should bring back the money being held overseas to fund the infrastructure improvements we need across the country. We should simplify the code and help middle-class Americans pay their bills.

But I have been disappointed by the most recent effort, which has not been bipartisan at all and has resulted in a bill that will add to the debt, create huge new loopholes that will encourage companies to move money around and move jobs overseas to avoid taxes, and will have huge unintended consequences for our economy.

One of the most troubling developments of this bill was the inclusion of a provision to repeal a key part of the Affordable Care Act that would kick 13 million people off their insurance by 2027 and increase premiums by 10 percent in the individual market. That means less money in the pockets of American middle-class families. The American people want us to work together to make fixes to the Affordable Care Act, not move backwards with a partisan approach to healthcare added into a tax bill.

This bill also hurts middle-class families by doing a bait and switch. Under the bill, millions of middle-class Americans would end up paying more in taxes in the long run. Many of the tax cuts they receive, if they receive a tax cut at all, would only be temporary.

This bill would allow a one-time opportunity to bring back some of the trillions of dollars of earnings held overseas by U.S. companies. I have long supported this, but I also would like to see at least part of any of the billions in taxes raised by this provision to be used to fund infrastructure.

The American Society of Civil Engineers' 2017 report card gave our Nation's infrastructure an overall D-plus grade. There is an economic imperative to fixing our infrastructure: Businesses rely on our transportation network to move goods to market. If our deteriorating infrastructure goes unaddressed, it will cost our economy nearly $4 trillion by 2025, leading to the loss of 2.5 million jobs. That is a crisis that we have an opportunity to address through a tax bill, but we aren't. It is a missed opportunity.

If done right, we can close loopholes, bring back money U.S. companies are holding overseas to fund infrastructure projects here at home, give local businesses the ability to compete against out-of-State Internet retailers, support our rural communities, and provide incentives to keep jobs in America.

I have always said we could bring down the corporate tax rate, but not by adding $1.5 trillion to the debt. We need to work together to pass a tax plan that works for everyone, one that helps middle-class families and Main Street businesses, and without blowing up the deficit.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in opposing this conference report.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I have listened to the comments of my friends on the other side for several hours. Frankly, it has tried my patience.

If you boil down the inaccurate assertions, you come up with two basic points. One, that the bill before us cuts taxes for wealthy taxpayers proportionately more than it does for middle-income taxpayers. Two, this bill raises taxes on middle-income taxpayers.

Nothing like some old-fashioned nonpartisan light to cut through the partisan fog created by my friends on the other side.

I refer to a set of tables developed by the nonpartisan official congressional tax scorekeeper, the Joint Committee on Taxation, which I will ask consent to have printed in the RECORD.

The tables show significant tax cut for middle-income taxpayers.

Let's take a look at taxpayers in which the median U.S. income reside. I am talking about taxpayers at income levels between $50,000 and $75,000. In 2019, two-thirds of taxpayers receive a tax cut of greater than $500. In 2021, 61.7 percent receive a tax cut of greater than $500. In 2023, 54.8 percent of taxpayers will receive a tax cut of greater than $500. In 2021, 53 percent of taxpayers receive a tax cut of greater than $500. The individual income tax cuts sunset in 2026.

Let's take a look at another middle-income group, those in the $75,000 to $100,000 cohort. In 2019, 77.8 percent of those taxpayers receive a tax cut of greater than $500. In 2021, that figure is 72.2 percent. In 2023, that figure is 63.1 percent. In 2025, that figure is 61.4 percent. The individual tax cuts expire in 2026.

I ask my friends on the other side to shut down their rhetorical fog machine. Stop the phony characterization of this bill as a tax cut for the wealthy. Recognize it for what it is, a tax cut for Americans that is focused on middle-income families.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and the significance of this historic legislation to all Americans.

It has been more than 31 years since comprehensive tax reform was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Reagan, and it has been nearly two decades since the United States has experienced a period of sustained economic growth of 3 percent or more.

Similar to the Tax Code prior to the last major overhaul, today's Tax Code is overly complex and burdensome on American families and businesses. The current code is riddled with nearly 200 tax deductions, credits, exclusions, and tax breaks that ''cost'' the government nearly $1.5 trillion in lost revenue each year. These costs unnecessarily burden hard-working Americans, who spend more than 6 billion hours each year to understand their tax liability and comply with filing requirements.

The Finance Committee began to lay the groundwork for tax reform years ago, during which time the committee held over 70 hearings on how to reform the Tax Code and promote economic growth. In the 113th Congress, the committee also formed five bipartisan

working groups to examine options for reform. This years-long process has enabled us to produce the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and I am confident this legislation, based on ideas from both parties, will benefit all Americans by ensuring our Nation remains competitive in the global economy.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will make American businesses competitive again by permanently lowering the corporate rate to roughly the average rate that our competitors have already adopted. This legislation will also end the lockout affect many American businesses face today by adopting a territorial system. This will encourage American companies to invest their profits here at home and hire more people.

On the individual side, this legislation will lower individual income tax rates for all Americans and greatly simplify the code by roughly doubling the standard deduction. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, this will result in fewer than 10 percent of Americans itemizing deductions, meaning the vast majority of Americans will benefit from tax simplification.

I am especially pleased the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act preserves the child and dependent care tax credit and dependent care flexible spending accounts, enhances the ABLE Act, and sharply reduces the number of Americans who are subject to the Alternative Minimum Tax, a parallel tax system that adds layers of complexity.

This is historic legislation that hardworking Americans across the country have long deserved, and I look forward to passing this legislation tonight to ensure all Americans have more economic opportunity and prosperity for years to come.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, today I wish to discuss an important provision in the tax conference agreement that relates to the 20-percent deduction for certain passthrough income for agricultural cooperatives.

I was pleased to see that the conference report fairly treats certain distributions from farmer cooperatives to their patron. This treatment will ensure that farmers will not see a tax increase at a time of depressed agricultural prices.

I would like to clarify a drafting change that occurred in moving from the Senate language to the conference report language. Specifically, section 199A(c)(1) provides that the term ''qualified business income'' does not include any ''qualified cooperative dividends,'' as defined by the bill. I would like to clarify that in this sentence, the terms ''qualified business income'' and ''qualified cooperative dividends'' are mutually exclusive and that the intent is that these terms are to be treated separately under sections 199A(a)(1) and (2), as they were under the Senate bill.

Also, I believe that the definition of ''qualified cooperative dividends'' includes ''per unit retains paid in money,'' PURPIMs, paid under 1382(b)(3).

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, when we pursue tax reform, invariably those impacted will voice concerns along the way. I know this from experience, having done tax reform in North Carolina.

Everyone was for tax reform until it came to protecting their individualized interests. However, reform was not about protecting tax benefits for the rich or the like, as some of my colleagues have suggested—understandably, for political purposes.

Tax reform is what we can do as a Congress to help spur economic growth. Without growth, we cannot solve our Nation's problems. Having an uncompetitive tax code hampers the ability of the middle class to grow and prosper.

Through this process, we have fought to ensure that there are appropriate transition rules and protections for various strategic sectors in our economy, and I am proud of the work that both Chambers of Congress have done through the conference process.

When we debated the Senate's tax reform package on the floor, some of my colleagues offered amendments on discrete issues, and I believe that, for many of these issues, we attempted to embrace, as a body, a process that defines problems and works to solve them.

I also believe that the conference committee did a good job working with JCT and the Finance Committee to address issues, without jeopardizing the underlying tax reform measure.

For other issues that were not able to be addressed in theconference report, I believe that legislating is an exercise of continued and systematic work. That means we need to come back next year in a reconciliation process and continue to improve upon this legislation.

As an example of some of the work that we must still do, I do not believe that we should penalize companies for voluntary repatriation and believe that there should be targeted transition rules in place to consider those who have a history of voluntary repatriation and are not simply doing so late in the year as tax reform became a realistic possibility. That said, I understand that some things are not always achievable, and it is tough to treat some companies differently than others when everyone is making sacrifices.

Another area that I think needs to be worked on in future iterations of tax reform are tailored transition rules for different strategic sectors like the energy sector, manufacturing sector, and other industries that have foreign tax credits stranded overseas. Additionally, as we evaluate how the tax treatment for passthrough entities unfolds, we need to ensure that we are appropriately regulating and taxing capital deployers so that we are fully realizing their potential contributions to economic growth.

In its totality, I was happy to see that there was common ground found on issues such as: how JCT scores and evaluates insurance reserves; how the limitations on business interest deductibility affects different sectors, particularly those that rely heavily on debt to operate; ensuring that there is continued parity for pass through entities in the new territorial system by preserving appropriate export incentives in the Tax Code; and many others that are so important to State and local economies.

When I did tax reform in North Carolina as the speaker of the North Carolina State House, I received many of the same criticisms that I have received as we have gone through this current reform process. Our hard work paid off in North Carolina, and I believe that it will pay off for America—as a global competitor and for all Americans.

Thank you. I look forward to supporting this conference report, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the future as we continue our collective pursuit to make America the most competitive it can be and as we continue to help America achieve its economic potential.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, we commend Senator HATCH for his efforts on this most important bill. We would like to ask for confirmation on a question that will be of considerable importance to millions of seniors housing residents, including those living in assisted living and memory care residences and in continuing care retirement communities, CCRCs.

As you know, capital for seniors housing, including assisted living and memory care residences and CCRCs, essentially comes from the same lending sources that fund other types of real estate. HUD, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and commercial banks finance seniors housing through their respective housing related programs. Seniors housing competes with other real estate based investments for both equity and debt and it is critical that our tax law treat these seniors housing units in a manner that is comparable to other housing.

Provisions relating to the deduction for business interest and to the deduction for depreciation in the bill include rules governing a ''real property trade or business,'' as that term is currently defined in the tax law. Under these rules, the conferees stated that they intended that a real property operation or a real property management trade or business includes the operation or management of a lodging facility. We would like to ask the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Finance if he agrees with us that the operation or management of residential rental property housing the elderly, such as an assisted living residential facility, memory care residence, or a continuing care retirement community, are not excluded from the definition of a ''real property trade or business'' merely because they provide necessary supplemental assistive services that meet the needs of aging seniors.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I agree.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise today to engage in a colloquy with my friend and colleague, the distinguished chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator HATCH.

I would like to confirm my understanding of the modification of the section 958(b) stock attribution rules contained in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The Senate Finance Committee explanation of this bill, as released by the Senate Budget Committee, definitively states, ''This provision is not intended to cause a foreign corporation to be treated as a controlled foreign corporation with respect to a U.S. shareholder as a result of attribution of ownership under section 318(a)(3) to a U.S. person that is not a related person (within the meaning of Section 954(d)(3)) to such U.S. shareholder as a result of the repeal of section 958(b)(4).''

I would like to confirm that the conference report language did not change or modify the intended scope this statement. As you know, I filed an amendment to the Senate bill, Senate amendment No. 1666 would have codified this explanatory text of the Finance Committee report.

I also want to confirm that the Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service should interpret the stock attribution rules consistent with this explanation of the bill.

Mr. HATCH. The Senator is correct. The conference report language for the bill does not change or modify the intended scope of the statement he cites. The Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service should interpret the stock attribution rules consistent with this explanation, as released by the Senate Budget Committee. I would also note that the reason his amendment No. 1666 was not adopted is because it was not needed to reflect the intent of the Senate Finance Committee or the conferees for the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

I thank my friend from Georgia for his leadership on this issue to ensure that the stock attribution rules operate consistent with our intent and do not result in unintended consequences. I look forward to continuing to work with him on this important issue.

Mr. PERDUE. I thank the chairman for the clarification and appreciate his outstanding leadership and work on this important and historic legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

DACA

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, thank you for the recognition. I rise also to talk about the tax issue and this horrible tax cut, but I can't help but mention a little bit about what I went through the last hour or so with some wonderful young people in my office.

First of all, there are 7,000 Dreamers in my home State of New Mexico. Here is one of them, shown in this picture. This is Carlos. Carlos was brought to New Mexico from Mexico when he was less than 1 year old, and New Mexico is the only place that Carlos has known as his home. I had the opportunity to visit with a number of young people who are very much like Carlos. They have gotten in a bus, they have come to Washington, they call themselves the New Mexico dream team, and it is a remarkable story. They told many stories to me about their situations that sounded very much like Carlos's story. They urge us to protect them. They are fearful, they are emotional, but they are also strong and courageous. Let's remember these are some of our very best and brightest young people. We cannot lose them. We must continue to fight for a clean Dream Act—no doubt about it—and we need to remember the 11 million undocumented immigrants who are here in the United States and strive and fight for true immigration reform.

Mr. President, working families in New Mexico want good jobs and good wages. They want affordable healthcare and retirement security. They want a job and educational opportunities for their children, but the Republican's latest tax plan does nothing for regular families in New Mexico or across the country. It will not create good-paying jobs, not now nor for our children. It will kick 13 million people off healthcare and raise insurance premiums. Their plan threatens Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, and it does nothing to improve public education or bring down the high cost of college.

The Republican tax plan overwhelmingly benefits the rich by giving huge tax breaks to their campaign donors, to the superwealthy, big corporations, multinational businesses, and hedge funds. One of the biggest problems is, the Republican plan will drive up the debt by $1.5 trillion, and that means they will have to take a hatchet to programs working families rely on. This is not a responsible or a fair tax plan. It is a hocus-pocus tax sham, and I oppose it.

I have to reflect a little on this first year that we have seen under President Trump and the Republican majority—what a year of lost opportunities. If the Republicans had worked with us during this year, we could have had at least two big bipartisan achievements. We could have had a bipartisan improvement on healthcare, built on the successes of the Affordable Care Act, and we could have had a fair tax bill for all Americans. How sad partisanship and politics got the upper hand.

The Senate and the House majority are pushing this tax scam as fast as they can to hide it from the American people. We have not had proper hearings. We have not heard from expert witnesses or had adequate independent analysis. Even the Republicans don't know what is in it. My office has met with many New Mexicans raising red flags on the unintended consequences of this bill. No Member of Congress—no Democrats or Republicans—has had enough time to digest and understand this plan.

When it comes to legislation this important, we must follow the regular order. We must see a full analysis by the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation. We must hear from the best tax experts in the country. The American people must understand the plan, and every Member of Congress must fully understand its impacts. We are not there.

Republicans and the President are not being straight about what this plan will mean for the average American. They aren't talking about how it will affect the President's own personal taxes. He touts it as a tax cut for the middle class and working Americans, but not one single objective analysis says it is designated to help the middle class, and his Treasury Department's one-page so-called analysis predicting a $300 billion surplus is built on unrealistic growth assumptions that no serious economist accepts. Even Republicans have said the bill is about helping their donors and cutting taxes for big corporations.

The American people are not blind. They aren't fooled by the administration's fake numbers, and they oppose this plan. Recent polling, as recent as December 13, shows that 55 percent of Americans disapprove of the bill. Sixty-five percent say the wealthy benefit the most, and almost all pollsters come out somewhere in that range.

Now, let's look at some of the hard, cold numbers. First, we know the Republicans propose adding $1.5 trillion to the debt over the next 10 years. This chart shows the difference between the Federal deficit under current law and the massive increase in the deficit under the Senate Republicans' plan. Current law is in blue, as you can see here, and the Republicans' plan is in red. It is pretty dramatic—pretty dramatic. Republicans represent themselves as the party of fiscal responsibility, but incurring this amount of debt to give big tax breaks to the rich is patently irresponsible.

To pay for this debt, the government will have to borrow by selling Treasury bills, notes, bonds, securities, and savings bonds. Based on estimates from the JTC and the CBO, the government's cost to borrow to pay for this debt will be over $40 billion over the next 10 years and even more after that unless we pay off the debt. The American people will be on the hook for $1.5 trillion. That is $12,742 for each and every American household today. My colleagues have come to the floor saying this tax bill will provide an average tax cut of around $2,000 for 1 year in 2019. What they aren't telling you is, they are also opening a line of credit on you and your family of $12,000.

This is the new Federal debt that would be taken out in every American's name every year by the GOP. So much additional borrowing by the Federal Government can also drive up interest rates. Higher interest rates mean higher costs for the government to borrow. The Congressional Budget

Office estimates that if interest rates are 1 percent higher annually than projected through 2027, the debt will be $1.5 trillion higher—that is 6 percent of gross domestic product—and the amount each American owes on their new forced Federal credit card would go up even more.

Increased Federal interest rates have real consequences for the average American. A rise in rates can price out a first-time home buyer; it can determine whether a young person can afford to buy a car. The average American consumer does not want to see interest rates go up. Increased government borrowing and interest rates can take up the economy's lending capacity and discourage the very private investment Republicans say they want to encourage.

Giving massive tax cuts to the wealthy also will force massive cuts in revenue coming into the Federal Government. When I first arrived in the Senate, Senator Kent Conrad from North Dakota was chair of the Budget Committee. He was a master on the Federal deficit and on the Federal budget, and he understood the danger of racking up huge deficits. In 2011, the Budget Committee was concerned that the debt threatened the national security. The committee majority developed a budget framework that Senator Conrad presented on the floor that July. He showed us many charts that day. One showed that the government had a budget surplus for only 5 of the last 50 years—that was in 1969, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001. In those years, revenues were close to 20 percent of gross domestic product.

Around the same time, the bipartisan Simpson-Bowles budget commission concluded that the Federal Government needed revenue equal to 21 percent, but the Republicans' current tax cut legislation would leave the Federal Government with revenue of only 17 percent of GDP.

Former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers sounded alarm bells in an oped in the Washington Post on December 10, and Larry Summers isn't alone. Bruce Bartlett was an economic adviser to Presidents Reagan and George W. Bush. In a September Washington Post op-ed, he freely acknowledged that he ''had a hand in creating the Republican tax myth.'' He is referring to the myth that tax cuts lead to robust economic growth. Mr. Bartlett now says: ''Republican rhetoric around tax cutting'' is ''wishful thinking. . . . In reality, there's no evidence that a tax cut would spur growth.''

In other words, tax cuts will not spur economic growth. They will create more debt, squeeze consumers, and mean steep cuts to vital government programs. So why is the majority pushing so hard for them? Why do they want this tax cut bill so badly?

There is really only one reason—for their donors. Representative CHRIS COLLINS of New York was honest about why he has to deliver tax cuts. He said, ''My donors''—and this is his quote, Congressman COLLINS—''My donors are basically saying, 'Get it done or don't ever call me again.' ''

Making the superrich even richer doesn't justify burdening our kids with huge government debt. It doesn't excuse threatening American healthcare, retirement security, and other vital programs, but cutting vital Federal programs is exactly the price the middle class and working Americans will be expected to pay under the Republicans' tax sham. Their plan calls for $500 billion worth of cuts, and Speaker RYAN is already talking about where they will cut. He said:

> We are going to have to get back next year at entitlement reform, which is how you tackle the debt and the deficit. Frankly, it's the healthcare entitlements that are the big drivers of our debt, so we spend more time on healthcare entitlements—because that is really where the problem lies, fiscally speaking.

He wants to starve the Treasury to benefit the wealthy, and then he wants to slash critical programs that create jobs, support innovation, secure our Nation, and help people pay for housing, food, and medicine.

I want to support tax cuts for middle-class families. I want to help make sure that working people can take home more of their pay. I also want to make sure we can pay for roads, bridges, schools, scientific research, and national defense. This bill doesn't do that; it does exactly the opposite. It takes money from the middle-class families and gives it to the ultrarich. Then it leaves us with little to support our communities, little for infrastructure, little to make the United States of America continue to lead the world in innovation, science, and economic might, and little to ensure that we take care of those in need.

This bill also fails Indian Country. While giving billions of dollars of tax breaks to corporations, this bill does nothing to spur economic growth or attract investments in our Native communities—not even basic, low-cost provisions to ensure that Tribes receive the same tax benefits as other governments, like State governments. Once again, Tribes have been overlooked by the majority, despite early and vocal Tribal input on tax parity in Indian Country.

I am prepared to roll up my sleeves and work with Republicans on tax reform that is fair, simplifies the Tax Code, and keeps American businesses competitive, but I cannot support tax cuts that lopsidedly benefit the ultrarich, hurt working families, neglect Indian Country, and balloon the Federal deficit.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, tonight, once again, Congress is proving to the American people that Washington is broken. This bill is not a product of deliberation of the world's most deliberative body. It is a not a product of meaningful public hearings. It is not a product of compromise or months of hard work among multiple committees. It is certainly not the product of a grand legislative idea that was desperately needed to meet the demands of the public. The bill in front of us is the product of dysfunction, partisanship, and political desperation.

Thirty years ago, the Senate passed President Reagan's tax reform 97 to 3. After the conference committee had worked it over, it passed overwhelmingly with 74 votes. That could have been the case today, but there was never an attempt to have an honest debate about this bill, and there was no attempt to get bipartisan buy-in. I reached out to lend my perspective and Montana's perspective—the perspective of rural America—but my offer fell on deaf ears, and I never heard back.

I asked the President to work with me. I raised my concerns early, and they have never made an attempt to address those concerns. There was no effort to reach across the aisle and build consensus for this bill.

Once again, the leadership of this body chose to draw a line in the sand. They chose to empower the fringes and leave those in the middle out in the cold. As a result, the first major tax bill in Congress in a generation will likely pass with the support of only one party. That is not what the Founding Fathers had in mind.

As for me, I wanted a tax bill that would ensure that hard-working Montana families and businesses had a say in this process. I wanted to construct a bipartisan bill that provided folks with tax relief without adding to the debt. I wanted to simplify the Tax Code without gutting provisions that would help build our middle class. Today, we are stuck with this final bill that does none of those things, and our options are yes or no.

There are some things in this bill that are good—three, to be exact. This bill keeps in place important medical deductions that benefit seniors and help them pay for care as they age. It expands the child tax credit to provide a boost to families across the country. It lowers income tax brackets to keep a few extra bucks in your pocket each year. But when we look at the bill, we have to weigh the good and the bad.

Speaking of those individual tax cuts—the ones I just talked about a few seconds ago—well, they are only temporary. They are short-term promises that will disappear with the wind. Estimates show that more than 80 percent of this bill's benefits will go to the top 1 percent; 60 percent will go to the top one-tenth of 1 percent of our population. In fact, hard-working families will actually see a tax hike within 10 years.

But for this country's biggest corporations, this bill makes their tax cuts permanent. So at the same time that taxes start rising for teachers and farmers and electricians and nurses

and working folks, large corporations and big businesses will still be reaping the benefits from the giveaways in this piece of legislation. On top of huge benefits, this bill makes no attempt to ensure that these corporations will use the savings to create more good-paying jobs.

This bill also destroys the foundation of our healthcare system. Because of this bill, 13 million Americans will become uninsured, and everyone else's premiums will go up by about 10 percent. It will be more expensive to see your doctor. It will be harder for rural hospitals and clinics to keep their doors open. More folks will end up in emergency rooms—the most expensive medical treatment. They will be sicker, their treatment will be more expensive, and the rest of us will be forced to pay for it.

The bad list doesn't stop there. It forces a $25 billion cut to Medicare. This bill pushes millions of people out of itemizing their deductions—reducing incentives to buy a home or donate to a charity. It caps State and local income tax deductions, and this targets middle-class families. It changes the way we adjust tax brackets for inflation, which will force future generations to play catchup. It will force State budgets into the red and put critical healthcare, education, and law enforcement initiatives on the chopping block. It opens up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil drilling, but that is not the worst thing about this bill. The worst thing about this bill is it saddles our kids and grandkids with more crushing debt.

In 2008 and 2009, this country was going through one of the worst economic crises since the 1930s. The debt was increased in that period of time. People often say that the government needs to be run like a business. Well, if you have a business, and income is not coming in, you have to borrow some money. That is what happened. With the economic downturn, the money wasn't coming in, so our debt went up. On the other side, if you are in business and you are making a few bucks and times are better—and they are good—you pay that debt down. Well, this country is in a lot better shape now than it was in 2008 and 2009. We should be paying that debt down at this moment in time, not adding $1.5 trillion to it.

I am going to tell you, as sure as I am standing here today, within the first quarter of 2018, there will be folks standing up on the other side of the aisle saying that we need to cut Medicare, we need to cut Social Security, and we need to take away subsidies for everyone, whether they be farmers, mothers, young families, the disabled, or veterans. Money that is used to keep our public lands in public hands, dollars that are used to make education more affordable, dollars for healthcare overall—they will tell us that we simply cannot afford them because our debt is so high. But today we are going to tack on $1.5 trillion for the sake of giving the richest of the rich a tax benefit and middle-class families a temporary benefit that will go away over the next 10 years.

How they have so quickly forgotten the fiscal restraint that we talked about when Democrats controlled this body. Our national debt is already above $20 trillion. This is more than $64,000 for every man, woman, and child in this country. The path we are on is truly unsustainable.

It is not the first time we have been down this road. Bush tax cuts were sold to the American people, and we were told that they would pay for themselves. Guess what. Today those Bush tax cuts are directly responsible for one-third of that $20 trillion debt. We know this to be true. Yet here we are, about to swipe the credit card one more time for over $1.5 trillion—to put our kids and our grandkids on the hook to pay it back while we get temporary relief and the large corporations get permanent relief.

For those of us who were ignored during this process, this is what we are stuck with. There are some good things but a whole bunch of bad things—more than I can count on my hands. We can't celebrate the good things and ignore the bad. Just because we ignore it doesn't mean that it is not going to come true.

This bill will not strengthen the middle class. It will not improve our schools. It will not lower the cost of healthcare.

Let's call it what it is. It is a tax giveaway to the wealthy masked as tax reform, and those who vote yes on this bill will do so at the expense of our kids and our grandkids. They will be paying this tab long after we are gone. What is ironic about this is that most of the people who serve in this body say: I am here to make sure the next generation has an opportunity. We are taking away their opportunity with this bill. It will limit their opportunity. It will cap their potential—all for what? I am not really sure because when I go back to Montana every weekend, folks aren't stopping me on the streets and telling me that the corporations and the wealthy need a tax giveaway. What they do tell me is this: We need to make sure programs like CHIP are around. We need to make sure Medicare and Social Security are there for future generations. We need to protect our public lands. We need to pass a farm bill that works. We need to invest in infrastructure. Folks, this tax bill takes away all of that potential.

We have been at war for 16 or 17 years. The military needs rebuilding. It makes it much tougher. Everyone knows what is going on in North Korea. The potential to have to spend a bunch of money there is real. Infrastructure—whether it is broadband, highways, bridges, or water systems—is in dire need of help.

The fact is, the tracks are greased; this bill is going to pass. Rather than working on the pressing issues around here, the next excuse is going to be entitlement reform, which means we are going to do our level best, in the name of the debt, to gut Medicare and Social Security. Who knows what else will be put on the chopping block to be ripped away from working families?

This bill ties our hands and prevents us from making the kinds of investments we need to build a strong middle class, which has been the envy of the world, and it puts our most vulnerable at risk.

I am going to vote no on this bill because it is a step backward. It raises the debt. It does nothing to solve the income inequality in this country, and it pushes the American dream further out of reach.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I want to cover what I think are the seven worst aspects of this tax bill.

The first thing is that this is not a middle-class tax cut. Credible, independent analysis of this bill found that the richest 1 percent of the United States will get $85 billion of the benefits in the year 2019. These Americans will get a tax cut of more than $55,000 per person while taxpayers who fall in the middle of the road will get a couple of hundred bucks. Many in the middle class will pay more because of this bill.

People making $30,000 or less will see a tax increase of about 10 percent. Even foreign investors will do better than the middle class in this bill. What do I mean by foreign investors? I mean foreign investors. I mean people who don't live in the United States but who own stock or are investors in American companies. In 2019, they will get a $48 billion tax benefit. That is a bigger benefit than more than half of the rest of the country will get from this bill. You have to work hard to design a tax plan that helps the middle class less than this one does. In fact, the Washington Post looked at this plan a few weeks ago and found that it is the worst tax plan for the middle class in 50 years. Here is the thing. It shouldn't be that hard to do a middle-class tax cut; you just do a middle-class tax cut.

The No. 2 reason this bill is horrible is it is primarily written for special interests. Republicans couldn't give the middle class a bigger tax break because they needed all of that money for special interests. Real estate firms will see an immediate 16 percent decrease in taxes next year. For families who own multimillion-dollar hotels, that makes this a great bill.

Big banks and financial firms also win. Over the next 10 years, financial firms will save $250 billion. Over the next 10 years, financial firms will save $250 billion.

The biggest single beneficiary is Wells Fargo. What I remember from the last election was that the lesson the voters were teaching us across America was a populous lesson, that

they were sick of financial institutions and the very powerful politically and the very powerful economically running us. Here we are giving a massive tax break to Wells Fargo, an estimated 18-percent boost in earnings just for Wells Fargo. This is not a bank that has been a good player recently. They were mired in scandal after they bilked customers into buying auto insurance and created thousands of fake credit card and bank accounts.

People are not getting a tax cut. Corporations are getting a tax cut, and no one knows how we are going to pay for all of this.

This brings me to No. 3. If passed, this bill will increase the Federal deficit by a minimum of $1.5 trillion. With $1.5 trillion, we can pay down every single student loan in the country and still have enough money left over for middle-class tax cuts. Instead, we are going to make sure that Wells Fargo investors have another banner year.

There was an entire group of Republicans elected to the Congress on the premise that the Federal debt and deficit were too high and that we needed fiscal discipline and fiscal responsibility, and now they are adding $1.5 trillion to the deficit.

No. 4, this bill is just bad economic policy. It is premised on the idea that if you provide a tax cut for corporations, they will share it, essentially; that if you give money to a corporation and they take that money and they reinvest it in their physical plant, they make additional developments—maybe they build a new factory, or maybe they pay their people more. That sounds great. Here is the problem: The corporate sector is sitting on an unprecedented amount of cash already. The corporate sector has lots of cash already. So we have a lesson in what they will do with extra cash, right? If they were going to use extra cash to pay their people more or invest more in physical infrastructure or expand their businesses, they would already be doing that because they are already sitting on record amounts of capital. But they are not doing that. What they are doing is stock buybacks and dividends. In other words, they are paying off their shareholders.

When a group of American CEOs was asked what they were going to do with the windfall money they are about to receive, they did not say they are going to pay their people more; they did not say they are going to invest more in expanding their businesses; they indicated that they are going to do what they have been doing with their record amounts of cash, which is pour it back into stock buybacks and dividends.

This is bad economic policy. Forget the moral part for a moment. Even at the macroeconomic level, this is not smart.

No. 5, this is bad policy because it is a bad process. This bill was written in secret. It was rushed, and it was 100 percent partisan. We know it didn't have to be that way.

One of the things I said to some of my colleagues with whom I have a strong relationship is, listen, why don't we try to do this subject to a 60-vote threshold? Why don't we try to find bipartisan agreement? And then, listen, if you find that we are operating with you in bad faith, if you find that there is no room for compromise, drop the threshold down and do it with a 51-vote margin, but at least you will have exhausted the possibility of bipartisanship.

They started with 51 votes. What does that mean? That means they never wanted to listen to Democrats. That is why this process is so flawed. And now the House just sent over a bill that is so messed up, they are going to have to vote again tomorrow. To fix the garbage they sent over this afternoon, they are already talking about an additional technical fixes bill to do next year. This is the product that you get when you don't have public hearings, when you don't have bipartisanship, and when you don't take your time.

No. 6, this bill is bad for healthcare. People's premiums are going to skyrocket, and 13 million Americans are going to go without health insurance.

No. 7, this bill increases income inequality. This bill changes our tax system to reward wealth over work. For me, American capitalism is about, you work hard, you have a good idea, and you are rewarded. It is not about, your dad was rich, he passed the money down, and you are rewarded. American capitalism is about pulling yourself up by your bootstraps. But what we are doing with the Tax Code is unprecedented—except for during the gilded age. What we are doing with the Tax Code right now is saying: We value already being rich more than we value someone who is climbing that mountain.

That is a foundational moral question—do we value work, or do we value wealth? The problem with this bill—and we can go through process and policy and politics, but the foundational problem with this bill is that, through this document, we are declaring that we value people's wealth that already exists. We value passive income more than we value earned income. And that is not good for the United States of America. That is the problem with this bill. We are telling people that we value people who already have money more than people who are climbing that hill. That is why I oppose this bill so strongly, and I think that is why people across America—for the very first time, at least in recent history but maybe in American history, we have a tax cut bill that is so deeply unpopular because people understand what a rotten piece of legislation this is. I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to speak about the conference report we will be voting on later this evening. Before I do that, I want to mention a few folks by name who deserve a big thank-you for the incredible work they did to get us to this terrific point we are at today.

I wanted to start with Leader MCCONNELL. His vision and leadership made this possible, and I am grateful for that. I want to mention Chairman HATCH, who also helped to guide the Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over our Tax Code; Chairman ENZI, the chairman of the Budget Committee—without a proper budget resolution, this moment would not have been possible; Chairman MURKOWSKI, who has fought for so long to open up this little tiny postage stamp in an incredibly remote part of Alaska to prudent energy development, and finally, tonight we are going to pass the legislation to do that; Senator CORNYN, our whip, who is also a member of the Finance Committee and played a very important role; Senators THUNE, PORTMAN, and SCOTT, with whom I worked very closely for a very extended period of time to try to find the consensus that I think we have reached among Republican Senators.

I want to mention Senator CORKER. I had many long and ultimately very fruitful conversations with Senator CORKER, who approached this in a very thoughtful and responsible way. I am very grateful for him.

I want to mention some of the staff who worked incredibly hard on this: Mark Warren, who handles tax policy for Senator THUNE; Zach Rudisill, who works for Senator PORTMAN; Shay Hawkins, who handled this brief for Senator SCOTT; Andrew Siracuse, who works for Senator CORNYN; and Bart Massey, who handled this responsibility for Senator ENZI, and Matt Giroux. They all did terrific work.

A big special thanks to some of the guys on my staff who did an amazing job. Randy Herndon joined my team earlier this year and did an absolutely extraordinary job. Fortunately, he has an incredible wealth of knowledge about tax policy, and he was able to put that to work for Pennsylvanians and for Americans in a tremendously constructive way. Brad Grantz, my legislative director, also helped to guide this process. Dan Brandt, who is my chief of staff, did some great quarterbacking.

I should point out the Senate Finance Committee staff who worked incredible hours and did a great job—Jay Khosla, Mark Prater, Jen Acuna, and the rest of the Senate Finance Committee staff, and also Brendan Dunn in the leader's office, who played a very important role.

Speaker RYAN and Chairman BRADY in the other Chamber played an indispensable role in getting us here, as did Tom Barthold, who leads the Joint Committee on Taxation, quantifying every wrinkle along the way in the final product, as well as his team.

I should also mention that the President provided constructive leadership along the way, and we worked extensively with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and the Director of the National Economic Council, Gary Cohn, from the White House.

This took a long time to put together and involved an enormous amount of work, but I am so proud of what we have brought to this floor and what I believe we are going to pass later this evening. The process started over a year ago when members of the Finance Committee began to tackle what seemed like a very daunting challenge—the most ambitious tax reform in 31 years. Could we really overhaul the entire Tax Code and achieve two very important accomplishments and do it with the very narrow majority we have, knowing that our Democratic friends did not want to participate in this process, and try to get this all the way across the goal line?

I am thrilled to be able to report that I think we have accomplished those two big things. What are they? No. 1, we were determined from the very beginning that we would not even attempt to bring a bill to the floor unless it lowered the tax burden on the families we represent—individuals, families, middle-income and lower income families. That was No. 1. No. 2, we wanted to fundamentally restructure the business side of our Tax Code so that American workers and businesses can compete and win in a global economy against anybody. I have to tell you, we did those things, and I think that is why this is going to pass tonight.

First, on the individual side, this is absolutely a direct tax cut for the vast overwhelming majority of low- and middle-income taxpayers. They will simply pay less in Federal taxes. That is the reality.

By the way, most high-income taxpayers will have some tax savings as well. I don't apologize for that. I am in favor of lowering the tax burden on everyone. While not every last individual is going to have a tax cut, the vast majority of people will.

We do it through a variety of mechanisms. I will not go through all of them, but a couple of the mechanisms that I think people understand and appreciate are, one, we doubled the standard deduction—what does that mean? That means that a couple filing jointly, as most married couples do, the first $24,000 of income they earn doesn't get taxed at all—zero, nothing. They don't owe a dime to the Federal Government on the first $24,000 that they earn. That one step alone results in a tax reduction for many millions of Americans. In addition, we lower marginal tax rates so that the income people earn above $24,000 gets taxed at lower rates under our bill than under current law. We also dramatically increase the child tax credit so that families with children get this additional benefit on top of the ones I just mentioned.

The net effect of all of this is that every single income category pays less in taxes. You don't have to take my word for it; that is the joint tax nonpartisan review of our bill. And low-income earners receive the largest percentage of benefits of all.

For people who are listening to this debate, whether in the Chamber here or watching C–SPAN, I can understand that they could be a little frustrated because they hear our Democratic colleagues say: This is a terrible deal for the middle class. Some have even said it is a tax increase. And they have heard me and other Republicans say this is absolutely a tax cut for the middle class. Who are they to believe? I understand that frustration.

Let me suggest that there is a simple way to cut through all of this—there are two, actually.

No. 1, look what happened on the Senate floor during debate on this. The same sort of argument was taking place when a Democratic Senator offered an amendment to take our tax policy for low- and middle-income families and individuals and make it permanent. If this were a bad deal for the middle class, presumably all the Democratic Senators would vote no, but they did not. They voted yes. It was really quite an extraordinary compliment to our work that they offered an amendment to take what we did—which is not yet permanent; we weren't able to do that; we are going to come back and revisit that, and I hope we will make it permanent—and said: This is so good, we should make it permanent right now. So I appreciate the compliment. I appreciate the validation of the tax cut, that this is for low-income and middle-income families, and I want to work with them to make sure it is permanent. We should be able to do that.

The second way we know where the truth lies in this debate is in late January, early February, just check your paycheck. Take a look. Withholding is going to go down because you are going to owe less money to Uncle Sam, so you are going to get a take-home pay raise. It is as simple as that. So the mystery will be all gone when people take a look at their check and discover that, yes, look at that, I actually got the pay raise those Republican guys said we were going to get. I am looking forward to when that happens and, at that point, I think this debate will shift to other topics. That is my guess.

I also want to touch on the tax reform on the business side because I think that is what is likely to drive the economic growth and the opportunities I want to see for the people I represent. It comes in a context. The context is the weakest economic recovery in the history of the Republic. After a very severe recession in 2008, we never really had the booming recovery we have always had in the past. It is not a huge mystery why. Our Democratic friends had complete control of the elective government, and they did all of the things they wanted to do. They had the ability—and they did—huge, repeated tax increases with no reforms, a virtual takeover of healthcare, an avalanche of new regulations, and a massive spending binge. They did all of those things and, unsurprisingly, we got a weak economy, not a strong economy.

One of the specific problems we have had and that has plagued us ever since that recession is a collapse in the growth of the capital stock, which caused a collapse in the growth of productivity, and without productivity, it is not at all surprising that workers aren't getting raises. The path to higher wages for workers is allowing workers to become more productive. To be more productive, they need better tools, and better tools are acquired through investment.

So that was lacking, and that is the heart of what we are fixing. Our reform goes right to this challenge of lowering the cost of deploying capital. What do I mean by deploying capital? What I mean is investing in the very kind of equipment that makes workers more productive and allows them to earn higher wages.

A simple example is, you go to a construction site and there are two guys working and one of them is working a backhoe and the other is working a shovel. They are both digging a hole. They are both moving dirt. Which one do you think is getting paid more? The guy operating the backhoe is always making more money because he is able to be so much more productive than any human can be with just his bare hands and a shovel. So when we make it more affordable for businesses to go out and buy new tractors, new equipment, new machinery, that gives them the chance to put those more valuable tools into the hands of their workers.

By the way, someone also has to build those things. Someone has the job at Caterpillar of making that tractor. Someone has the job of making that vehicle. Someone has the job of making the machinery.

So all of these things coming together are a very powerful driver of economic growth—not the only one. Not only do we lower the cost of acquiring that equipment, we also lower the top rate that businesses pay.

We have arguably the most uncompetitive Tax Code in the world—the top rate of 35 percent. What we do in our bill is we lower that rate to 21 percent—slightly below the average of the nations we compete with; pretty close to the average. This is going to free up American workers and businesses to compete and win in all kinds of fields where we are getting beaten today. That is going to come to an end because when we have a chance to compete on a level playing field, American workers and American business, we compete and we usually win. We are going to get back to winning.

We also recognize that most businesses in America are not organized as C corps, they are organized as

passthroughs—small, subchapter S companies, partnerships. So we have a corollary, a reduction in tax rates for them. It comes as a deduction against their earnings. It doesn't apply to all partnerships. Professional services partnerships, for instance, don't get this treatment. I would like to revisit that. I think we want to revisit that because I personally would like to see this treatment expanded to that category, but the vast majority of businesses—partnerships, S corps, C corps—are going to experience a significant tax cut that is going to allow them to compete.

Another big, important feature is moving away from this global taxation system we have. We have all been so disturbed by the stories we have read about of American companies being acquired, sometimes by a much smaller company overseas, not because the economics of the transaction make a lot of sense but because the Tax Code drives them. It just makes very little sense, from a tax point of view, to have a multinational company headquartered in the United States.

So we have been driving these transactions that are terrible. They usually cost us jobs. They cost us growth. This comes to an end with this reform. We are not going to have this system where we punish business for bringing money back home to the United States. This punishment ends, and it is going to encourage a huge inflow of capital, of accumulated profits back into the United States, because no longer will companies be facing a penalty tax unique in the world. That is over. It is a very constructive development.

What does it mean when you take one of the world's worst business tax codes and you turn it into arguably one of the best? It means more investment. It means more people all around the world are going to want to invest in America. It means more Americans are going to want to invest in starting a new business or expanding an existing business. It means more business will be able to afford the tools and the equipment and the vehicles I referred to earlier. That is the source of economic growth.

Some of our colleagues on the other side don't seem to acknowledge that this is a reality, but there is no great mystery here. When you lower the cost of something, you get more of it, and when we lower the cost we impose on businesses becoming more productive, we will have more productivity.

All of this comes at a very interesting time in the economic cycle. What I am referring to is the fact that we are arguably close to what economists think of as full employment—4.1 percent, 4 percent. Very seldom does the American economy go below 4 percent for extended periods. It means that when this money gets put to work—when companies go out and start buying this equipment—they need workers to fill the orders, but then they need workers to operate the equipment. Demand for workers is going to go up.

What happens when demand for workers goes up at a time when there is a relatively small number who are not employed? It means upward pressure on the wages of those workers. This is exactly the dynamic we have been waiting for and we are going to trigger that and we are going to watch this happen. I think it is going to start relatively quickly—probably next year—that we will start to see upward pressure on wages. That means the people I represent are going to find that they have options, they have higher compensation, they are getting a pay raise because their employer—it is not because employers suddenly wake up one day and decide: Oh, I will just be more generous today. It is nothing of the sort. This is the only way they can hold on to their workforce, hold on to the employees they need.

So it is very likely we are going to see an increasing share of the total economic output in the hands of the workers who produce it, and I think that is a terrific development.

A couple of other points I want to touch on briefly. One is that this legislation also effectively repeals the individual mandate of ObamaCare. Technically, what we do is we zero out the penalty. The penalty for noncompliance goes to zero, and so that is equivalent to repeal.

First of all, this is a great strike for freedom, in my view. It is appalling to think that the Federal Government has the right to force an American to buy a product against his or her will—a terrible infringement on the freedom of Americans.

Our Democratic colleagues have described this repeal as a stake through the heart of ObamaCare. Think about what a damning indictment that is about ObamaCare. It is a stake through the heart. If the only way ObamaCare can survive is if people are forced to buy the product against their wishes, what kind of product could that be? What kind of business model depends on forcing people to buy your product because they will not buy it if it is voluntary?

So not only is it a significant strike for freedom, it is also tax relief for low-income folks. This ObamaCare penalty in Pennsylvania, in my State—and I think my State is typical—83 percent of the people who get hit with this tax penalty are in a household that earns less than $50,000 a year. So this is more direct relief for low- and middle-income folks.

The last point I want to make—and I see my colleague from Ohio on the floor. He did amazing, great work getting us to this point. He was a pleasure to work with and enormously knowledgeable, and I just want to congratulate him for where we are today.

A quick word about the deficits. Let me start with a very simple observation. I am convinced that when we pass this legislation and it is signed into law, the Federal budget deficits will shrink as a result of this legislation. It is very simple. The reason I say that is the economic growth, the response to the reforms, the very profound reforms we are making are going to give us a bigger economy to tax, and the extra growth, the bigger economy, means more revenue to the Federal Government. So you could reasonably ask: Well, OK, how much more growth do you really need, though, in order to offset the lost revenue that comes from some of the changes you are making? Fortunately, that is a simple exercise in arithmetic.

We know what the answer is. Whether it is Joint Tax or the Congressional Budget Office, the nonpartisan analysis is, we will need to average between two- and four-tenths of a percent of extra GDP growth—extra economic growth—each year, on average, for the next 10 years. If we do that, then we will have a smaller deficit as a result of this legislation, not a larger one.

So, for me, what this bill comes down to is a simple question: Do you believe in America? Do you believe in the capacity of the American people to restore the vibrant growth we used to take for granted, decade after decade of annual growth of over 3 percent that caused people's wages to rise and the standard of living to grow?

We have had this period that has been stagnant, and some of our friends think, Well, that is what America is now. Just get used to it. Accept it. That is the new normal—barely 2 percent growth, if you are lucky. I think that is nonsense, and it is not true.

I still believe in America. I still believe in American workers. I still believe in our system. I still believe we are capable of restoring the kind of growth that has always been our birthright.

I think this legislation takes a huge step in that direction. It is a direct, immediate tax cut and, therefore, a pay raise for the hard-working people I represent, and it is a series of reforms that is going to encourage economic growth that will result in higher wages and a better standard of living as well.

I am thrilled with the opportunity we have tonight, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to this special interest, tax breaks for the rich, trickle-down economics bill that history shows doesn't work.

I want to start by thanking Senator WYDEN from Oregon, the leader on our side—the Finance Committee has done very good work—and Gideon Bragin in my office who has been one of the tax reform experts in this body. I want to thank both of them.

This bill should have been an opportunity for all of us to work together to put money in the pockets of working

people. It is pretty simple. Instead of cutting taxes for the middle class, though, Washington chose to cut taxes for millionaires and corporations and pay for it by cutting Medicare and kicking people off their health insurance.

It ought to be pretty simple. If we want to cut taxes—if we want to talk about cutting taxes for the middle class—if we want to cut taxes for the middle class, then let's pass a bill to cut taxes for the middle class instead of giving the money to corporations and the richest CEOs and relying on a bank shot, hoping it trickles down. Cut out the middleman. That is what my colleagues claim to want. That is what the President said to us and the country that he wanted, but that is not what this bill does. This isn't a middle-class tax cut—not even close.

According to the Tax Policy Center, 83 percent—you see a Monopoly man here on this chart—83 percent of the benefits in this tax bill by the end of the decade go to the wealthiest 1 percent in this country. Imagine, 83 percent of the benefits go to the richest 1 percent of people in this country. That is even worse than the Senate bill passed—which wasn't that great—earlier this month. It was already pretty bad. Sixty-two percent of the bill's benefits would have gone to the top 1 percent of households by the end of the decade. Apparently, 62 percent wasn't good enough for the Republican members of the conference committee. They thought 83 percent of the benefits—83 percent of the benefits—should go to the richest 1 percent in this country, so the bill has actually gotten worse and worse and worse for middle-class families.

How did the bill get this bad? It got this bad through massive, permanent tax cuts for the wealthy, for so-called passthrough businesses and corporations, which mostly benefit the richest people in this country. It got this bad through paltry tax cuts for some middle-class families that expire after a few years.

Get this. The corporate tax cuts are permanent. They last forever. The tax cuts for individuals, inadequate and immodest as they are, expire after a few years. Gee, I wonder why they did that. It was through a new way of calculating inflation called Chained CPI, which will primarily hurt middle-class families. That doesn't even take into account the millions of Americans—my colleague from Pennsylvania was part of it; in the middle of the night they put a new provision in this bill that will cost 13 million Americans their health insurance. So 13 million Americans will lose insurance under this bill.

All kinds of elected officials, all kinds of us in the House and Senate have insurance paid for by taxpayers, and my colleagues are willing to take insurance away from 13 million people, most of whom have jobs. They don't have jobs that pay what we make. They don't have health insurance like we have. They don't get pensions like we have. They are making $8, $10, $12 an hour and can't afford insurance. We, as privileged elected officials, are going to take insurance away from 13 million people, and at the same time it will raise insurance premiums 10 percent—not 10 percent over time, but 10 percent a year. If you are paying $500 a month in insurance now, you will pay $550 the next year, and you will pay more than $600 the following year.

It didn't have to be this way. Our door, as Democrats, has always been open. Democrats represent half this country. Democrats wanted a seat at the table and wanted to help write a bill. Let me illustrate.

A number of us in the Finance Committee in both parties, including my colleague from Ohio, Senator PORTMAN, and Senator TOOMEY, Senator WYDEN, and others, were invited to the White House to meet with the President to talk about the tax reform bill. I presented the President two bills I have been working on. One was the Patriot Corporation Act, which was pretty simple. It says that if corporations do the right thing—if they pay good wages, if they provide good health insurance and pension benefits for their employees, and if they keep their production in the United States of America—they get lower tax rates.

The other bill, called the Working Families Relief Act, is also pretty simple. It puts money directly in the pockets of people making $25,000, $50,000, and $75,000 a year. The President of the United States looked at me and said: I like the Patriot Corporation Act, and I like the Working Families Tax Relief Act.

After the hour-and-a-half meeting, which was witnessed by a dozen Senators in both parties and a number of his Cabinet officials, including Secretary Mnuchin in the Cabinet room at the White House, I walked up to the President and said: Thank you for your interest. I handed him and his chief economic adviser, Gary Cohn—whom I am proud to say is from Cleveland—copies of the bill.

Then, something started to happen. Then the meetings started in MITCH MCCONNELL's office. For people who don't work here and live here and see this, I would point out that down the hall, 100 feet, is Senator MCCONNELL's office. Pass the Ohio clock—that is my State; pass the Ohio clock, and 100 feet down the hall is Senator MCCONNELL's office.

The meetings started in Senator MCCONNELL's office. The President of the United States said that he liked the idea of the Patriot Corporation Act, liked the idea of the Working Families Relief Act, but then he turned it over to Senator MCCONNELL. Do you know what happened? Wall Street lobbyist after Wall Street lobbyist walked in that door and out that door; tobacco lobbyist after tobacco lobbyist walked in that door and out that door; oil company lobbyist after oil company lobbyist walked in that door and out that door; drug company lobbyists from all over the country walked in that door and out that door.

They walked in that door. They didn't literally carry bags of money out that door after they made their points and made their pitches, but they carried provisions in the tax bill that will make their employers bags of money. They didn't carry bags of money themselves. That would be uncouth. But they sure wrote provisions in this tax bill that provide bags of money for their companies—for the tobacco companies, for Wall Street, for the oil companies, for the drug companies.

Over and over and over, Republicans made clear—not that they would pass the Patriot Corporation Act even though the President had said that he liked it, not to pass legislation like the Working Families Tax Relief Act even though the President had said that he liked it; they made clear that they are benefiting one class of people—the wealthiest Americans, corporate CEOs, board members, and stockholders who see their profits rise and grow their businesses when they ship jobs overseas.

Remember, we have said many times here as we have tried to end this tax loophole that if you shut down production in Mansfield, OH, or you shut down production in Hamilton or Zanesville or Chillicothe or Lima and you move it overseas, you get a tax break. They open a factory there and ship it back into the United States of America.

This bill didn't fix it. It didn't close that loophole. It didn't fix that. It made it worse. It greased the skids for those companies to shut down faster in Mansfield, Lima, Chillicothe, and Zanesville, OH, and move their production overseas. They get bigger bonuses, they make bigger profits, and they get bigger stock dividends.

Republican leaders like to claim that somehow, if you give a big corporate tax increase, if you cut corporate taxes as this bill does, about 40 percent, $4,000 would end up in the pockets of every working man and woman in this country; workers would get a $4,000 raise. Of course, nobody believed them, but that is what they said: They would get a $4,000 raise.

Do you know why I know that is not true? Because history shows that anytime they get big tax cuts, anytime they bring dollars from overseas, the money doesn't go into employees' pockets. It doesn't usually go to create jobs. It goes to give more benefits to the executives.

The other reason I know that is not going to happen—that these dollars will not go to employees and not go to investing in more jobs—is that their corporate pals let the cat out of the bag and made clear they won't. CEOs from the largest corporations, already on record, state plainly that they are not raising wages; they are not going to hire more workers.

What are they going to do with this windfall? I know this will come as a shock. They are going to keep it for themselves.

Imagine, these CEOs in and out of Senator MCCONNELL's office—the drug companies, Wall Street, tobacco companies, oil companies, all the others. Believe it or not, the CEOs of these corporations are already making $8 million, $10 million, $12 million—some are making $20 million a year. That is not enough for them. Why would that possibly be enough? If you are making only $20 million a year, you have to do something to juice it a little bit, so they will keep that money for themselves. They will do bigger bonuses, they will do stock buybacks, and they will do dividends.

End this charade. I have heard all this happy talk on the floor about how this is going to make Americans more competitive and how it will trickle down to the middle class. If you want to do a middle-class tax cut, do a middle-class tax cut. Don't bank-shot it. Don't take out the middleman. Don't give it to corporations and say: Please, oh please, oh please, give us a middle-class tax break. It never works that way.

Republican leaders had a chance to work across the aisle. I heard Senator TOOMEY say that Democrats didn't want to be involved. I heard Senator CORNYN say that Democrats didn't want to be involved. I like those two gentlemen. I have worked particularly with Senator CORNYN on a number of things. We are working on a couple of issues right now. They know that is not true. They sat in that White House meeting. They heard the President of the United States say to me and to Senator CASEY and to Senator MCCASKILL and to Senator STABENOW and to Senator WYDEN and to a couple others—they heard us offer reasonable proposals. The President was agreeable. Many of them were part of his campaign. Candidate Trump was saying a lot of these things during the campaign. But then, lo and behold, they said: Democrats don't want to be a part of this. Well, not exactly.

We had a bill to expand the child tax credit. We had a plan to reward companies that create jobs here. All that got jettisoned down the hall in Senator MCCONNELL's office. Down this hall, down this hall in Senator MCCONNELL's office, 100 feet away, is where these deals were cut—these deals with the drug companies and oil companies and tobacco companies and Wall Street lobbyists going in and out of his office. I didn't see all of them come out, but I am guessing they had really big smiles on their faces.

These massive cuts for corporations come at a heavy price for the middle class. When 1 percent gets richer and richer and richer, we know the middle class shrinks. These massive cuts come at a heavy price.

This bill will explode the deficit. We know that. Even my colleagues call themselves deficit hawks when there is a Democratic President, but following the enforcer in chief, the Wall Street Journal editorial page—they call themselves deficit hawks when there is a Democratic President, but all of a sudden, they say: We will grow out of the deficit.

We know this bill will explode the deficit. We know what the plan is to deal with the deficit. Do you know what they will do? They will steal the money Americans have paid into Social Security and Medicare. How do we know that? I am not just saying it. As a progressive Democrat in this body, I am not just saying: Of course they are going to cut Social Security and Medicare. I think that, but do you know why I am sure of it? I am always pretty sure of it because that is what they do. But I am sure of it because they said that. They made their plans crystal clear. Speaker RYAN said that he wants to turn next year to what he calls entitlement reform.

There are retirement and health benefits that people earn over a lifetime of work—social insurance. You pay into Medicare over the course of your life. When you need Medicare, when you are 65, you get this insurance. You pay into Social Security your entire life. You either get survivors benefits for your children or you get disability or you get retirement when you reach the age of 66, more or less. You pay into unemployment insurance. If you need it—God willing, you don't, but if you need it, you get help. That is what social insurance is. You pay for it, and you get help from society. It is societywide social insurance. But the Ways and Means chairman, KEVIN BRADY, said that the next stop for Republicans is to tackle entitlements.

Here is what we know. This bill is going to cause huge deficits. We know that. They have acknowledged it, and 2, 3, 4 years from now, Republican Members will come to us—after the lobbyists have been down the hall in Senator MCCONNELL's office, they will come back and say to us: We have this huge budget deficit. We are going to have to raise the eligibility age to maybe to 70. Some of them have talked about that. We are going to have to privatize Medicare. They will say: We have to make these programs stronger and sustainable. Nobody thinks they want to make them stronger. They want to cut them. That is how you save money, even though you don't in the end.

Here is what is aggravating about this. Think about it. All of us—a number of people here in this body are past what society has designated as retirement age, 65. A number of Members of this Congress, particularly in the Senate, are over 65.

I work in my garden. I work outside. I do things. But I am not working in a diner, I am not working construction, and I don't use my arms and shoulders and brain and legs to do my work. We work here. We work in jobs we are privileged to have, and we get good compensation. We get a good salary, and we get good benefits. But we are going to tell a bunch of people who work with their hands and work with their brains and work with their bodies and work with their arms and shoulders and whose knees break down over time—we are going to tell the barber in Barberton, we are going to tell the truckdriver in Evendale, we are going to tell the construction worker in Conneaut, we are going to tell the waitress in Warren, we are going to tell the nurse in Newark that they are going to have to work until they are 70, sorry. Is that what we are going to do?

Follow this simply. This tax cut causes a huge budget deficit to give money to the wealthiest people in the country and creates a huge hole in the budget. Who is going to fill the hole in the budget? Not the lobbyists walking in and out of Senator MCCONNELL's office 100 feet down the hall. They are not going to pay for it; they are not going to have to pay for it. It is going to be the nurse in Newark who has to work until she is 70; it is going to be the waitress in Warren who has to work until she is 70; it is going to be the carpenter or construction worker in Conneaut; it is going to be the barber in Barberton and the truckdriver in Evendale.

If we pass this bill, 83 percent of the benefits go to the top 1 percent, and this 83 percent, a lot of which blows a hole in the budget deficit, is going to be paid for by working families. So cut out all the crap about this being something for working families. It is not.

I will say this for Republicans in Congress: They are making it pretty easy for the American people to see whose side they are on. You are either on the side of everyday working Americans, who are working more hours than ever before and getting too little pay for the hours they are working—they are either working for them or they are working for the people in Senator MCCONNELL's office down the hall.

I want my colleagues to just pick through this. I want my colleagues to think about this picture, this stream of lobbyists in and out of Senator MCCONNELL's office, this stream of lobbyists from America's largest, richest corporations—the drug companies, the tobacco companies, the insurance companies, the companies that tend to run this government. I want you to think about that.

Are you on the side of the workers who are doing the heavy work and can't work until they are 70 or are you on the side of CEOs and politicians who do the bidding of these CEOs? It is a pretty clear case. It is a picture that is pretty obvious. Americans deserve better. We can do better for them by starting from scratch with one goal in mind: If we want a middle-class tax cut, I say to the Senator from Utah, don't talk about a middle-class tax cut, don't do trickle-down economics. If you want a

middle-class tax cut, then give a middle-class tax cut. Give a tax cut to the middle class. It is pretty simple.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to talk tonight about a once-in-a-generation opportunity we have in this Senate tonight to help middle-class families, to help grow our economy. I am going to talk about the facts. I am not going to be making stuff up. I am going to talk about the real middle-class tax cuts that are in this legislation. I am going to show you charts that indicate not just what kind of tax relief is going to be there for you and your family but who is going to pay, where the burden is.

Despite what you are hearing on the floor tonight from some on the other side of the aisle, the burden of taxation actually increased in this tax bill for the wealthiest Americans. In terms of defending the status quo, which is a situation now where jobs and investment are going overseas, I think it is an outrage that this body has sat and watched company after company go overseas because of our Tax Code. To say we shouldn't fix it, I don't get that. If we don't lower the rate on businesses and workers who are competing every day when you have the highest rate in the industrialized world and you have an international system that rewards revenues being kept overseas—$2.5 trillion to $3 trillion of earnings overseas instead of bringing that back—that status quo is not acceptable.

We can engage in all kinds of rhetoric here tonight, but if we stick to the facts, I think we might be able to see why this legislation is not only going to pass tonight but why so many Americans who are struggling because they are living paycheck to paycheck are going to be happy with this legislation. The proof is in the paycheck. People say the proof is in the pudding. The proof is in the paycheck when people see their withholding changing—less money being taken out of their paychecks for taxes—when they see they have a little more take-home pay and the family's budget is a little healthier, when they see the economy begin to take off, and when they see the end of this exodus of U.S. companies going overseas. In the last 13 years, 4,700 American companies have left our shores and gone overseas—being bought by foreign companies—that would not have gone if this Tax Code we are promoting tonight had been in place. That is based on an Ernst & Young study. Check it out. It is a big accounting firm. So 4,700, and when they leave our shores, guess what, they take their jobs and investments with them.

You might wonder why wages have been flat in this country for the past couple of decades. It is because people who are supporting the status quo and don't want to change this Tax Code are leaving workers in America with no opportunities to get ahead because not only are wages flat but expenses are up. That is called the middle-class squeeze. It is very real, and it is happening.

I would ask folks, when they are thinking about what you are hearing tonight on the floor, remember, one side is supporting the status quo. The status quo is not working. It isn't working for people in America and people in my State of Ohio who tell me: Rob, I am working hard. I am playing by the rules. I am not getting ahead.

The statistics bear that out. Yes, some people are getting ahead, but it is not the guy or the woman working on the shop floor in a factory in Cleveland, OH, or Columbus, Toledo, Dayton, or Cincinnati because their wages have been pretty darn flat. Again, their expenses are up, especially healthcare, which is the largest single one of those expenses. They want some help.

This legislation gives them that help in two ways: One, real middle-class tax cuts. We will talk about that in a second. Second, letting them be competitive instead of competing with one hand tied behind their backs because they are competing in a global economy, and they know that.

Give them a chance. Give them a tax code that actually is up-to-date and competitive and lets them have the opportunity to build a better life, not just for themselves but for their kids and their grandkids because that is what they really care about.

Again, I am happy to talk about that opportunity we have tonight, and it is a rare opportunity because we have not reformed this Tax Code in any substantial way in 31 years. Think about that. I celebrated my 62nd birthday today. That means we have not reformed the Tax Code in 31 years. That is half of my life. By the way, 31 years ago, Ronald Reagan was President. Pete Rose was still playing for the Cincinnati Reds. ''Top Gun'' was at all the box offices. It was a big hit. That is how long ago that was. During that time, I will tell you that every other country we compete with, all of them, have reformed their Tax Code, except us. We have sat back and had this debate. We have had this gridlock, partisan gridlock, in Washington because we can't get our act together.

By the way, if you are a worker trying to get ahead, you can't do it on your own because the Tax Code has you competing with that one hand tied behind your back. Only this place, Washington, Congress, a President, can propose, develop, and sign legislation that can help address this problem. This is our job. I sure hope we will do it.

In 1986, when that tax reform was passed 31 years ago, it led to two things: one, more economic growth. In the 1980s and 1990s, we did have economic growth—3, 3.5 percent, even 4.5 percent growth. Think about that. We are now living, over the last 10 years, with growth, on average, at about 1.5 to 2 percent. That is a big difference. The second thing it did is, it got wages up. Wages actually increased during that period after that tax reform.

We need to do it again. Our economy needs a shot in the arm again, not just to improve the economy but to improve take-home pay. That is what this tax reform proposal is designed to do.

We have heard, on the other side of the aisle, how this has moved too quickly, somehow there hasn't been enough thought put into this. I think it is long overdue. I think we should have done this years ago. I also know, from being involved in these issues over the past couple of decades on the House Ways and Means Committee and now in the Senate Finance Committee, there has been a lot of thought put into this issue. Just since I was elected to the Senate in 2010, there have been 70 hearings on tax reform.

Chairman HATCH is in the Chamber tonight. He will tell you, 2 years ago we had five bipartisan working groups covering every part of the Tax Code. The bipartisan working group that I cochaired with the Democratic leader, CHUCK SCHUMER, focused on the international side. Do you know what we decided? We decided we have to have a lower business rate because it has to be competitive; otherwise, we will continue to lose jobs in investment overseas, and we decided we have to have an international system that is competitive and bring back some of that $2.5 trillion to $3 trillion that is stuck overseas back to this country for more jobs and investment. Guess what. It was bipartisan then, and it is in the tax bill now.

Those are the ideas that are in this tax bill before us. They make sense. In fact, for years, there has been a bipartisan agreement that our Tax Code is broken, and it is Congress's responsibility to fix it.

I would like to commend tonight Speaker RYAN; Leader MCCONNELL; Finance Chairman ORRIN HATCH, who is on the floor; Ways and Means Committee Chairman KEVIN BRADY, who has been a strong and fair negotiating partner with the Senate. I also want to thank my colleagues who have spent so many hours on this effort: Senator TOOMEY, whom you heard a little while ago talking about the economic benefits, as he does so well, Senators SCOTT, THUNE, CORNYN, ENZI, and MURKOWSKI. They were all on the conference committee, but many others too. Senators COLLINS, JOHNSON, RUBIO, CORKER, who all helped us get to this point and improve the legislation.

The bill that passed the House earlier today, and we are going to vote on tonight, is the result of years and years of research and debate. It makes good on the promise we have made to create a tax code that provides tax relief to hard-working families but also positions America for leadership in the 21st century global economy.

While we have seen some improvements in the economy recently, we have seen better economic growth

numbers. Again, a lot of people I represent are not seeing the benefit of that. That is why we have to pass this bill.

For years, colleagues on both sides of the aisle have called for middle-class tax cuts to help ease the burden. This legislation will finally actually deliver that middle-class tax relief. We have the opportunity to provide it tonight. Starting January 1—less than 2 weeks from tonight—that tax relief goes into effect. People are going to see how this tax reform helps them as soon as the IRS can adjust withholding in paychecks, which I would hope would happen before the end of February. Again, the proof is in the pudding. The proof is in the paycheck. People are going to see it.

People can go online now and use a tax calculator to see how it will affect them and their families. This is going to happen, and it is going happen soon if we pass this legislation tonight.

Again, the most immediate benefit is for working families and for the middle class. This bill doubles the child tax credit. It also increases the refundability of the child tax credit. For those families with kids, you have the opportunity now to save a little more money to deal with the expenses of raising a child. It doubles the standard deduction from $12,000 per family to about $24,000 per family. This, in effect, creates a $24,000 zero income tax bracket for families and simplifies the Tax Code. Probably 90 to 95 percent of Americans are going to take that doubling of the standard deduction, I am told, and that will simplify their returns but also give them tax relief right away. It lowers tax rates for families across the board, with the largest proportional benefit going to those at the lower end of the income ladder, those who need it the most.

In fact, the combination of these tax cuts for lower income Americans means that at least 3 million Americans who have income tax liability now are going to pay nothing in taxes. They will be off the tax rolls altogether.

I have a letter from the Joint Committee on Taxation that affirms that. At our meeting last week of the conference, you can see where the Joint Committee affirmed that again. Over 3 million are going to pay no income taxes at all who pay income tax now. For those who say there is no benefit there, talk to those 3 million people. They feel the benefit. In fact, those people are going to be off the tax rolls altogether because of the tax relief we are passing tonight.

As this chart shows, every income group will receive a tax cut. This one is for the year 2019, so it is a year after the tax cuts are put in place, which starts in just a couple of weeks. We have heard a lot from opponents that the top end, those making $1 million or more, as we just heard a little while ago, get all the benefits. It is simply not true. This shows that the biggest percentage cut is among folks making between $20,000 and $30,000 a year. That is the biggest, a 16.3-percent cut.

It also shows that the smallest percentage cut is among those making $1 million or more, a 5.9-percent cut. Again, there is tax relief across the board here, but the bigger benefit is among folks at the lower end of the economic scale. In fact, when you look at who pays the income tax, you will see that those at the top are going to pay a slightly bigger share of the tax burden under this bill. Today, those making between $20,000 and $50,000 a year pay 4.37 percent of the income taxes. Under this bill, they are going to pay a little less, 4.1 percent of the income taxes.

Those who make over $100,000 will go from paying 78.7 percent of the tax burden to 79.1 percent of the tax burden. If you make over $100,000 a year, you are paying 78.7 percent of the tax burden today, and that is going to go up. Your share of the burden is going to go up. The Tax Code is pretty progressive right now, and it gets even more progressive under this tax legislation.

These are not my numbers. These are the numbers from the Joint Committee on Taxation, which is the nonpartisan group that scores these things. Check out the numbers yourselves. Go on the Joint Committee on Taxation's website, jct.gov, and check it out.

When you don't consider not choosing to buy healthcare insurance to be a tax increase, which is how the Joint Committee on Taxation scores ending the individual mandate, every income group of taxpayers gets a tax cut under this plan every year, for the next 8 years, during the time this tax cut is in place. Yes, it does expire, as did the tax cuts in 2001 and 2003. Congress took those up, and for 95 percent of Americans, we extended that tax relief. I hope we will do that again—I expect we will—but during these next 8 years, this is real tax relief, and it is needed.

I reject the premise that choosing not to buy healthcare insurance under the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate is somehow a tax hike, and I think most Americans do too. Take a look at the Rules Committee's website at rules.house.gov, and you will see how a typical family of four at the median income level will save more than $2,000 a year on its taxes as a result of this plan. The median-income family in Ohio—and in your State wherever you are—is going to be saving more than $2,000 a year on its taxes.

Some have told me, as I walk down the halls here, that is not much money. Do you know what? For families who are living paycheck to paycheck, that is a lot of money, and it does help. It can be used to pay for healthcare, to buy gas, to buy groceries, to maybe add a little more to one's retirement.

Of course, beyond the middle-class tax cuts that are in this legislation, families and workers are going to benefit from more jobs and higher wages, as we talked about earlier. This is going to be because there will be new investment and because there will be more productivity, which is the thing that is really lacking in our economy right now. Our productivity is weak. All of the economists agree on this whether they are right, left, or center. You have to do something to boost that productivity because that is going to result in higher wages, and more competition for workers is going to result in higher wages. That is going to happen because this Tax Code is focused on increasing wages through more investment.

We have talked about how companies are going overseas now and how the status quo is not working. It is crazy that Congress allows that to happen, and fixing it is long overdue. We have talked about the $2.5 trillion, $3 trillion that is stuck overseas right now. We want to bring that home. We want to add more jobs and investment in this country.

We did a study in the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations—a bipartisan effort. We studied these companies that go overseas through what is called inversions or by being purchased by a foreign company. What happens? Do they just move their headquarters overseas? No. We found out they also move jobs and investment.

This is real. It is happening now. We can fix it. That is what this bill is intended to do, and I believe you are going to see not just middle-class tax relief to help with the take-home pay and the family budget, but you are going to see this increase, finally, not just in economic growth but in wages. That also makes the family budget a whole lot more healthy.

I see Senator CASSIDY has just come to the floor. Let me address an issue that has been misrepresented on the floor this afternoon.

I heard one of my colleagues say this bill gets rid of the historic tax credit. It does not, thanks to the efforts of some of us who strongly support it, including Senator CASSIDY. We actually retain the current 20-percent credit in the Senate-passed bill and in the final legislation. By the way, this historic tax credit has been very helpful. It has been instrumental in generating more private funds to restore historic buildings across my State of Ohio, including in my hometown of Cincinnati, as well as in Cleveland, Columbus, and elsewhere.

We also preserve the important tax credit for urban redevelopment through the new markets tax credit and the private activity bonds, which are still in this legislation just as they are in current law. In Ohio, again, these tax incentives have leveraged a lot more private sector dollars, spurred economic growth, job creation, affordable housing, and I think have ultimately increased the tax revenue because, as people are working and as you get these buildings up and going, economic growth is generated, and so is tax revenue. They pay for themselves, in my view. I have shared some

of those success stories in my home State throughout this process, and, again, we have successfully maintained those provisions in our final bill.

The result is, we have a good tax reform bill that achieves the things that Republicans and Democrats alike have long supported—tax cuts for the middle class and a more competitive Tax Code for American workers and companies.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle tonight have talked about this being bad for the deficit. I just have to tell them I respectfully disagree.

The most important thing we can do right now to get the deficit down is to get this growth back because economic growth results in more revenue. One point in economic growth alone puts $2.7 trillion more in revenue into the coffers of the Federal Government. That is based on the numbers from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. Think about that—$2.7 trillion more with just one point of economic growth.

The budget score we were forced to use for this legislation estimates a very conservative level of economic growth—at a weak 1.9 percent over the next 10 years. That was the last 10 years. We don't want to repeat that. We don't have to repeat that. The average economic growth over the past 30 years has been more than 2.5 percent, and over the last two quarters, we have had economic growth of 3.1 percent and 3.3 percent. The Federal Reserve's and private forecasts are both above the CBO's growth projections for next year, as an example, to show you why I think the CBO's numbers are way too small, too weak.

That 1.9-percent growth is not only wrong, but I believe it is unacceptable. It cannot be the new normal. With the strength of our economy right now, paired with the pro-growth changes in this tax reform plan, I believe economic growth will surpass this relatively low projection that we are forced to use by increasing economic growth at just 0.4 percent more than this 1.9 percent, this weak projection. In growing the economy at about 2.3 percent rather than at 1.9 percent, on average, there is sufficient revenue to pay for all of the tax relief in this plan plus to begin to pay down the debt.

That is what I believe will happen if you do the right kind of tax reform. It has to be the right kind. It has to be pro-growth. I believe what we have done in this bill is exactly that. There is no question that we are going to have more economic growth and more investment in America. The current Tax Code is so broken that it is pretty easy to do that, honestly—to create a more efficient and effective and productive Tax Code. I believe a more confident America, with rising wages and stronger economic growth, by the way, is much more likely to address the very real fiscal challenges we face as a country.

This tax reform bill is not just about dollar amounts and bottom lines, though; it is about the investment we are making in American families, American workers, and American businesses. We are giving families the freedom to spend more of their own money how they see fit, we are putting faith in American entrepreneurs and workers to compete and win in the global market, and we are creating a fairer tax system that levels the playing field and creates jobs and investment here in America rather than overseas.

Our constituents deserve this; they deserve better than the status quo. They deserve more than just hollow promises; they deserve a brighter future. I believe the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will reopen our economy as the best place in the world to do business and create that brighter future for all Americans.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I, personally, congratulate the distinguished Senator from Ohio. He is one of the most intelligent people in this body. He has had all kinds of experience outside of the Senate. He is a person whom everybody should listen to. He makes a lot of sense. He is one of the most valued members of a very strong committee, with all kinds of valued members on it, but he is one of those valued members on the Senate Finance Committee, and I have nothing but respect for him.

Everything he has said here this evening is true. It is mind-boggling to me that we even have arguments from the other side. We are talking about pulling this country out of the mess it is in, and it is going to take this.

I just want to compliment the distinguished Senator from Ohio. He is a terrific human being, with a tremendous ability, who has had a lot of experience outside of the U.S. Senate, and who has been successful everywhere he has gone. He is one of the most distinguished members of the Senate Finance Committee. He is not talking politically; he is talking factually. I just wish everybody in this body were on the floor to listen to him. I have tremendous respect for him. That is one reason I am getting up here right now.

We can turn this mess around, but if we don't do it soon, it may be impossible to turn it around. We have been spending this government into bankruptcy. That is where we are. We keep making excuses so we can go back and beat our breasts and claim we are doing so much for the people when we are just spending them right into bankruptcy. It is making it more difficult for the committees to do their work. I just wish we could get both sides together once in a while instead of having all of this inner conflict on everything that comes up.

It is almost like, if a Republican says something, it has to be contradicted, and I might add, if a Democrat says something, he has to be contradicted. I don't mind good arguments. I don't mind people having different points of view. That is what makes this place a great place. That is what helps the United States of America to be a great country and a great government, but we don't even listen to each other anymore.

Where is this bipartisanship that this country really, drastically needs?

We happen to be in the majority right now. It seems to me that a decent minority would want to find ways to work with the, hopefully, decent majority. I think we can be very decent on our side, and I believe my colleagues on the other side can be very decent. Let's get rid of the politics, and let's do what is best for America. Let's get this country out of the mess it is in. The distinguished Senator from Ohio has shown us some ways here.

Our tax policy is for the birds. We know what we need to do, but every time you raise a solution, you have somebody saying: Well, that is not the answer. Then we have the conflicts between the two Houses. That is good because that is what helps us to refine some of this legislation.

All I can say is, I just wish all of us would put the country first, put politics second, be politically astute but at least be open to rational reasoning, whether it comes from the other side or our side. I am just amazed at how we can sit and belabor these things day in and day out and never really get together. We are hurting the country because we are unwilling to get together. We are hurting the Congress of the United States because we are unwilling to get together.

I could go on and on as to our unwillingness to get together. I think it is time for us to wake up and start saying: Look, let's find common ground. Let's find ways of getting together instead of constantly fighting each other on every stinking issue that comes up. There are reasons for differences in politics and reasons for differences in tax policy, but we ought to be able to at least discuss these differences without there being total partisanship, which is what we are, unfortunately, suffering from. I believe we can turn this mess around. If we do, it will be a banner for everybody to march behind, and it seems to me it will be an example for the whole world. I would like to see us do it.

I know there are people on the other side who cannot stand the President. Yes, he won an election they didn't think he should have won, but he did win. He has thrown his hands open to the other side and, I believe, would do more. It was only 7 or 8 years ago when he was much more moderate than he is now. I think all they need to do is to reach out and grab his hands and say: Look, we will find some common ground here in the best interests of our country and in the best interests of everybody.

It is not bad to fight things out. I don't have any problem with that.

That is part of this body, part of what we do. But we actually have to come to some conclusions that will push the country forward, and we are not doing that, except on a limited basis that really doesn't amount to all that much.

We are coming to the end of a very difficult year. The Democrats thought they were going to win the Presidency, and they didn't. They especially feel badly about losing to somebody like Donald Trump, who, I think, has held out his hands and his arms to them and would do so if they would just embrace a little bit more of what he is trying to do. I would like to see us do this. I believe he would throw his arms out to whomever in this body would work with him, and by working with him, we may be able to get some of our ideas on both sides actually put into law that may help this country.

I really particularly enjoyed and appreciated the comments from the distinguished Senator from Ohio. I think he is one of the most distinguished people in this body. Earlier, I heard the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania. He is a brilliant guy who works his butt off to try to get us into good places. We ought to listen more to these folks. There are folks on the other side who are brilliant, too, who, I think, make a real difference.

I particularly enjoy my counterpart on the Senate Finance Committee, Senator WYDEN from Oregon. We are different. We have different philosophies, but I have never seen a day when he wasn't willing to sit down and work out our problems, and that to me is pretty important.

Our leaders are good people. I have watched CHUCK SCHUMER for all the years he has been in the Senate and before, and he is a better leader than what we are getting here lately. I have watched MITCH MCCONNELL. Mitch is one of the shrewdest people I have seen in this body since I have been a Member, and he is open. I would like to see our leaders get together a little bit more. I would like to see a little less fighting and a little more constructive work together. I don't expect miracles because I have been here only 41 years, but I do expect that we can do much better than what we are doing, and it is going to take both sides getting together to do it.

We happen to be in the majority right now, and the Democrats should give us an edge. We should give them the edge when they are in the majority. I think that I, for one, have done that.

I hope we can put aside our differences and start working together in the best interest of the country. I believe in this country. It is the greatest country in the world. People all over the world are praying that the United States will get it together. They know that we can lead. They know that we have leadership in the Congress of the United States. We can get it together if we will.

I appreciate my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I appreciate that we have differences. I appreciate that sometimes those differences put us into pitched battles. That is not all bad, either. But it is bad if we don't work things out and if we don't look for the good on the other side in both ways.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish to commend the distinguished chairman of the Finance Committee for his hopes for more bipartisanship and his concern about the way the Senate is working today. I appreciate that. I think we all hope that in the new year there will be more bipartisanship. I think there are some areas where we can work together.

On this issue, though, I think we have some basic disagreements, and we are still debating those and articulating our differences before we cast a vote tonight. I have said for a number of weeks now—not months but certainly weeks—when describing the bill that is before us, the prior iteration of the bill in the Finance Committee and the version in the House, that I thought that each one of them had a few things in common, in my judgment. This is my sense of the overall bill.

First of all, I think every one of these bills has been a giveaway to the rich or the superrich and a giveaway to profitable corporations. I think it is excessive. We have a difference of opinion on that.

This is a tax bill, and yet it will have a substantially adverse impact on health care because of one basic provision that was added in the last couple of weeks. That provision alone will cause healthcare premiums to increase by an additional 10 percent a year, and it will cause 13 million people to lose their healthcare, according to the Congressional Budget Office, including, by one estimate, 5 million fewer Americans benefitting from Medicaid. At a time when we should invest substantially in the middle class and invest in our children, roads, bridges, schools, scientific research, skills training, and broadband in rural communities—we can make the list even longer—this tax bill prevents that from happening in a significant way because of the giveaways that I talked about to profitable corporations and the superrich.

This bill will literally pay for a permanent corporate tax cut on the backs of middle-class families in the next decade. Congress's official scorekeeper, the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation, tells us that in the next decade, meaning the second 10 years that this bill is in effect, the bill uses hundreds of billions in tax increases on working families to pay for a permanent corporate rate cut. I will say that again. In the next decade, taxes go up for you across America, working families, to pay for a 14-percentage-point cut for profitable corporations.

This kind of result, where we have a corporate tax break which increases debt and someone else has to pay for it down the road, is a result that only a swamp dweller could support, but unfortunately that is where we are today.

How about for children? There has been a lot of discussion about the child tax credit. Thankfully, there was debate about that. We don't talk about children in this body nearly enough or that tax credit, but, unfortunately, even the proposals by some on the Republican side weren't adequate enough. Even the ones rejected may not have been enough. Under this legislation parents of 10 million children in the lowest income working families will either receive no improvement in the child tax credit or a token increase of $1 to $75. The last minute changes to the bill, which got a lot of publicity in the last couple of days—those last-minute changes to the bill—will do nothing additional for these families.

Another 14 million children in low- and middle-income working families would get something by way of the child tax credit but less than the full $1,000 per child increase that a family making $400,000 a year would receive. For a fraction of the hundreds of billions of dollars going to the very wealthy and profitable corporations, we could have, in this bill, made sure that every low-income parent gets the full $2,000 per child tax credit, but because of the way the bill is written, it doesn't allow that to happen for every low-income parent. I think that would have been a worthy goal of the legislation, but that is not where we are. To say that is unfair is a vast overstatement. The families who need it the most aren't getting the full benefit of the child tax credit increase, but those who are wealthy get an extra $2,000 of child tax credit.

I mentioned the Joint Committee on Taxation. Let me give you another way to look at the bill according to the Joint Committee on Taxation. The JCT estimates that in 2019 alone, the second year the bill is in effect, were it to pass, more than $36 billion in tax cuts will go to households worth more than $1 million. That is in the document entitled JCX–68–17 of the Joint Committee on Taxation. It is a $36 billion cut for the wealthiest Americans, while over 57 million middle-class households—my definition for those making under $100,000—will see a tax increase or tax cut of less than $9 a month in 2019. So for 57 million middle-class households, they will see a tax increase or a tax cut of less than $9 a month in 2019.

Instead of lining the pockets of the rich with $36 billion in tax cuts in 2019, that money could have been used to connect Americans to the internet, especially Americans who live in rural areas. Let me be precise: 39 percent of the people living in rural America don't have high-speed internet.

Mr. WYDEN. Will my colleague yield?

Mr. CASEY. Yes.

Mr. WYDEN. My colleague is making a very important point, and I think it would be great if he would repeat those figures, because all night we have had Republican Senators come to this floor and say: Hey, middle class, just wait until February. Wait until February, and your paychecks are going to be bulging.

From what my friend from Pennsylvania has just said, using this new data that we just got from the Joint Committee on Taxation, what we have picked up—and my friend from Pennsylvania has clearly done his homework—is that something like 60 million taxpayers with an annual income of $200,000 or less will get practically nothing—maybe $100 a year in tax relief or a tax increase. So I think what my colleague is talking about—I would like him to walk me through the numbers he used—is that it directly contradicts what we have been hearing last night, where one Republican Senator after another was saying: It is just going to be good times come February because your paycheck is going to bulge.

Would my colleague just repeat what he found?

Mr. CASEY. I want people to make sure that people know the document. This is the document, JCX–68–17. If you look at the category of Americans who are making $100,000 or less—that is 57 million households who make under $100,000—they would see either a tax increase of one kind or another or a tax cut of less than $9 a month in 2019.

I don't think that is much help when we consider that it is not as if that is the only revenue available—that all we can come up with is $9 a month—because I just walked through the other number which is relevant—the $36 billion that will come in 2019, the second year that the bill is in effect, going to households worth more than $1 million.

If I had to choose, I would say that we should give all of that $36 billion to middle-income families or folks trying to get to the middle class or at least a substantial percentage of the $36 billion. I have been asking for months: Why do people making more than $1 million, that category of Americans, need $36 billion in tax cuts? I don't think they do.

It is interesting—I want to commend the work of the ranking member of the Finance Committee. In some of our debates, one of the numbers that came out in the last couple of weeks was what has happened to the top 1 percent since 1980. I said several times that they have had a bonanza. I didn't have an exact number when I said that; now I do. Since 1980, the share of national income for these folks in the top 1 percent, which is less than $1 million a year, but it is about $730,000 and up, so that is—the 1 percent goes beyond the millionaires and up. But since 1980, the top 1 percent have had their share of national income go up from 11 percent to 20 percent, from 1980 to 2014, so it has almost doubled. So my point is, they have done pretty well since 1980, so why do a big share of them—meaning the million-dollar-and-up crowd—why should they get $36 billion in this tax bill? It doesn't make a lot of sense.

So that is one way to look at it. What we could invest these dollars in—a bigger tax cut for the middle, a bigger tax cut for those struggling to get to the middle, working families trying to get to the middle, or other priorities, such as infrastructure. I mentioned just one idea on rural broadband. I think rural America should get some help being connected to the internet. That is one way we could focus on priorities.

Let me give another example—the estate tax. As many people know, once fully implemented, this bill doubles the estate tax—it exempts the first $22 million of inheritance from the tax, which is $11 million per individual. The cost of doing that will be roughly $9 billion a year. In the earlier versions of the House and Senate bills, that number was a lot higher. There was a lot higher revenue loss from the elimination of the estate tax, but even with the changes, there is still a revenue loss of an estimated $9 billion a year.

Well, what could we do with $9 billion? Well, in the midst of this debate about the Children's Health Insurance Program, just for 5 years of the Children's Health Insurance Program, that is roughly the number that we need. So 1 year of revenue losses from the estate tax equals 5 years, roughly, of paying for the Children's Health Insurance Program. And that is not done yet. The Children's Health Insurance Program expired September 30, and I hope that in the midst of all of this work on tax policy, we are going to get that done. I know that the distinguished chairman of the Finance Committee, for years, from the beginning, has been a strong advocate of the Children's Health Insurance Program, and I commend him for that, but we have to get it reauthorized in a few short days.

I wanted to talk as well—I know I probably am limited on time, and I will move quickly—on the Republican budget because you can't really read the tax changes in isolation; you have to also consider them in the context of the Republican budget resolution that passed. That budget proposal, which did pass, proposes to cut Medicaid by $1 trillion over the next 10 years. So that is $1 trillion with a ''t'' for Medicaid. The Republican budget also proposes to cut Medicare by over $400 billion over the same period, over 10 years. So the proposal roughly proposes to cut about $1.5 trillion from just Medicare and Medicaid. All the while, this Republican tax bill contains almost the same amount of unpaid-for tax cuts.

We heard recently from Speaker RYAN that he wants to ''reform'' Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Well, my view of that is, when they talk about reform in that context, that means cutting—cutting funding for programs that working men and women of my home State of Pennsylvania and the country have paid into to ensure that they have some retirement savings and a safety net for when tragedies and unforeseen events occur. Some people refer to Social Security and Medicare as earned benefits because they are. They have earned those benefits for Social Security and Medicare.

How about outsourcing? The Republican tax bill gives U.S. companies that offshore jobs a large tax cut on old profits that is unavailable to companies that kept jobs and production in the United States. This means that a company that outsourced to Mexico to take advantage of cheap labor will pay less taxes on accumulated profits than a domestic company that kept jobs in the United States. In fact, once the bill is enacted, some profits from an overseas factory may never be taxed in the United States, while a company that keeps those jobs here could be taxed at the U.S. corporate tax rate. This disparity could actually encourage companies to move production and jobs overseas.

We mentioned earlier the tax cut for major corporations. One of the great leaders of corporate America for many, many years, Jack Bogle of Vanguard, said the following a few weeks ago. I don't know what political party Jack Bogle is in, but he said this most recently about corporate profits:

> Corporate profits after taxes last year were the highest they've ever been in the history of GDP going back to 1929. And we are thinking of giving relief to the corporations at the highest levels ever. Individual wages are at the lowest level in about 15 years as a percent of GDP.

Those are not my words; those are Jack Bogle's words.

So corporations will have a tax windfall to spend on increasing executive compensation if they want or increasing stock buybacks or increasing dividends. All this is with absolutely no guarantees that workers will see benefits from this tax cut, despite assertions by many here in Washington about what would happen on wages and other benefits.

Mr. President, I have maybe 3 more minutes. I know we are maybe a little over time.

There has been a little bit of discussion—not enough—about what happens to the Consumer Price Index, which is used as a baseline for measuring programs over time. Maybe the most pernicious tax—and that is the best word for it—in the bill is the so-called Chained CPI, which alters the way inflation is measured. This bill raises an estimated $134 billion on the backs of hard-working Americans by changing how the Tax Code measures inflation—so-called Chained CPI. So it is the measurement of inflation that is going to change, and that is going to have an adverse consequence for untold millions of Americans. This number grows over time. The Joint Committee on

Taxation told us that this single provision increases taxes by at least three times as much in the next decade as it did in the first decade—potentially as high as $400 billion in the second 10 years. This will be in full force when a lot of young people are entering the workforce. Someone who is just starting their professional life will see this tax increase haunt their paychecks for the next 50 years.

There is a lot we could talk about in terms of missed opportunities here, but let me conclude with this: There is nothing in this bill that invests in rebuilding America. I thought we would have an opportunity to do that, as we seemed to be headed that way a couple of years ago, but we don't have that opportunity with this bill. We could be using this opportunity to make a substantial investment in roads, bridges, schools, water systems, or the like, but that won't happen. In our State, we have 4,500 structurally deficient bridges, and we wish that we would get some more help in addition to State dollars going for those.

There is nothing in the bill to expand college affordability and nothing to ensure that workers' wages increase. Amendments like that were offered in the committee. It was all Democrats for the amendment and all Republicans against it.

Those in the middle class and those working to join the middle class continue to tread water in this bill, while the superrich zoom ahead.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. We know the world has changed a whole lot in the last 30 years—the way we travel, how we communicate, the way we work, our hairstyles, the clothes we wear, the movies we watch, the music we listen to—but one thing hasn't changed: Our outdated Tax Code hasn't kept up. We simply can't afford to wait any longer. Now is the time to act.

Hoosiers need a raise. Working families across America need a raise. American businesses need to remain competitive in what is an increasingly global and hypercompetitive economy.

The bill we are voting on today will provide real relief to all Americans, especially middle-class families and those of modest means. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will creates a Tax Code that is simpler, that is fairer, and that allows Hoosiers to keep more of their hard-earned money, and that is what they want.

This bill we are voting on today will help create an environment where jobs and businesses can grow by making permanent a corporate tax reduction to 21 percent. We have the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world. That is no way to remain competitive.

We will lighten the burden on small businesses with this legislation. I come from a small business family. My dad worked 6, 7 days a week growing up. He sold HVAC equipment and spent a lot of time on the road. I know because he told me that it irked him that when he added up his profits, he discovered toward the end of the year that over half of what he earned he paid to various forms of government. We provide relief to businesses like that.

We shift the structure of the international tax system so that foreign profits from U.S.-based companies will be invested right here in American communities, not overseas.

Throughout this process, I have listened carefully to extensive feedback from the people of Indiana, and I have to say that I am grateful for all the Hoosiers who weighed in over the course of this effort. They helped me shape this work product in a way that will more benefit the people of Indiana today and for future generations.

I heard, for example, from Susan from Indianapolis. Susan said:

> Our tax system has become so complicated—the average person needs to hire someone with expertise to help. If most of us didn't have to hire help—right there we'd be saving money.

Susan, you are right, and that is why we have lightened the burden for millions of Americans with this proposal.

Under this act that we will be voting on this evening, 9 out of 10 Americans can take the standard deduction. We have doubled the standard deduction, vastly simplifying compliance with a convoluted, unfair Tax Code that picks winners and losers. We undo so much of that with this bill we will vote on this evening.

I heard from Debbie from Clark County. Debbie contacted my office about her business's challenges. Debbie said the following:

> We are constantly striving to reinvest in our company through new equipment and increased wages to hire and retain good employees. A lower corporate tax rate will allow us to buy more equipment and offer . . . better wages.

It is common sense, and I am glad that Debbie contacted me to reinforce what is on the mind of so many Hoosier business owners.

This bill continues and expands the support for Indiana's highest priorities, and that is why I will be supporting it. Among these priorities are deductions for contributions to benefit our charitable organizations essential to communities throughout Indiana and throughout our country and keeping tuition waivers for graduate students untaxed. I again thank the graduate students and all the stakeholders throughout Indiana who had concerns related to this issue. They weighed in. We made changes to the legislation to accommodate their concerns, and this will enable Hoosiers to be better equipped to thrive in this ever-changing global economy in which we live.

We managed to maintain the earned income tax credit so that work pays more than joblessness. We expanded the child tax credit for families trying to make ends meet. We protected the adoption tax credit so that caring adults can become loving parents. We preserved private activity bonds. These benefit low-income housing and help to build hospitals and schools and other essential programs in the communities that need them most.

Now, the bill also makes good on our promise to repeal what many regard as the most oppressive aspect of ObamaCare—the individual mandate tax. I promised Hoosiers for years and years that I would get rid of the individual mandate. Tonight we will be fulfilling that promise.

In Indiana nearly 140,000 Hoosiers chose to pay this tax instead of buying insurance they either don't want or can't afford. In my home State, 81 percent of those who paid this tax made less than $50,000 per year. This comes from the IRS. And 40 percent of the people who pay this tax make less than $25,000 a year. Tell me this isn't a tax on the working poor.

This bill lifts the burden for families in Indiana and across the country, and it is one of the many reasons that I will be proudly supporting it. Collectively, this is a no-brainer. This legislation will lead to an increase in capital investment, which will lead to an increase in economic growth. This bill will make workers more productive so that they earn higher wages. This bill, across every income category, will cause Americans to see a reduction in their tax rates and more take-home pay—more of their hard-earned money in their pockets. So many Americans haven't seen an increase in take-home pay in well over a decade. It is time to provide relief to hard-working American families. It is time to create certainty for our job creators so that they can create more jobs.

I look forward to helping to move this legislation across the finish line this evening. I hope we get some bipartisan support in that effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, today is a terrible day. It is a terrible day for millions of working families in this country. They just want Congress to work for them. It is a terrible day for people who just want to get on with their lives and not have Congress cost them even more money.

It is a terrible day for millions of hard-working people, but it is a great day for giant multinational corporations and billionaires who fund Republican campaigns across this country. Today is their day. Every fundraiser, every fat check from a billionaire, and every champagne-and-caviar party has been about getting to this day—the day when the politicians whom they put in charge of Washington would pay them back with a $1.5 trillion giveaway.

Supporters of this bill call it tax reform. It is not tax reform. It is a heist—a heist that steals from millions

of middle-class families and hands that money over to the wealthy; a heist that will hurt Medicare and Social Security and reduce healthcare coverage by 13 million people in order to hand over money to giant corporations that are already rolling in profits; a heist that will hurt our economy and blow a hole in our national debt.

The American people have seen through this scam. They see through every lie that has been pushed forward. They know this bill doesn't provide middle-class tax relief. It ultimately raises taxes on more than 60 percent of working families in this country. They know this bill does not promote economic growth. Nonpartisan projections have shown that it will have a negligible impact. Even former Republican officials admit it. They know this bill will not raise wages for working people. Corporate CEOs have already said so. Those CEOs have told everyone who would listen that when they get their truckloads of money from the GOP tax bill, they will turn right around and funnel that money to their wealthy shareholders.

They know this bill isn't even to help Americans. A third of those shareholders who will get truckloads of money from the GOP bill don't even live in the United States.

Over the last month and a half, we have all watched as one Republican Senator after another has cast aside every single one of their supposed principles to get behind this monstrosity of a bill. Real relief for the middle class is gone. Concern about the national debt is gone. Concern about economic growth is gone.

There is only one principle left: Reward billionaire campaign donors. This is not a conspiracy theory. It is not a partisan attack. It is what Republicans in Congress are saying in public to reporters. As one of my Republican colleagues said in a moment of honesty, if they don't pass this tax giveaway bill, ''financial contributions will stop.'' And a Republican House Member said big donors told him to pass the tax bill or ''don't ever call'' them again.

Let's call this out for what it is. It is government for sale. That is how you end up with a $1.5 trillion tax giveaway to corporations at a time of record corporate profits. It is not supposed to be this way. Congress is elected by the people. It is supposed to represent their interests, not those of the people and companies rich enough to fund campaigns.

Boy, there is a lot of work for us to do. Over the last 30 years, corporate profits have skyrocketed while wages for working people have stayed flat. But even though corporations—not families—have been getting richer and richer, Congress has forced families to pick up more and more of the cost of our military, our roads and bridges, and our schools.

Corporations used to pay about 30 percent of the cost of running the government. Now, it is under 10 percent. But today, the politicians who run Congress will slash corporate taxes even more and shift even more of the burden onto working families. Working people will pay more so that giant corporations can pay less.

There is no better example of this than the bill's treatment of Wells Fargo. Last year, we found out that Wells Fargo had opened millions of fake accounts so that executives could goose their sales numbers, drive up stock prices, and rake in bigger bonuses. It turns out that Wells Fargo had also charged half a million customers for auto insurance they didn't need, which meant that a lot of people—including soldiers and sailors and marines—got their cars repossessed. That sounds pretty sleazy. But instead of holding them accountable for cheating their customers, this Congress is on the verge of passing a tax bill that will shower more free money on Wells Fargo than any bank in the country. That is right. When this bill passes, the punishment to Wells Fargo for cheating millions of Americans will be a big gift-wrapped present worth billions of dollars in tax giveaways.

This tax bill is shameful, and it is the result of a shameful process. There were no hearings on the bill that overhauls the Tax Code and shifts around trillions of dollars, no input from a single Democrat, and no time for vetting by actual tax experts.

Big-time donors are very happy with this outrageous tax heist, but the American people are angry, and they are right to be angry. Over and over, again and again, they watched this Congress ignore their pressing problems, ignore children's health insurance, ignore flat wages, ignore an opioid crisis, ignore hurricanes and wildfires, ignore working families who are ripped apart by greedy politicians and politics built right here in Washington. Over and over, again and again, they watch, instead, as Washington jumps to do more favors for billionaires, more favors for giant companies, and more favors for campaign donors.

Today is just one more terrible day for hard-working Americans, just one more terrible day in Washington where Washington works great for those at the top and will not lift a finger to help anyone else. People's anger is understandable. I share it. Sooner or later, a reckoning is coming, and I promise you this: When it does—when the politicians who lead this Congress and vote for this tax heist are held accountable for turning their backs on the American people who sent us here—then we will be the kind of country we want to be. Then we will be the kind of country we were meant to be—a democracy where everyone, even the richest and the most powerful, pay a fair share, and where we all work to build a better future for all of our kids.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, C–SPAN is an interesting phenomenon. When I go back home to Illinois, I run into people who say: I saw you on C–SPAN.

I often joke and say: Do you have trouble sleeping? Why are you watching C–SPAN?

I wonder who it is that really watches C–SPAN. It could be a lot of people who are really fascinated by politics. It could be folks who are finding it difficult to sleep. It could be some older folks who just pass the time by watching what happens on the floor of the Senate and the House.

Tonight, I think we have a special audience of C–SPAN. Tonight, I think it is entirely possible that we are going to have the wealthiest section of audience and television viewers in the history of C–SPAN. Do you know why? They have a bill coming up—a bill that is designed for the wealthiest people in America. So they are probably at this point trying to figure out how to livestream C–SPAN onto their yachts so they can see if this tax bill is going to pass. Why would they do that? Why would they be tuned in? Because this is the biggest tax break for the wealthiest people in the history of Tax Code reform. It is.

It turns out that in 2027, 83 percent of the tax breaks in this bill go to the top 1 percent of wage earners in America. Boy, how can you sit down and write a tax bill that is so lopsided for the wealthiest people in America? You had to have said to the staff first: Find out what taxes are left that the wealthy might pay and get rid of them—reduce them right and left. And they did.

Imagine that that is your starting point for Tax Code reform in America—that you are ignoring working families and the reality of the life they lead, you are ignoring small and medium-sized businesses, and you are focusing on the wealthiest people in America and the biggest corporations.

Do you know what I found in Illinois? When you travel around my State and meet the business leaders and ask them point-blank: Tell me about Federal taxes, the biggest corporations never complain because the Tax Code is loaded with escape hatches for the biggest and wealthiest corporations and individuals. It is small and medium-sized businesses that pay the most taxes. They are the ones that should have been the biggest beneficiaries on the bill. Secondly, there are the working families. People who are struggling paycheck to paycheck, who can't save money for their kids' future, are worried about their kids' student loans. Wouldn't it have been great if the Tax Code reform really focused on them instead of on the wealthiest people in America?

It is a stereotype, I know, that the Republicans worry about the rich instead of the working folks, but when you look at this bill, sadly, that is the reality.

Here is the good news, if there is any good news in that terrible story I just recounted. The American people get it. They understand it. How in the world

could you write a bill and call it tax reform and tax cuts, and have two-thirds of America hate it instantly? They did it. Congratulations. You put together a bill, which, instinctively, the American people knew was a bad deal for them. And it is.

When you take a look at this bill, you realize why we are asked to vote on this Republican tax plan—a plan written behind closed doors and rushed through Congress on a last-minute rush this year. It is because the Republicans are bound and determined to have something that they passed this year. In all fairness, they passed the Defense authorization bill, but they spent month after month on repeal and failure to replace our healthcare system, and now, before they leave town at the end of this calendar year, they are bound and determined to get this done, whatever it takes, their so-called tax reform plan.

After a year in control of Congress and the White House and extraordinarily few legislative achievements to show for it, Republicans are forcing through this partisan tax plan only a few short weeks after it was unveiled.

You may not remember unless you were watching C–SPAN that night—I came to the floor when we were finally given the Senate tax bill. It was about 500 pages long. As I was going through it, on page 257—I remember the page—I looked at it, and I thought, what is this? There was a page in the middle of the tax bill with all sorts of scribbled handwriting that was absolutely impossible to read. Now, remember, this is a Tax Code that is going to have an impact on individuals, families, and businesses to the tune of millions of dollars, and here was a page in it that no one could read. Do you know why I know no one could read it? I submitted it to the RECORD, and the clerk of the Senate came and found me afterward and said: Senator, you can't put this in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD because we can't read it. That is what was going on here in writing the Tax Code of the United States of America. It was a slapdash, hurried effort that sadly does not reflect the best of this institution or the best of the Members who are part of it.

Why would they do this? Because if this bill were subject to proper scrutiny, as it should have been—you only really reform the Tax Code once every several decades—a monumental giveaway to corporate America would have emerged, a tax break or giveaways to the wealthiest Americans.

So while most families are focused on getting ready for the holidays, my Republican colleagues and friends are hoping most Americans will be too busy to notice them passing a tax bill that will raise taxes on middle-income families.

This is supposed to be the greatest deliberative body in the world, the U.S. Senate, and my Republican colleagues threw regular order and bipartisan input right out the window of the Capitol. They have spent the past 2 weeks behind closed doors writing the final version of this tax bill. Only last Friday evening—last Friday—we finally saw the text of this tax plan fully released, fully revealed. There are more than 1,000 pages of new Tax Code, and that is what we are expected to understand and to vote on in a matter of days.

Are the memories of my Republican colleagues so short that they have forgotten their repeated calls of ''read the bill'' when we considered the Affordable Care Act? Did they forget their criticism of that process, which took place, incidentally, over many months, characterized by transparency, multiple bipartisan hearings, and included well over 100 Republican amendments? Have they forgotten all the criticism they leveled on that effort to try to provide health insurance for more Americans?

This is no way for major legislation to be written, this tax bill before us. It certainly reflects the best wishes and hardest work of many of the lobbyists and corporate donors who benefit my Republican colleagues.

Is it any wonder that after this rushed process, the initial analysis of the final bill shows that millions of working families in Illinois and across the Nation will be hurt, while the wealthiest 1 percent of wage earners in America receive a massive windfall? Sadly, it is no surprise.

In their plan, Republicans chose to make essentially all individual provisions to the tax bill temporary in order to pay for massive, permanent corporate cuts that will overwhelmingly benefit the wealthiest investors. The result? As I said, when the bill is fully phased in by 2027, more than half of all Americans will see their taxes increase under the Republican plan. These are tax increases that will be felt particularly hard by those households in the bottom 60 percent and those families with kids. By 2027, while middle-income families pay a higher tab, the richest 1 percent of Americans will receive a whopping 83 percent of all the tax cuts under this plan. I just can't believe they pulled this off, that the Republicans figured out how to give 83 percent of the tax breaks to the top 1 percent of wage earners in America and sell it as tax reform to help working families. It is indefensible.

This devastating result was baked into the DNA of this Republican plan from the start. There is no greater example of this than Republicans' determination to erode State and local tax deductions. It used to be a standard principle in American taxation that you wouldn't tax people on the money they paid in other taxes. We didn't tax a tax until this bill came along. We used to say that if you pay a State income tax or State sales tax or State property tax, we are not going to impose a Federal tax on your tax payment—no tax on the tax. They didn't buy it. They changed it. They put limits on the amount of deductions that you could take for this. What does it mean? Ask the Realtors in my State, the homebuilders, and they will tell you that this is going to be a damper on economic growth in the State of Illinois—a growth that we desperately need in my State to create jobs and opportunities.

This deduction is taken by nearly one-third of all taxpayers, and taxpayers in my home State benefit from it among the most in the Nation. The principle is simple: Under the new Republican plan, Illinoisans will start paying Federal taxes on the local, State, and property taxes that they pay, and they don't receive the deduction that historically has been there.

Republicans apparently feel differently because in the face of weeks of warnings from Realtors, homebuilders, local school districts, State and local officials, and first responders about the increased difficulty that the elimination of this deduction will create, it didn't deter them one bit, and every single Illinois Republican Congressman ignored all of this and voted for this terrible plan. It means higher tax bills for middle-income families in my State and many others and a strain on crucial State and local investments in education, infrastructure, and public safety.

That isn't the only hit to middle-income families. Here is the one that I find the most reprehensible. Millions of people will lose health insurance because of this tax reform bill. It guts one of the major provisions of the Affordable Care Act.

After failing miserably to achieve one of their campaign promises to repeal the Affordable Care Act and take away healthcare from millions of families, Republicans slipped into this tax bill a provision that undermines the Affordable Care Act. The net result of it is an increase of 10 to 20 percent for health insurance premiums for those buying in the marketplace, and—this is a kicker—13 million Americans are going to lose health insurance because of this health reform bill that is brought to us by the Republicans.

I don't see how you can go home to any State and say: Good news. I gave a tax break to the wealthiest people in America and the biggest corporations, and average working folks here are going to lose their health insurance. How can you stand up and say that is good for your State or for this country?

Republicans' efforts to take away healthcare from families and give tax cuts to the wealthy shouldn't surprise us. The surprise here is that so many of the so-called fiscal hawks—how many times have I heard my Republican colleagues come to the floor and pose for holy pictures when it comes to the national debt. Oh, it goes over and over again, the speeches they give when there is a Democratic President. Now that there is a Republican President, political amnesia has set in.

It turns out that this Republican tax reform—giving tax breaks to the

wealthy and not to the middle-income families of America—will add $1.5 trillion to our national debt. Who will pay off that debt for these tax breaks to the wealthy? I am afraid it is our kids and our grandkids. Somehow these fiscal hawks are able to convince themselves that cutting taxes on the wealthy is worth a new burden on our kids.

When you get past all the fancy rhetoric, the bottom line is, Republicans believe that we can afford to add $1.5 trillion to the debt if it means giving tax cuts to the wealthy but that we can't afford it as a nation when we know we are going to need it to make massive investments in things that mean a lot to working families. Shouldn't we have put more money into fighting the opioid crisis that claimed almost 2,000 lives last year in my home State of Illinois? Shouldn't we have put more money into helping kids go to college so they aren't burdened with student loans that change their lives? Shouldn't we have put more money into medical research? Couldn't we have put more money into investing in our infrastructure? No. The Republicans say there is a much higher priority—tax cuts for wealthy people.

What does make sense to my constituents and millions more across America is that $1.5 trillion increase in national debt poses a real threat to our economic future and a threat to the future of Medicare and Medicaid.

PAUL RYAN, Speaker of the House, Republican leader, said they are going to take care of the added deficit and debt by cutting entitlement programs like Medicare and Medicaid. I would say to PAUL RYAN, my neighbor from Wisconsin, you are in for a fight, my friend—and it will not be just the Democrats; it will be a lot of folks in Wisconsin who aren't going to stand for that outcome.

Americans deserve better than what the Republican leaders in Congress have brought to us in this bill—rushed through without bipartisan consideration and without review by experts. This may be a ''big political win for the Republican Party and their donors,'' but it is on the backs of hard-working families.

Some of these consequences that we face are already dangerously clear, others, which we will only discover as we pore through the fine print of this 1,000-page bill—we can only guess what they will mean.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I come from a different world. I come from the real world. I have been here just a couple of years, but this sort of rhetoric that we have heard on the floor of the Senate over the last few weeks is amazing to me. The disinformation, the known misleading statements that are made—that doesn't exist for very long in the real world because there are rules and regulations out there where that is taken care of. But it seems that if you are good at it in this body and can get away with it long enough, that what Vladimir Lenin once said is true, and that is this: It doesn't matter what you say is true; it only matters that you say it and say it and say it, and pretty soon, to the common folks in your country, it becomes true.

Well, I think we have lived through a century where we have done nothing but disproved that as a free society here and as a leader of the free world.

I think what is at stake tonight in this vote is bigger than just a few changes in our Tax Code. Good grief. We can work for the next 10 years and not clean up every detail in this Tax Code, but this is a first step to bringing sanity back to our country.

Let me put a little perspective on this. Let's talk about what President Trump inherited when he took office in January of this year.

We had 8 years of the lowest economic growth in the history of the United States—1.9 percent. We had the lowest workforce participation rate in over 40 years.

In the last 8 years, we borrowed 35 percent of every dollar that was spent by the Federal Government—this body borrowed before you and I got in the Senate.

Under the last administration, for 6 years of those 8 years, the opposing party in this body had a supermajority for 2 years and they had a majority for 4. So for 6 years, that party had the White House and they had a majority in the Senate at least. In those 8 years, they doubled our national debt from $10 trillion to $20 trillion this year, even though last year—or the last year of the last administration, 2016—our Federal Government collected more Federal tax than any other year in our history, and the last few years have been the same.

With all that borrowing, even when the last administration said: OK, we need to fix infrastructure, we need to get the economy going—they put $1 trillion into fake infrastructure investments, and none of these parameters moved. We still had no economic growth.

This is the same party that liberalized Social Security and Medicare to the point where they are not sustainable. And in just 14 years—14 years—both those trust funds go to zero. This is not about going to Medicare and Social Security and finding money to give to the rich; this is trying to figure out how to get the economy going so we can save Social Security and Medicare. It is no more complicated than that.

But what we are hearing here are words like ''shameful'' and ''ridiculous.'' I think what President Trump walked into was shameful and ridiculous. For the United States—the wealthiest country in the history of the world—to have those sorts of performance parameters is ridiculous. It is shameful. There will be a day of reckoning, and it is today. Our President took that seriously, and he said that job No. 1 is growing the economy.

Let's put that in perspective. He said, in the first year of his administration, he wanted to focus on three things that would grow the economy. One is he wanted to pull back on regulations. I am here to tell my colleagues that over 860 of the most onerous regulations and rules have been reversed so far this year.

The second thing President Trump said was he wanted to work on energy. Well, we got the Keystone Pipeline working. He actually moved on stopping the Clean Power Plan that was thwarting the energy production in this country, and, in this bill tonight, we will open up ANWR production to give us capability on the energy side of our economy.

The third thing the President said he wanted to do was to change our archaic tax plan; not to give money to the rich but to open our companies and our workers to be more competitive with the rest of the world.

For the last decade—maybe even the last 30 years—I have lived this in my career. For 40 years, I have watched U.S. competitiveness decline and decline and decline. Why? Because of two reasons. Our Federal Government grew out of any proportion. In 2000, the size of our government was $2.4 trillion. Last year, it was $4 trillion. That is under one Republican administration and one Democratic administration. We have put regulation on top of regulation. We liberalized all of our social programs to the point we cannot afford it.

The other thing we did is we loaded onto this tax situation where we lost our competitiveness with the rest of the world. The rest of the world lowered their tax rates while we actually increased ours, they reduced their regulations while we increased ours, and we just simply lost our competitive edge, such that today, two out of every three acquisitions regarding a U.S. company are U.S. companies being bought by a foreign company. Now, that is a C corporation. In many cases, it is an S corporation. Why is that? It is because of the difference between our 35 percent corporate tax rate and the average of 18 percent in Asian countries and 21 percent in Europe. All we are doing is trying to reach some point of being reasonably competitive with the rest of the world.

This President walked into a disaster, and what we have seen in the first year are dramatic results: Two million new jobs have been created this year, 860 regulations reversed, and illegal crossings on the southern border are down 60 percent.

We passed a bill in this body 97 to 2 that allows a department head in the Veterans' Administration to remove people for cause, for lack of performance. Guess what. So far this year, over 500 people have been asked to leave because of performance reasons in our

Veterans' Administration. That is something both Democrats and Republicans should be proud of.

We also see a Department of Education that has removed 300 people for the same reason. CEO competence is at a 20-year high. Consumer confidence, despite what the other side wants to tell us, is at a 16-year high, and many studies are proving that today.

Tonight I want to clear up some of the absolute, unbelievable mistruths and myths about this bill that are being perpetrated. We heard several just in the last hour on this floor. The first, the great one—I love this: This tax plan is only going to help the wealthy. We are going to tax the low-income people in America, and we are going to give it to the billionaires.

Let me just give some examples here. A median-income family today—a family of four who works, with two kids, who makes a median income of $73,000 a year is going to get a $2,200 tax reduction. That is a 60-percent reduction in their Federal tax rate.

A single working mother, as an example, with one child at home—now, this is a parent who has to find childcare, has to find a way to work, gets very little help from family or friends, doesn't own a home—I know many people like this—that person is going to get a 75-percent tax cut in this bill.

Beyond that, today, 52 percent of households in America—this is before this bill—pay zero Federal income tax, but this bill goes further. Up to 6 million people will potentially be removed from the tax rolls because of this bill. I am just a simple business guy, but I just look at the facts. These are mathematical facts here. There is no projection, no opinion. This is part of this bill that belies half of the mistruths we just heard in the last hour on this floor.

The second one is a process question. Of course, this is what we always hear the minority party say. I dare say, as an outsider, I heard Republicans say this in the last 6 years. There is no transparency, no regular process, no regular order. Well, in the last few years, there have been over 70 public hearings—Senate hearings in committee—about tax reform. This particular bill has been in full regular order. Yes, it was done in reconciliation, but that is regular order. I personally would have preferred not to have done that, but it is within regular order.

It went through committee. Amendments were put up and debated and passed in committee. Then the bill was brought to the floor. We voted on amendments on this floor, and then it went to a full vote and was passed—or will be passed tonight.

The third myth: This tax plan will not generate economic growth. This is a really rich one because most of the people saying that have never written their signature on the front of a check. They just simply haven't been in business. Yet these are now the newfound experts in this body who say: Well, this is not going to grow the economy. Of course, it is not; we need bigger government to grow the economy. Haven't we proven that?

No, we have disproved that. If anything, over the last 8 years, we have proven that bigger government does not correlate with a better, growing, competitive economy. What this bill simply does is it gets government back out of the way, to some degree, helps us become competitive with the rest of the world, and ignites this economy.

Let's just look at what is being said about this. First of all, it has been estimated that nearly 1 million new jobs will be derived because of this bill. It is estimated that annual incomes of working Americans will go up somewhere between $4,000 and $9,000. That is in addition to the tax cuts. That is because the demand for labor in a growing economy will create rising wages.

The other side says: Well, to get rising wages, you need to increase minimum wage. That is the wrong way to look at this. This bill, I can tell from personal experience, will create demand for labor, and that labor will increase in price.

GDP will grow somewhere between 3 and 5 percent over the next decade. I actually believe it will be much more than that. The big one, in my mind, is by eliminating the repatriation tax, and, by the way, we are the last country in the world to still have this archaic tax, which we collect no tax on today, but eliminating that brings over $2.6 trillion back into this economy.

The other side says: Well, that is not going to go to the economy, it is going to dividends or to pay down debt. Guess what. In a capitalistic society, it is all contributory. It all adds to the benefit of growing the economy.

Capital formation is part of what created this miracle in the first place. The last 70 years in America has been, I would argue—as a 40-year experienced veteran of the business community here, as the only Fortune 500 CEO in the Senate and in all of Congress, I would argue that this economic windfall we have experienced over the last 7 years in America is based on three things: On the top of the best workforce in the history of the world, it is innovation, capital formation, and the rule of law. Quite frankly, because of regulations in this body over the last 15 years and because of our Tax Code, we have taken those for granted. Tonight we begin to reverse that.

The next claim I want to debunk is that this tax plan adds $1 trillion—I love this one—will add $1 trillion to the debt. This is from the other side that administered more than doubling our debt in the last decade. No other President in the history of our country, prior to the last administration, added $10 trillion to the debt of this Nation.

There is no bigger debt hawk in this body than I, and I can tell you this is what brought me into the political arena. This $20 trillion in debt is the beginning, it is not the end of the story. Unless we do something today about our Federal debt, it is going to grow $11 trillion, is the latest estimate, over the next decade. Most of that is on the mandatory side.

To solve this debt crisis, clearly we have to grow the economy, but we will not solve the debt crisis only by growing the economy. We will not solve it unless we start by growing the economy.

We are told by the Joint Committee on Taxation and by the Congressional Budget Office—and both of these modeling groups I have personal problems with—but even if you take their worst-case scenarios, you only have to grow the economy two-tenths of 1 percent per year. That is going from 1.9 percent, which is the average baseline of the last 8 years, growing it by two-tenths of 1 percent to 2.1 percent over the next decade. There has only been one time in one decade in the last 70 years where this economy didn't grow more than 2.5 percent, and in that decade it grew 2.3 percent. So in no decade since World War II have we grown less than 2.3 percent.

In addition, CBO says we have to grow 2.2 or 2.3 percent. The last two quarters are already over 3 percent. The fourth quarter looks like it will be as well if we pass this tax bill tonight.

It just seems to me that people who have experience in the real-world economy know that investing in our workers is the best investment we can make, and that is what this tax bill does. Don't be confused by the rhetoric.

Members of the other body in the last hour say there is going to be a day of reckoning. There is, because I believe that the other side has failed the working poor in this country. The best example is ObamaCare, perpetrated by the supermajority, 60 votes on the other side, and we know it is now collapsing under its own weight, but this is what they have done to the working poor in America.

In 2014—and it has been that way over the last 3 years as well—but 2014 is the last year we can get from the IRS. Under ObamaCare, the IRS fined 8 million people in America $2 billion, and the irony is, half of those people make less than $25,000. Now, that is outrageous, and for those same people to beat their chests now about this being for the rich, it is even more outrageous.

I will close with this. The biggest argument they make is that this is for the rich, and the rich are not paying their fair share. The top 1 percent today pay about 40 percent of all tax revenues that we have, and the top 10 percent pay over 70 percent. That was true before this bill, and that is going to be true after this bill.

What is going to also be true is the fact that the working men and women of America will find that their place of employment, whether it is a one-man self-proprietorship, a one-woman self-

proprietorship, or a major corporation, those companies, in a global economy, are going to find themselves more competitive because of what President Donald J. Trump is doing in this tax bill and what we are backing up tonight. I argue that this is a historic day, not just because of tax relief for the working men and women of America, or building competitiveness for those same people around the world, but for our kids and grandkids so we can begin to deal with this huge growing debt.

People say: Well, you are adding debt. No, this is an investment, and, by the way, it is not $1.5 trillion. They know that $500 billion of that—one-third of it—is this policy versus law. They know that, but it still makes a better story. They also know that $200 billion of that are fake costs because it says if you eliminate the way it is scored right now, if you eliminate the repatriation tax, the Joint Committee on Tax and the Congressional Budget Office, in their infinite wisdom, say that is going to cost you $200 billion. We don't collect $200 billion in repatriation tax. As an outsider, I cannot believe we sit here and talk about these fake numbers that way.

The President of the United States has a vision for our country. We need to rise up and be competitive again in order to deal with this long-term tax situation but, more importantly—or as importantly—to be able to afford to do the right things for our people. When we have hurricanes, when we have fires, we don't have the resources to do that. Every dime we are spending behind these hurricanes and behind the fires and behind all of the things we are doing is borrowed. Every time we spend on our military, it is borrowed money. The only way to eventually change that is to begin to grow our economy. This is only one of many steps that are required, but this tonight becomes historic because you can't do the others unless you make this economy competitive.

I want to praise our President tonight for having the guts to stick through this process. We are going to pass this bill tonight and make America great again because we are going to make America competitive again.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, the American people understand this bill. They understand this bill will hurt middle-income families, and they know this bill will add to the deficit. They understand the Joint Committee on Tax has scored the bill as adding to the deficit. I hear so many of my Republican friends talk about these deficit hawks. We follow the recommendations of our professionals. This bill will add to the deficit. That is why the American people believe this tax bill, which has been advertised by Republicans as a tax cut, is not good for America. It is an extraordinary thing to get the majority of Americans against a bill that is purported to be a tax cut, because they understand it is not a tax cut for middle-income families.

Let me give one number. The corporate tax rate under this bill will be reduced from 35 percent to 21 percent. That is a substantial reduction in the corporate tax rate. Now, understand that only about 5 percent of the largest businesses in America pay the corporate tax rate. It isn't a rate paid by small businesses. This is paid by megacorporations. They are getting a tax cut.

When we look at the cost of that tax cut as scored by the Joint Committee on Taxation—the professionals—it is about $1.5 trillion of business tax relief. Guess who pays that $1.5 trillion. It goes on our national debt, and middle-income taxpayers are going to be asked to foot the bill.

They get that. They understand this doesn't help middle-income families. You are not helping middle-income families when you raise the estate tax limits so fewer families pay the estate tax, which already affects only the 0.2 percent wealthiest in America. They are getting a break. Already, we have a concentration of wealth in America. The top 1 percent owns close to 40 percent of the wealth in America. They understand that doesn't help middle-income families because they understand that we have seen in America the shrinking of the middle class and that we have had an increase in income and wealth disparity in America.

That is not good for our economy. That is not how you grow an economy or how you grow a middle class. This bill will not grow a middle class. This bill will make even more extreme the income and wealth disparities in this country.

They also get it when we talk about what is temporary and what is permanent. I really appreciate my friends talking about the deficit. Of course, they don't include the fact that many of these tax provisions are only temporary, such as the major tax relief for individuals. That is temporary in nature. The business tax is permanent.

I hear my Republican friends saying that we will just extend it. If you extend it, the deficit is even larger than the $1.5 trillion. As to the individuals and the middle-income families who get some of the benefits of this bill, when we add it all up, they lose. The benefits they get are temporary, but business tax relief is permanent. This bill is an assault on middle-income families.

When we take a look at how we are going to have to pay off that deficit and who is going to pay off that deficit, it is going to be middle-income families left holding the bill. We know that. That is why this bill is not popular. That is why we know that it is not good for middle-income families and it is not good for our economy.

But they even go further. It has been pointed out in the Senate that they have added a provision that is now in the conference report which takes out an essential part of the Affordable Care Act on individual responsibility that would ultimately leave about 13 million Americans without health insurance.

Why was this done? It was done for two reasons. First, Republicans have been trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act, and these 13 million people who have benefits today are going to lose it. But a second thing is that you can use those savings—and they are not real savings; we are talking about less money being used to help people get health insurance—to provide additional tax cuts for wealthy Americans and corporations. So you are knocking 13 million people out of health insurance and using that money in order to extend these tax breaks for higher income and businesses. That is unconscionable.

What is going to come next when you are not even subtle about this? They now are going to say that the deficits are bigger than previously expected. I hear my friends on the Republican side. They are deficit hawks. Well, you are not deficit hawks when you deficit-finance a tax cut. That is not helping this country.

So what comes next? Well, we are going to have to cut Medicaid and Medicare. Who suffers when you cut Medicaid and Medicare? It is going to be middle-income families again.

Then we have to take a look at the Federal budget. We have heard some of my colleagues already talk about this. I see plans right now that we are going to take it out on the Federal workforce—the Federal workforce, which has already contributed about $182 billion to the deficit, through getting pay adjustments below the cost of living, having freezes, going through continuing resolutions, sequestration, and government shutdowns, asked to do more with less.

We are talking about critical services to the American people, whether it is research done at the National Institutes of Health, whether it is food safety, whether it is veterans services, or whether we are talking about dealing with the opioid crisis in America. All of that is in jeopardy, and we know that. We know they are coming back with cuts in these programs because we now have a bigger deficit as a result of giving corporations these big tax cuts—not all businesses, just the biggest businesses—and giving the high-income people this tax relief. That is why the American people do not like this bill.

We talked about creating jobs. I heard my friend again talking about creating 1 million jobs under this tax bill—spending $1.5 trillion and creating 1 million jobs. We had bipartisan legislation in the last Congress that took a couple hundred billion dollars of one-time only revenues and said the responsible thing would be to use that to seed infrastructure. If we could get

that up to about $300 billion, we create 4 million jobs. So that is 4 million jobs for $300 billion. Here we have 1 million jobs, by their own number, and spending $1.5 trillion. It is a terrible investment for the American people. We can do better.

This bill is also an attack on our States. It is an attack on Marylanders. It is an attack on the State of Maryland. Marylanders will come out much worse under this bill. There are many reasons for it, but one of the major reasons is that the bill eliminates the deduction for State and local taxes. I am going to talk for a moment about that because I did serve in the State legislature, as did many of the Members of this body. I believe we should respect State and local government. It is the same taxpayer who pays local taxes, pays State taxes, and pays Federal taxes. Ever since we adopted a Federal income tax, one of the only provisions that remains intact throughout the entire history of the income tax is to say that we are not going to tax on tax. We are not going to impose taxes on State and local taxes. That, of course, was one of the reasons why a constitutional amendment was changed, to allow income taxes, and now we are breaking that commitment on Federalism.

We are really breaking the constitutional spirit to tell our State and local governments that we are going to impose taxes on taxes and make it more difficult for them to raise the revenue they need in order to finance State and local services.

In Maryland, about 45 percent of Marylanders use the State and local tax deduction. We happen to rank No. 1 in the Nation on the number of taxpayers that use State and local tax deductions on their Federal income tax returns.

The average amount in Maryland on deductions for State and local taxes is $12,900. That is the average. So the average taxpayer in Maryland is going to pay more taxes as a result of the $10,000 limit imposed in this bill. But it even gets worse for Marylanders, and I think this is going to be typical in a lot of States around the Nation. Maryland has an itemized deduction. It has standardized deductions on their income taxes, as many States do. But I think Marylanders are going to be surprised to find out they may not qualify for itemizing their deductions at the Federal level because, as a result of the changes that have been made here, only about 5 percent of the people in this country will still use the itemized deduction.

So go and do your Federal taxes, then go do your State taxes, expecting to be able to deduct the State items, only to find that if you haven't deducted at the Federal level, you can't deduct at the State level because we harmonize in our enforcement with the Federal Government. You didn't think about that when you put this provision in the bill.

I heard my friend say we had hearings. We didn't have hearings on that provision. We have never had a hearing on that provision. We never brought State people into our committee and say: What happens if we raise the deduction? What impact does it have on the States? What are the impacts on the States if we eliminate State and local tax deductions? We haven't had those discussions.

Quite frankly, it is going to be more challenging for our States and local governments to meet their needs. They have the primary function for educating our children and keeping our communities safe. That is a primary function of local government, and sanitation and dealing with public health. It is going to be much more challenging for our State and local governments to be able to do their finance. Did we consider that when we took up this bill? The answer is no. There are so many consequences to this bill that have not really been thought out. Let me just give a few.

There is a reason why people concerned about the real estate industry are concerned about this bill. The limitations we put on the deductions of property taxes and the limitations that have been increased on the amount of interest you can deduct on mortgages will all have an impact on property values. Properties that Americans own will be less valuable with the passage of this bill because they will not be able to get the same tax advantages as they had prior to it. Have we thought about that impact? Have we thought about what that does to wealth and middle-income families? Have we thought about what impact that has on assessed evaluations on local governments that depend upon property taxes? There has been no consideration of that.

I met this week with leaders in our nonprofit community in Baltimore. We went over some of the issues they deal with in providing help to our community. Several were faith-based-type charitable groups. I went over what impact it is going to have with the restrictions on the number of people who are now going to be using itemized deductions.

One of the charitable faith-based groups I met with told me that the overwhelming majority of their givers are in the middle income. Today, they are able to take a deduction because they use itemized deductions. Under this bill, most of those families are going to fall within the standard deduction and will no longer be itemizing their deductions on their Federal tax returns.

Now, they don't know what impact that is going to have. But when their givers find out there is no tax advantage to that gift, you know it is going to have an impact. We know that. Charitable giving is going to be down. I hear my colleagues talk frequently that a lot of what we do to help people is that we rely upon the private sector. We rely upon the charitable groups. Did we have the courtesy to bring them into a hearing to understand the impact this is going to have? No, it is going to have a negative impact on our nonprofit charitable groups, and that is another consequence of this legislation, that we don't have the full impact to understand.

Let me talk just a minute about this 20 percent deduction on passthrough income. Just so people in this country understand, this is a rather complicated provision that was added to the bill. It provides additional tax relief for businesses that do not use the C tax rate. These are our partnerships, our S corporations, our limited partnerships, and our sole proprietorships. Understand what we are trying to do here. Because we have cut the corporate rates so low—down to 21 percent from 35 percent—we recognize that other businesses now are going to be at a disadvantage. That is true. So we are trying to figure out some way to give them tax relief.

Now, I have heard my colleagues talk about simplifying the Tax Code. This provision does anything but simplify the Tax Code. It has what is known as guardrails as to how we calculate how much you can take, up to the 20 percent of the distribution, as a nontaxable event. That guardrail affects the type of business you are doing, it affects the amount of assets you have, it affects the amount of salaries you give, the labor that is done within it, whether it is actually services performed by the partnership or not. My goodness, it is a minefield for accountants and tax lawyers to now develop shelters.

I am old enough to remember the 1986 tax debates here in the United States Congress. I was not part of the Congress. I was in the State legislature at the time. I remember the effort to get rid of shelters, because shelters are an inefficient way that you set up business structures in order to minimize taxes. Well, this passthrough provision is going to be used as shelters. There is no question about it. We have had no hearings at all as to how we are going to deal with that problem.

Then I heard one of my colleagues on the Republican side talk about how this is going to bring all these jobs back home.

Let me make this clear. What this bill does is move toward a territorial tax system. What does that mean? That means companies today that outsource some of their work to another country will be able to pay only that country's tax rate rather than the U.S. tax rate. That means that in some cases they will be able to pay less in taxes. What they can now do—because we are harmonizing to a territorial tax, we are rewarding some companies to outsource.

Do we understand what the lower tax rates for corporations—what the net impact will be on jobs in America? All we hear is: Oh, we are going to create new job opportunities because we have lower rates for businesses. But we don't

tell the American people that they can keep those jobs overseas and pay a lower tax rate. Let's be honest about that.

Why didn't we have a hearing on that part? The consequences are far from understood.

I have heard several of my colleagues talk on the floor of the Senate about preserving credits, that we preserve this credit—like you are getting credit for leaving something in the Tax Code. Let me say something. Credits are important. In the city of Baltimore, we have used low-income housing tax credits, historic tax credits, and new market tax credits to generate a lot of economic activity. It is very difficult to put together a major economic program within our urban centers. I could point to West Baltimore and how we have used all those tools for urban redevelopment. I could point to our arts district and how that has been used.

I know this. Credits are not going to be worth as much under this bill as they were before because we have changed the value of a tax credit. What impact is that going to have? I don't know. The problem is, none of us know, but it is going to have a consequence. It is going to affect economic growth, and it is not going to be positive. We haven't taken steps to try to counter that.

I noticed there were some changes in the renewable energy sector. I don't fully understand all the changes, but I do know those who are involved in wind and solar believe that what we have done will make it more difficult for them to get investors. It sort of looks as if, perhaps, this was an effort to help the fossil fuel industry.

When you look at the ANWR provision, which opens up the pristine areas of the Arctic to drilling in Alaska, you know that this bill is tilted toward fossil fuels rather than having a level playing field for America's energy. I worry, is this the first step to mid-Atlantic drilling off the Atlantic coast off of Maryland? I worry about the impact it could have on the Chesapeake Bay.

I must confide that I have been in conversations with some of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, asking whether we will cooperate on a corrections bill. I find that amazing. We haven't passed this bill yet, and we are talking about the process to correct the mistakes that are clearly in this bill. That is not the way we should be legislating. We know that we are going to have to revisit the passthrough provisions because we know they are not drafted right. We know the tax credits are going to need additional time. We know the energy provisions are going to have to be revised. We know we have done damage to middle-income families who are going to demand we correct this. Why don't we get it right the first time? Why do we have to look at passing a bill that we know is badly flawed?

The last point I want to make is, there has been a commitment that when we take up a tax bill—don't we want to simplify the Tax Code, so Americans understand it better and feel more comfortable that everyone is being treated fairly? Secondly, the one argument I hear from all stakeholders is: Make the Tax Code predictable so that we can plan. Give us the rules. Don't change the law all the time. Don't put temporary provisions in there because Congress has a habit of missing extender dates. We have already missed extender dates in this Congress, and now we are talking about leaving town this week while we have provisions that have expired, such as the Children's Health Insurance Program.

What does this tax bill do? It has numerous provisions that expire, some within a short period of time, adding uncertainty to our Tax Code and the planning of our Tax Code. This bill is anything but simplifying the Tax Code, and it is certainly not providing predictability.

The American people get it. That is why they believe this bill should not be passed. It is an assault on middle-income families. It is dangerous to our national security because it increases our deficit. It will hurt millions of people who will lose their health coverage, and it should be defeated.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WICKER). The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I would like to spend a few moments talking about why my colleagues and why the American people should be supportive of this very important legislation, historic legislation, that we are debating on the Senate floor. It is particularly historic for my State, the great State of Alaska. There has been a lot of misinformation on this bill, and we are seeing a robust debate, which is fine.

I don't need to repeat all the arguments on both sides, but I will say that my colleagues on the other side have seemed to focus on one particular point. They are coming here and making this point again and again; that is, the point that this bill will supposedly raise taxes on the middle class. We are hearing it, and everyone is saying it. The problem with that argument is, it is fundamentally untrue. The truth will be in the paychecks of the American people, which they will see in a few months.

Let me talk about some of the provisions that are in the bill. The bill will be a middle-class tax cut for the vast majority of Americans.

Here are some of the provisions. These are in the bill. These are the facts. The bill doubles the standard deduction. For an individual, the standard deduction goes from $6,300 to $12,000. For married couples, it goes from $12,700 to $24,000. That is in the bill. That is important for middle-class families. It doubles the child tax credit. The child tax credit is doubled from the current $1,000 to $2,000, so more parents can claim it. It is in the bill. That is a fact. And it lowers rates. In fact, it not only lowers rates for middle-income Americans, it lowers rates on every single income bracket in the IRS code. That is a fact.

Bottom line, an average family of four making $75,000 a year will have about 200 more dollars per month in take-home pay under this bill—$2,400 a year. A single parent making $41,000 a year will see their tax bill decrease by $1,300. That is a 73-percent decrease. That is a fact. It is in the bill.

Let me mention one other critical way in which this tax bill will bring middle-class and working-class tax relief. It will get rid of the very regressive and unfair individual mandate of the Affordable Care Act. About 20,000 hard-working Alaskans and over 6 million Americans have to pay a tax, a penalty to the IRS for not buying something—health insurance—that they cannot afford. Let me repeat that. They are penalized for not buying something that they can't afford. Think about the absurdity of that.

Here is why this is such an important middle-class tax cut. When we get rid of that penalty, close to 80 percent of the 6 million Americans who pay the ObamaCare individual mandate tax—close to 80 percent of them—make $50,000 or less. Think about that. Tonight, we are getting rid of that tax, that unfair penalty, and that will undoubtedly bring tax relief for the middle class.

This bill also decreases taxes on small businesses and companies so that they can reinvest at home in our great Nation, hire American workers, give pay raises, and help grow our economy.

Many of these ideas, doing these kinds of things, have been bipartisan policy ideas for years when we have talked about tax reform. Let me give you one. In 2012, President Obama said that our current business tax structure hurt American business and inhibited growth. He said that the tax system ''provides tax breaks for moving jobs and profits overseas and hits companies that choose to stay in America with one of the highest tax rates in the world.''

That is from President Obama. It was true then, and it is true today.

Something has to be done, and we are doing it tonight. The bill will also give small businesses and large companies a chance to help grow our economy. You have heard Senator after Senator come to the Senate floor. My colleague from South Carolina has talked about this eloquently for years. It is an issue I care deeply about. But here is the issue. We have had a lost decade of economic growth. For over 10 years, we have not hit 3 percent GDP growth once in a year.

It is an issue I care deeply about. As a matter of fact, I come to the floor and I talk about it a lot. One thing I have noticed in my 3 short years in the Senate is that I am not sure I have seen my colleagues from the other side ever come here and talk about the need

to rev up the economy or about the fact that 1½, 2 percent growth, which is what we have had for almost the last 13 years, is not good for the country. I think, unfortunately, a lot of them believe in this idea of the new normal—that America hitting at 1½, 2-percent GDP growth is America hitting on all cylinders. Don't believe it.

We talk about GDP growth. What is that? It is really a proxy for the health of the U.S. economy. It is a proxy for the American dream. In the last 10 years, that economy has been sick. For millions of Americans, the American dream, which is based on a strong American economy, has been a mirage. We have to change this. This should be a bipartisan issue. Getting back to traditional levels of 3 percent or higher GDP growth should be something 100 Senators agree on. This bill is going to help us do that.

Finally, I would like to talk about something in the tax bill that will greatly benefit my State and our country; that is, opening the 1002 section of the nonwilderness Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for American energy development. A lot of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have talked about this, but I am going to tell you this. I can't begin to describe the elation that will be felt by many—so many—in my State when this passes. The vast majority of Alaskans support this provision and have supported it for decades. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Alaskans have worked tirelessly to get it passed since the 1002 area was set aside by this body in 1980 for possible energy development.

Don't believe all the rhetoric about ''Oh, that area is off-limits.'' That area is actually on-limits. In 1980, the Congress said: We know there is a lot of energy there, and we should look at the opportunity to explore it. Congress, come back and make the call someday.

Hundreds, thousands of my constituents, my fellow Alaskans—and I know some are in the Gallery right now, right above me—have been working on this for decades, and I want to thank all of them. But we have been stopped. We have been repeatedly stopped. You are seeing some of the arguments, many of which are truth-challenged. So I am being polite to all of my colleagues.

Year after year, we have tried. The last time that we made a big effort in this, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle killed this provision in 2005. It was a crushing evening in 2005 when this provision did not pass. It was a crushing evening for the late, great Senator Ted Stevens, particularly when then-Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said that killing the ANWR provision and beating Ted Stevens was ''one of the joys of my life.'' That is from the former Senate minority and majority leader.

Voting for the provision to unlock ANWR tonight will be one of the joys of my life, and I am certain that Ted Stevens will be joyfully watching from above, smiling.

Last month, a group of Alaskans came to DC to testify before Senator MURKOWSKI's Energy and Natural Resources Committee about the importance to America, to Alaska, and to our communities of the energy provision in this bill.

Matthew Rexford, who lives in Kaktovik, AK, which is a village that is actually in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, provided riveting testimony. Let me quote from that testimony:

> My fellow Inupiat and I firmly believe that attempts to permanently block development in the 100—an area intentionally NOT designated as wilderness because of its oil and gas potential—is a slap in the face to our region and its people. It's exactly the same thing as saying ''It's okay for everyone else in this country to have a THRIVING economy, but you can't have one at all.''

To you people living on the North Slope and you people living in Kaktovik: Sorry, you can't do it.

Matthew went on to talk about how responsible oil and gas development supports local communities by providing jobs, business opportunities, and infrastructure investments, like schools and hospitals and clinics—things that most communities in America have in abundance. We don't have those in abundance in my great State.

He said that the industry ''has moved our people away from third-world living conditions—we refuse to go backward in time. It has provided other basic services most Americans may take for granted'' that communities like his don't have.

Increasing domestic energy production will not only be good for my State and for communities like Kaktovik, but it will also boost our country's economy, and—this is a very important point—it will strengthen America's national security.

My colleague from Maryland, for whom I have a lot of respect, just talked about how this is going to hurt our national security. I couldn't disagree with him more. Producing more energy responsibly—oil, natural gas, renewables—and making the United States the world's energy superpower once again will dramatically increase our Nation's national security. This is something that we should all agree on.

I have served in the Marines for over two decades, and I have served as a U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, whose portfolio included global energy issues. I have seen how energy can be used as a tool for good, productive diplomacy and for troublesome power grabs by our Nation's foes. When we don't have to import energy from countries that don't like us or when we have the opportunity to actually export energy—American energy—to our allies, this dramatically strengthens our Nation's national security.

The Presiding Officer and I both sit on the Armed Services Committee. We have heard for years from the Department of Defense's military and civilian leaders. Whether he be Secretary Carter, a Democrat, or Secretary Mattis, a great Marine general, they have all consistently emphasized this point: Making America the world's energy superpower will help with jobs, will help with our economy, and it will dramatically help our Nation's national security.

Let me conclude by telling a story that really emphasizes this point.

Last year, I attended the Halifax International Security Forum. National security leaders throughout the world attended. I was in a meeting with a great national security leader of this body, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, and we were meeting with a senior-level Russian dissident.

We asked him at the end of the meeting: What more can we do in our country to help push back against the Putin regime and the activities that it is undertaking to undermine U.S. interests around the world and in our own country? What more can we do?

He looked at us and said: The No. 1 thing that you can do is to produce more American energy.

Let me repeat that. In terms of national security, the No. 1 thing that we can do is to produce more American energy. We do it more responsibly and with the highest environmental standards of any place in the world. Opening the 1002 area in using those high standards—the world's highest standards—with the most advanced technology, will produce more American energy for the betterment of my State, my constituents, and for the whole country. We are on the cusp of passing a bill that will put more money in the hands of the middle class, grow our economy, and fulfill a 40-year-long dream for Alaska.

The might of America has always been and will always be in the ingenuity of our people—the ability of Americans to make decisions for themselves, to live their lives as they see fit, to build, to grow, and to make a better tomorrow for the next generation.

The American dream does not have a price tag, but it can be stymied. It can be stymied and stunted by an overbearing Federal Government that wants to hinder the freedom of the individual and an overbearing Federal Government that crushes economic hope and opportunity through overtaxation or overregulation. It does this by telling someone like Matthew Rexford, who is from a small village more than 5,000 miles from here, that he and his people cannot make better lives for themselves and for their children by developing resources on their own land.

That is going to end tonight. At long last, that is going to change, and the vast majority of Alaskans—Democrats and Republicans, Native and non-Native—are going to celebrate. I believe, when the American people realize and experience the positive benefits of this bill through stronger economic growth, better jobs, and more take-home pay, that they are going to celebrate too. I

urge my colleagues to vote for this historic legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to be on the floor tonight with my friend the Senator from Alaska. The Navy salutes the Marine Corps and salutes him for his service before.

Now I just want to follow up on a couple of things that he mentioned. He need not stay on the floor if he doesn't want to, but he is more than welcome to as he spent a little bit of time criticizing the individual mandate.

Harry Truman used to say that the only thing new in the world is the history that we forgot and never learned. So I just want to take a minute and talk about the history of the individual mandate.

The individual mandate was not invented by Barack Obama. ObamaCare was never invented by Barack Obama—the idea for exchanges in all 50 States and the sliding scale tax credit to buy down the cost of healthcare in those exchanges. The idea to have an individual mandate so that everybody has to buy healthcare and that if you are not eligible for Medicaid or Medicare, you need to get healthcare and that, if you don't, there is a fine was not Barack Obama's idea. The idea that employers of a certain size and with a certain number of employees have to provide healthcare coverage for their folks was not a Barack Obama idea. The notion that the insurance companies could not deny coverage to folks who had preexisting conditions was not an idea that was invented by Barack Obama.

ObamaCare with those five provisions—exchanges in every State, a sliding scale tax credit to buy down the cost of the care, the individual mandate to make sure that everybody is getting coverage, the employer mandate by which the employer has to cover the employees, the prohibition against insurance companies in their not providing coverage for those with preexisting conditions—had its origin from right here in the U.S. Senate in 1993—right here in 1993.

The legislation was introduced by a Republican Senator from Rhode Island, Chafee. It was cosponsored by 22 other Republican Senators, including the chairman of the Finance Committee—one of the people I most admire here in this body.

Those five ideas didn't go anywhere in 1993, but do you know who took them? A Governor of Massachusetts took those five ideas and said: Maybe we could use those five ideas to cover everybody in the State of Massachusetts. Governor Mitt Romney created RomneyCare. Do you know what? For the most part, it worked. It covered just about everybody there. Initially, it had problems with affordability, but it has done better over time.

When we worked on the Affordable Care Act, we took that Republican Senate proposal from 1993. We took RomneyCare from 2006, and we included it in the Affordable Care Act because it was a market-based approach to making sure that everybody who didn't get coverage from their employers and who were not eligible for Medicaid and were not eligible for Medicare could get coverage.

We see in this legislation before us tonight not just changes to the Tax Code but also a further effort to destabilize the exchanges, which is something that the current administration spends a lot of time trying to do. It is a Republican idea. It is a market-based approach. They happen to be good ideas. They happen to work in Massachusetts, and they could work in the 49 other States if we didn't have an administration and my colleagues here in this body and in the House who were trying to destabilize the exchanges.

I hope that when this legislation passes and we repeal the individual mandate that we will not just repeal it. Why do we have it in the first place? It is to make sure that young, healthy Americans are going to be getting coverage in the exchanges. You can't just have sick and elderly people in the exchanges. You have to have some young, healthy people in there too. That is why we have the individual mandate. If we are going to get rid of it, we need to replace it with something that works at least as effectively. That is one of the things that we need to work on in our going forward between now and 2019 when the individual mandate is repealed under this legislation.

I had the privilege of serving as the Governor of my State of Delaware for 8 years. During those 8 years, we cut taxes in 7 out of the 8 years. We also balanced our budgets for 8 years in a row. We paid down some of our debt. We earned AAA credit ratings for the first time in the State's history. We still have them. For those 8 years, we had a general assembly whose majority was Republican in the House and whose majority was Democrat in the Senate. Do you know what we did? We actually worked together. We worked together in that we used sound budgeting practices, and we used sound economic analyses and forecasts. We worked together, but neither side got everything it wanted.

In Delaware, we have something that we call the Delaware Way. I describe it with the letter C—four Cs—communicate, compromise, collaborate, civility. That is it. That is the Delaware Way—communicate, compromise, collaborate, and use some civility. We don't do much of that around here, and we are the worse for it.

During those years that I was privileged to be Governor and we cut taxes for 7 out of the 8 years, I would read each tax proposal with four questions. One, is it fair? Two, does it foster economic growth or impede it? Three, does it simplify the Tax Code or make it more complex? Four, what does it do to the deficit? Do we end up with a deficit? Do we end up with a balanced budget? Do we end up with a surplus? I asked those four questions.

Twenty years later, as we took up tax reform here in the U.S. Senate, I asked the same four questions. Is it fair? Does it foster economic growth? Does it simplify the Tax Code? What does it do to the budget or to the deficit situation that we face? Those are the four questions.

Others have already talked about fairness. Let me just say that when you look at what is going to happen in the first couple years after the passage of this legislation, lower income folks, families, are going to get a tax cut too. It is not just the wealthy; low-income families will get a tax cut, too, for a couple of years. Families making $30,000 will benefit. They will end up lowering taxes for the first 2 years after the implementation of this legislation. After 3 or 4 years, families making $40,000 or less will be on the losing side. After 5 years, families making $50,000 will be on the losing side. After 8 or 9 years, families making as much as $75,000 will not be paying less taxes, they will actually be paying more taxes.

Meanwhile, folks whose income is half a million, $1 million, or more, for the most part will realize very substantial reductions in their taxes—very substantial reductions—and as that income goes up, the greater those reductions will be in their tax obligation. Some people ask: Is that fair? It depends on whom you ask. If you happen to ask people who are making $30,000 or $40,000 or $50,000 a year, maybe not. It is fair for a while but not for long enough.

I mentioned the 8 years I served as Governor of our State and how we balanced our budget to pay down debt and got an AAA credit rating. More jobs were created in those 8 years than any 8 years in the history of the State of Delaware. I did not create any of them. I did not create one of them. I helped create a nurturing environment for job creation in our State so that little businesses could get started and grow into bigger businesses and bigger businesses could make a profit and hire more people. The Tax Code is an important ingredient in nurturing an environment for job creation and job preservation—not the only ingredient but an important ingredient.

Senator CARDIN stood right in front of me a little while ago and talked about how important it is to have certainty and predictability. That is almost as important as the tax rates, to actually know what we are going to face and not face, the uncertainty of rates going up or down and the rules changing in the years to come. But I would like to run through a short list of other ingredients needed in the nurturing environment that I don't believe we are addressing in these changes to the Tax Code.

One is commonsense regulations, regulations that protect us, protect our

health, our environment, and do so in a way that is cost-effective.

Another way to create a nurturing environment is to make sure that we are producing, out of our high schools, colleges, universities, and community colleges, people who can read, write, think, use math and have technology skills in science and engineering. The inability to come out of these schools and go to work in the millions of jobs that are going unfilled these days is because the skill sets that are demanded by employers for these millions of jobs are not met by the people who are looking for work, for the most part, except for about 800,000 people—the DACA folks who fill 800,000 of those 3 or 4 million jobs that are unfilled.

What is another ingredient? Access to capital, the ability of a business to get money, to raise money to be able to invest in plant and equipment and in employees in the workforce.

Another is access to foreign markets to be able to sell the products or the services we provide to other countries around the world, get into those markets.

Another is energy costs. My colleague from Alaska said in his comments that one of the things we ought to be in America is the superpower of energy. Who invented nuclear energy? We did. We are the Saudi Arabia of coal. We are the Saudi Arabia of natural gas. We create, as far as I know, as much electricity from wind and solar as I think any nation on Earth, and we need to do a whole lot more, and we can.

With regard to healthcare costs, we pay way too much money for healthcare in this country. Actually, we have a pretty good idea of how to bring it down. One of those good ideas is the exchanges, and if we stop undermining them and degrading them and destabilizing them, they would actually work like they do in Massachusetts and a bunch of other States.

Public safety is a key ingredient among the forces and factors that are helpful in creating that nurturing environment.

Investing in research and development that could be commercialized in terms of jobs and economic opportunity is hugely important.

There is also protecting intellectual property, protecting against cyber attacks, transportation, infrastructure. Earlier this year, the Nation's Society of Civil Engineers evaluated our transportation infrastructure in this country, and again this year, D—''d'' as in dog—because our roads, highways, and bridges are in deplorable shape in many parts of this country. Did we invest any money in that in this tax bill? If I had $1 trillion to invest in this country to strengthen our economy, I would put it in infrastructure, roads, highways, bridges, ports, airports, broadband, just deploying broadband in vast areas of the country and rural areas of the country where we don't have access to the internet. That is what I would do. We don't do any of that in this legislation.

In terms of economic growth and job creation, what we are told by most economists is, sadly, a lot of companies will make extra money from—realize greater profits from the changes in the Tax Code, the majority of them. According not to me but to economists who are a lot smarter than I, a good deal of that money is not going to further investments in plant and equipment, not into their workforce, it will be turned into dividends and stock buybacks and not to create the kind of economic growth we all want.

Let me talk a minute about the third question I always ask about tax reform proposals; that is, does it simplify the Tax Code or make it more complex?

During our markup, our vote, and debate in the Finance Committee on the proposals, one of my colleagues—I think it was Senator MCCASKILL—had a stack about this tall of the Federal Tax Code. One of our expert witnesses from the Joint Tax Committee was asked: Will this legislation that is before us tonight actually make that stack of books that make up the Tax Code—is it going to make it smaller?

He said: No, quite the opposite—it is going to make it larger. Now, the idea of doubling the standard deduction, enabling more people to not have to itemize their taxes—that makes the Tax Code simpler. That is a good idea. But overall, when you look at all the other changes in this legislation, that stack which represents the Tax Code is not going to go down; ultimately it is going to go up.

Those are not my words but the testimony from the Joint Tax Committee.

Lastly, what is going to be the effect of these tax changes? What is going to be the effect on the budget deficit? And here is where I think we really missed the boat. When Bill Clinton became President in 1993, we were in a deficit. We were in a recession, and he became President. Eight years later, when he turned the reins over to George W. Bush—in those 8 years, more jobs were created than in any 8-year period in the history of the United States. On top of that, in the last 4 years of that administration—1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001—we had a balanced budget and a surplus. When the reins of leadership were turned over to the next administration, George W. Bush's, I think CBO was forecasting a budget surplus of at least $5 billion, probably more. There was a concern that we were actually growing the surplus too fast.

Well, it didn't take too long for the surpluses to be eliminated, and when that administration came to an end, we were in the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. We called it the great recession. We went from 4 years of surpluses to the worst economy since 1930. That is what Barack Obama and Joe Biden and a new Congress in 2009 inherited.

I know some of my colleagues think that there has not been any kind of economic recovery. Just look at where we were in 2008 and 2009. For the last 8 years, we have had economic growth and job creation for 8 consecutive years. I don't think we have ever seen that kind of sustained economic growth in the history of our country.

Instead of paying down debt after 8 years of economic growth and job creation, we actually, last year, increased the deficit by $666 billion. With this legislation, we are going to add another roughly $2 trillion to our debt over the next 10 years.

This is a missed opportunity, folks. It doesn't have to be this way. There are good ideas in this legislation. The corporate tax rate is too high. Let's bring it down. I am for that. The standard deduction ought to be doubled. I think Democrats are for that. The child tax credit ought to be increased, maybe doubled, made refundable to help lower income families too. I am for that. The capital gains rate maintained where it is—I am for that. The repatriation of overseas profits—I am for that. There are a lot of things I think could actually serve as a foundation on which we could come to an agreement on bipartisan legislation. As far as I am concerned, we never really had a fair chance.

I will close with an African proverb. My friend Senator SCOTT is about to follow me, and he has heard me say this before. The old African proverb says: If you want to go fast, travel alone. If you want to go far, travel together.

If you want to go fast, travel alone. If you want to go far, travel together. We should have traveled this road together. If we had, we would have maybe some short-term pain but long-term gain. But I fear that with this legislation, it will be just the opposite. There will be some short-term gain but I figure, in the long run, long-term pain.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor and will pass it on to my friend from South Carolina.

Mr. HATCH addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I have been listening to this debate for a long time, and I have to admit it has been interesting, but it has been prolonged way beyond where it should have been.

My friends on the other side make much about this process, demeaning the Members and staff who really put it together.

This bill was marked up in the Finance Committee. It is the first reconciliation bill to be processed in committee in the Senate in over 12 years. During that period, Democrats held power for 8 of those years; Republicans, 4 of those years.

The reconciliation bill that made up part of the Affordable Care Act never went through the Finance Committee. That reconciliation bill never went through any real Senate process. To be fair, the Affordable Care Act repeal bill that my side proposed didn't go

through the Finance Committee either. As difficult as it was, as chairman, I put out a chairman's mark, modified it, permitted debate and amendments, and put it to a vote, all in conformity with committee rules. We had a full Senate debate, amendments, and votes. So I don't want to hear tonight or at any time that the process deteriorated. It didn't deteriorate.

Mr. BROWN. Will Senator HATCH yield for a question?

Mr. HATCH. No, not just yet. I am going to finish these remarks.

I am going to insert in the RECORD an analysis of winners and losers. The analysis is dated today. It was produced by the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have it printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BROWN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, I would just like to ask Senator HATCH a question.

Mr. HATCH. I have the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BROWN. I want to state my objection. There is objection, Mr. President. I would like to state my objection. May I state the reason for my objection?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah has the floor.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, then I will withhold the unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah has the floor.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, may I state the reason for my objection?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah has the floor.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I have just withdrawn the request. I will insert it later when it is more expeditious to do it.

The announcements I have been talking about is dated today, and it was produced by the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation. I would like to put it in the RECORD. We will do that, if we can. I hope my colleague will allow me to do that, and I will ask consent that it be put in the RECORD.

That analysis shows that middle-income taxpayers are winners. That nonpartisan data shows—sorry, my writing is not too good here—well, it shows that they are winners, and that is the clear impact of this bill. That data cuts through the rhetorical fog generated by my friends on the other side.

My friends on the other side focus on the year 2027—10 years from now—when, guess what, that is the year past the sunset of tax cuts on the individual side. Focus on the years the cuts are in effect, and you will see the middle class are really winners. There is no question about it if you focus on it.

I ask unanimous consent that this report, ''A Distribution of Returns by the Size of the Tax Change for the Conference Agreement for H.R. 1, the 'Tax Cuts and Jobs Act,' '' by the Joint Committee on Taxation be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

A DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNS BY THE SIZE OF THE TAX CHANGE FOR THE CONFERENCE AGREEMENT FOR H.R. 1, THE ''TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT''

[Calendar Year 2019]

INCOME CATERGORY (2)	Percentage of Returns				
	Tax Decrease		Tax Change Less than $100	Tax Increase	
	Greater Than $500	$100–$500		$100–$500	Greater Than $500
Less than $10,000	0.7%	3.5%	95.6%	0.1%	0.1%
$10,000 to $20,000	5.6%	38.9%	52.4%	0.4%	2.7%
$20,000 to $30,000	17.2%	30.5%	47.1%	1.0%	4.1%
$30,000 to $40,000	30.1%	32.0%	32.4%	1.9%	3.7%
$40,000 to $50,000	51.2%	21.7%	20.2%	2.8%	4.2%
$50,000 to $75,000	67.7%	14.7%	10.2%	2.8%	4.6%
$75,000 to $100,000	77.8%	10.4%	4.1%	3.0%	4.8%
$100,000 to $200,000	87.0%	4.1%	1.7%	2.0%	5.1%
$200,000 to $500,000	93.0%	1.8%	0.6%	0.9%	3.7%
$500,000 to $1,000,000	93.5%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%	5.9%
$1,000,000 and over	85.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	13.8%
Total, All Taxpayers	48.3%	17.2%	28.9%	1.7%	3.8%

Source: Joint Committee on Taxation

Detail may not add to total due to rounding.

(1) This table is a distributional analysis of the proposal in revenue table JCX–67–17, excluding the following sections: I. Tax Reform for Individuals: D.4.–.7., E.1D.–E.2., F., and 1.2–1.13. Under section H., the distributional analysis does not income the effect of the cost-sharing reductions and change in Medicaid spending.

(2) The income concept used to place tax returns into income categories is adjusted gross income (AGI) plus: [1] tax-exempt interest, [2] employer contributions for health plans and life insurance, [3] employer share of FICA tax, [4] worker's compensation, [5] nontaxable Social Security benefits, [6] insurance value of Medicare benefits, [7] alternative minimum tax preference items, [8] individual share of business taxes, and [9] excluded income of U.S. citizens living abroad. Categories are measured at 2017 levels.

(3) The categories reflecting the size of tax change are indexed for inflation.

A DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNS BY THE SIZE OF THE TAX CHANGE FOR THE CONFERENCE AGREEMENT FOR H.R. 1, THE ''TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT''

[Calendar Year 2021]

INCOME CATEGORY (2)	Percentage of Returns				
	Tax Decrease		Tax Change Less than $100	Tax Increase	
	Greater Than $500	$100–$500		$100–$500	Greater Than $500
Less than $10,000	0.4%	2.4%	96.8%	0.1%	0.2%
$10,000 to $20,000	5.8%	33.2%	55.1%	0.7%	5.1%
$20,000 to $30,000	14.6%	27.7%	49.0%	1.4%	7.2%
$30,000 to $40,000	25.2%	28.9%	36.4%	2.5%	7 0%
$40,000 to $50,000	45.6%	21.2%	22.5%	3.3%	7.4%
$50,000 to $75,000	61.7%	15.2%	12.3%	3.6%	7.2%
$75,000 to $100,000	72.2%	12.2%	5.0%	3.9%	6.7%
$100,000 to $200,000	82.4%	5.2%	2.1%	3.0%	7.3%
$200,000 to $500,000	88.5%	2.5%	1.1%	1.8%	6.1%
$500,000 to $1,000,000	90.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	8.4%
$1,000,000 and over	80.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.5%	18.8%
Total, All Taxpayers	44.8%	16.2%	30.5%	2.3%	6.2%

Source: Joint Committee on Taxation

Detail may not add to total due to rounding.

(1) This table is a distributional analysis of the proposal in revenue table JCX–67–17, excluding the following sections: I. Tax Reform for Individuals: D.4.–D.7., E.1.–E.2., F., and I.2.–1.13. Under section H., the distributional analysis does not income the effect of the cost-sharing reductions and change in Medicaid spending.

(2) The income concept used to place tax returns into income categories is adjusted gross income (AGI) plus: [1] tax-exempt interest, [2] employer contributions for health plans and life insurance, [3] employer share of FICA tax, [4] worker's compensation, [5] nontaxable Social Security benefits, [6] insurance value of Medicare benefits, [7] alternative minimum tax preference items, [8] individual share of business taxes, and [9] excluded income of U.S. citizens living abroad. Categories are measured at 2017 levels.

(3) The categories reflecting the size of tax change are indexed for inflation.

A DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNS BY THE SIZE OF THE TAX CHANGE FOR THE CONFERENCE AGREEMENT FOR H.R. 1, THE ''TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT''

[Calendar Year 2023]

INCOME CATEGORY (2)	Percentage of Returns				
	Tax Decrease		Tax Change Less than $100	Tax Increase	
	Greater Than $500	$100–$500		$100–$500	Greater Than $500
Less than $10,000	0.2%	2.0%	96.9%	0.6%	0.3%
$10,000 to $20,000	5.1%	29.2%	56.4%	4.3%	5.0%
$20,000 to $30,000	13.1%	26.6%	50.6%	2.7%	7.0%
$30,000 to $40,000	19.8%	28.6%	40.3%	3.7%	7.5%
$40,000 to $50,000	39.9%	20.0%	27.2%	4.9%	8.0%
$50,000 to $75,000	54.8%	15.2%	15.7%	5.5%	8.8%
$75,000 to $100,000	63.1%	14.6%	7.4%	5.3%	9.7%
$100,000 to $200,000	73.6%	6.4%	3.1%	4.6%	12.3%
$200,000 to $500,000	70.1%	3.6%	2.1%	2.8%	13.4%
$500,000 to $1,000,000	83.0%	0.7%	0.4%	0.8%	15.2%
$1,000,000 and over	65.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	32.0%
Total, All Taxpayers	39.7%	16.0%	32.2%	4.0%	8.1%

Source: Joint Committee on Taxation
Detail may not add to total due to rounding.
(1) This table is a distributional analysis of the proposal in revenue table JCX–67–17, excluding the following sections: I. Tax Reform for Individuals D.4.–D.7., E.1.–E.2., F., and I.2.–I.13. Under section H., the distributional analysis does not income the effect of the cost-sharing reductions and change in Medicaid spending.
(2) The income concept used to place tax returns into income categories is adjusted gross income (AGI) plus: [1] tax-exempt interest, [2] employer contributions for health plans and life insurance, [3] employer share of FICA tax, [4] worker's compensation, [5] nontaxable Social Security benefits, [6] insurance value of Medicare benefits, [7] alternative minimum tax preference items, [8] individual share of business taxes, and [9] excluded income of U.S. citizens living abroad. Categories are measured at 2017 levels.
(3) The categories reflecting the size of tax change are indexed for inflation.

A DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNS BY THE SIZE OF THE TAX CHANGE FOR THE CONFERENCE AGREEMENT FOR H.R. 1, THE ''TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT''

[Calendar Year 2025]

INCOME CATEGORY (2)	Percentage of Returns				
	Tax Decrease		Tax Change Less than $100	Tax Increase	
	Greater Than $500	$100–500		$100–500	Greater Than $500
Less than $10,000	0.3%	3.3%	95.6%	0.6%	0.3%
$10,000 to $20,000	6.1%	29.4%	55.2%	4.3%	4.9%
$20,000 to $30,000	13.8%	25.8%	50.0%	3.4%	7.0%
$30,000 to $40,000	19.7%	26.9%	41.8%	4.3%	7.4%
$40,000 to $50,000	38.9%	18.2%	29.0%	5.6%	8.3%
$50,000 to $75,000	53.0%	15.2%	16.2%	6.2%	9.5%
$75,000 to $100,000	61.4%	14.5%	7.3%	6.0%	10.9%
$100,000 to $200,000	70.7%	6.8%	3.1%	5.1%	14.4%
$200,000 to $500,000	75.1%	3.8%	1.8%	3.3%	16.0%
$500,000 to $1,000,000	80.2%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	17.6%
$1,000,000 and over	63.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.8%	35.0%
Total, All Taxpayers	38.9%	15.8%	31.9%	4.4%	8.9%

Source: Joint Committee on Taxation
Detail may not add to total due to rounding.
(1) This table is a distributional analysis of the proposal in revenue table JCX–67–17, excluding the following sections: I. Tax Reform for Individuals: D.4.–D.7., E.1–E.2., F., and 1.2.–1.13. Under section H., the distributional analysis does not income the effect of the cost-sharing reductions and change in Medicaid spending.
(2) The income concept used to place tax returns into income categories is adjusted gross income (AGI) plus: [1] tax-exempt interest, [2] employer contributions for health plans and life insurance, [3] employer share of FICA tax, [4] worker's compensation, [5] nontaxable Social Security benefits, [6] insurance value of Medicare benefits, [7] alternative minimum tax preference items, [8] individual share of business taxes, and [9] excluded income of U.S. citizens living abroad. Categories are measured at 2017 levels.
(3) The categories reflecting the size of tax change are indexed for inflation.

A DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNS BY THE SIZE OF THE TAX CHANGE FOR THE CONFERENCE AGREEMENT FOR H.R. 1, THE ''TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT''

[Calendar Year 2027]

Income Category (2)	Percentage of Returns				
	Tax Decrease		Tax Change Less than $100	Tax Increase	
	Greater Than $500	$100–$500		$100–$500	Greater Than $500
Less than $10,000	0.3%	1.1%	96.6%	1.8%	0.2%
$10,000 to $20,000	1.9%	1.4%	72.9%	19.8%	3.9%
$20,000 to $30,000	3.4%	2.3%	72.0%	17.2%	5.1%
$30,000 to $40,000	4.9%	4.8%	69.4%	14.6%	6.3%
$40,000 to $50,000	6.2%	7.0%	65.6%	14.6%	6.6%
$50,000 to $75,000	6.0%	10.9%	61.5%	15.0%	6.6%
$75,000 to $100,000	8.9%	17.8%	54.2%	13.5%	5.6%
$100,000 to $200,000	16.2%	24.2%	34.1%	17.8%	7.7%
$200,000 to $500,000	32.8%	18.1%	15.3%	17.6%	16.2%
$500,000 to $1,000,000	54.7%	7.9%	4.5%	7.3%	25.6%
$1,000,000 and over	58.2%	2.4%	1.1%	1.9%	36.4%
Total, All Taxpayers	8.6%	10.4%	59.9%	14.8%	6.3%

Source: Joint Committee on Taxation
Detail may not add to total due to rounding.
(1) This table is a distributional analysis of the proposal in revenue table JCX–67–17, excluding the following sections: I. Tax Reform for Individuals: D.4.–D.7., E.1.–E.2., F., and I.2.–I.13. Under section H., the distributional analysis does not income the effect of the cost-sharing reductions and change in Medicaid spending.
(2) The income concept used to place tax returns into income categories is adjusted gross income (AGI) plus: [1] tax-exempt interest, [2] employer contributions for health plans and life insurance, [3] employer share of FICA tax, [4] worker's compensation, [5] nontaxable Social Security benefits, [6] insurance value of Medicare benefits, [7] alternative minimum tax preference items, [8] individual share of business taxes, and [9] excluded income of U.S. citizens living abroad. Categories are measured at 2017 levels.
(3) The categories reflecting the size of tax change are indexed for inflation.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, we have had an opportunity for the last several hours to go back and forth to debate the benefits or the negatives of this bill. This is a historic night for America 31 years in the making. If you are watching this debate at home, you might be a little confused. As Democrats and Republicans continue to talk about the same bill using very different perspectives, folks must be wondering where is the truth.

I would like to spend a few minutes clarifying some of the important points, some of the misinformation that is coming from the left. First, this is not a healthcare bill. Our friends on the left have suggested that somehow, some way this bill will eliminate coverage for millions and millions of

Americans, and they will lose their coverage. The only thing this bill actually does is it eliminates the penalty for those folks who decide not to buy health insurance. In other words, this bill reduces the tax burden on families who are working paycheck to paycheck. One-third of the families who pay the penalty are families who make less than $25,000, and 80 percent of the folks who pay the penalty make less than $50,000. Contrary to popular belief on the left, no one loses their insurance, but they will have the option to do what is in their family's best interest, what is in the individual's best interest.

We have sought for ways to work with our friends on the other side because we know this legislation is not about the Republican Party, it is not about conservatives, nor is it about liberals. It is about Americans—Americans who for too long have worked too hard and have seen too little in their paychecks.

The government does not create jobs. No matter what either side says, we don't create jobs, but we can, through this tax reform package, increase take-home pay by taking less out. Now, some may ask the question, What does that mean taking less out? Well, for your average, single parent in America who makes the average income of $41,000, as my good friend from Alaska already stated, that individual household will see about a 73-percent cut in their taxes. Said differently, that means an increase in their take-home pay.

Now, I was thinking about folks back at home in South Carolina—one person in particular—Sherrie, who is a single mother with two kids and trying to start a new business. Here is an opportunity to have just a little more margin at the end of each pay period—$1,300. These are real dollars, and my friends on the left seem to suggest that a 73-percent cut in the typical single-parent household's tax burden is not an increase.

Well, the story continues. For the average family in America making $73,000, they are looking at a tax cut of 58 percent—over $2,000 more in their paycheck. When I talk to my friends who are typical Americans—Michelle and Joe living in South Carolina, working hard, raising two beautiful kids—having a 60-percent cut in their taxes is real middle-class relief.

This is a bill that delivers, and the good news is, only in about 7 or 8 weeks, the average American will have an answer to which side is right; is it the left or is it the right? The fact is, they will be able to take a look in their own paychecks and determine for themselves the benefits of this tax cut.

When we think about the things we should be working on to restore confidence that the average person has lost in the government, we do that by making sure our tax proposal speaks to the average family. So we do double the standard deduction for individuals from $6,300 to $12,000; for single-parent households from $9,300 to $18,000; and for two-earner households, we essentially create a zero-percent tax bracket for folks living at the Federal poverty level of $24,000. By doubling the standard deduction to $24,000, we have essentially created a zero-percent tax bracket.

The good news is, it gets better. For those folks with children in the house where your child tax credit used to be $1,000, now the child tax credit is $2,000, with 70 percent of that amount being refundable—an increase from what it used to be.

So many folks on the other side have talked about whether this is simplification, but when 95 out of 100 tax filers can simply use the standard deduction, it means that, yes, on the back of a clean piece of paper, someone can determine their tax burden. This is good news. Of the 6 billion hours spent annually doing their taxes, we are going to cut that number down significantly.

For our friends living in blue States where the SALT, State and local tax, debate has been so important, we have decided to sweeten the SALT solution by allowing a hybrid of either your property taxes or income taxes to be used within that $10,000 threshold.

We have even made it easier through 529 plans to prepare and to pay for education, K–12, as well as college.

The one thing I will say that we have heard a lot of from our friends on the other side—and you will hear more of it tonight—it is FEAR. It is an acronym that means false evidence appearing real. It is not the truth, but fear sells. It seems as though my friends on the other side have decided, if you just keep saying it, it must be true, and over and over and over—and we will hear it more when I am finished—there are folks demonizing this legislation.

The facts are simple, and Senator CARDIN said it himself. I wrote it down when he said it because I was like: Wow. That is a clear, concise, true statement. Senator CARDIN said major tax relief for families, our bill.

We are on the verge of resetting American competitiveness. By lowering our corporate tax rate, we will allow the jobs of the future to be created here at home. With a 20-percent cut in your qualified business income, we will see small businesses prospering, and when they prosper, they will hire more folks. When I was in the gym this past weekend, a small business owner who runs a battery company with seven employees said, on January 1, he is hiring a new person.

A survey done of 7,000 manufacturers, the vast majority said that with this tax cut, they will hire more people, they will increase wages, and they will improve benefits. This is good news from a global perspective, this is good news from a small business perspective, and this is good news from an individual perspective.

It is time for us to complete the people's business and vote yes for tax cuts, vote yes for an improved business climate, and vote yes for a global competition where American companies and American workers are winning.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, one thing is for sure, this is not the people's business. This is the business of the powerful and privileged. Well, this is really a bank heist. How big is this bank heist? Well, it is about $3 trillion being delivered to the very richest Americans. Let's add it up. Changing the tax brackets for those who earn more than $200,000, $673 billion; changing the individual alternative minimum tax which only affects the very wealthy, $637 billion; changing the estate tax, $83 billion; changing the corporate tax rate, most of which goes to the advantage of the wealthiest Americans, $1.35 trillion; changing the corporate AMT, $40 billion; and the pass-through legislation that favors the wealthiest LLCs, $414 billion. Add it all up, and it is well over $3 trillion. There it is—$3 trillion. It is $3 trillion for the very richest Americans.

Is that the middle-class tax cut? Think about how much this is per person here in the United States of America. About $8,000 per person in America is being taxed so they can give $3 trillion to the very richest Americans. Is that a fair, square deal?

What if we were to spend $3 trillion on the middle class? What if we were to do that? What if we were to invest a trillion dollars of it in infrastructure? It creates a lot of jobs today, and it creates the foundation for a lot of jobs tomorrow and the year after.

What if we were to spend a trillion dollars on healthcare? We could go a long way in terms of greatly amplifying the success and quality of the work from our community health clinics—making sure, basically, that healthcare is a fundamental, affordable right for every American. We can do a lot on healthcare with a trillion dollars.

What could we do, I ask my Republican friends, with $1 trillion in education? How about spending $500 billion to strengthen our K–12 system and another $500 billion to strengthen and to make college affordable for every single American?

This $3 trillion this bill gives to the richest Americans is the biggest bank heist not just in American history but in the history of the world, happening here tonight and brought to us by the powerful and the privileged.

This is absolutely unacceptable. While the rich gloat over all the gold they are piling up—3 trillion dollars' worth—middle-class Americans get coal in their stocking. This tax scam so favors the wealthy that 83 percent of the benefits goes to the richest 1 percent. Is that the middle-class bill? I don't think so.

This bill sends jobs overseas, hurting middle-class Americans.

This bill increases our national deficit and our national debt, making it much harder to have programs that provide a foundation for families to thrive.

This bill destroys healthcare for 13 million Americans. Analyst after analyst says it will also raise insurance premiums for everyone else who buys healthcare. Wow, talk about clobbering the middle class by destroying healthcare for 13 million people and raising the premiums on healthcare for everyone else buying insurance.

So over here, we have the pile of gold—$3 trillion for the richest Americans—and over here, we have the loss of jobs shipped overseas. We have the increased price of healthcare. We have 13 million American people losing their healthcare.

Then we have the second phase of the Republican plan, which was announced by the Speaker of the House last week. This week we pass $3 trillion for the wealthiest Americans, but what do we do after that? We go after Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security. That is the plan we heard from the Speaker of the House.

This is a diabolical bill. This is an abomination in a government of, by, and for the people.

How does it come to pass that we even have this bill under consideration? I will tell you how. It is a cycle of campaign corruption. Megabillionaires fund the campaigns for the Senate and then have people come in here to pass this bank heist for the billionaires. That is the cycle—Citizens United allowing unlimited funds invested by third-party campaigns. Corruption in campaigns produced this tax scam, this bank heist, this abomination against the people of the United States of America.

Now, Oregon has about 1 percent of the population in the United States. So what would be their share if we would, instead, invest that $3 trillion in infrastructure, healthcare, and education? For Oregon, that would be $30 billion. That is 30,000 $1 million grants to invest in infrastructure that is needed all over our State, to invest in more teachers all over our State, and to invest in lower cost tuition so every child can go to a public university without debt.

But that is not what we have tonight—no. My friend across the aisle says that we are going to wave the magic wand and we are going to give all this money—all of this gold, all this $3 trillion—to the richest Americans, and jobs are going to automatically appear. But it has been analyzed by the experts. They say this barely increases the growth of the economy—just a smidgeon, almost immeasurable.

Then, there are these countereffects. You have the challenge that this bill will create a lot of money for companies that are going to buy machines to replace people who work—accelerating the automation in America that destroys jobs. This bill is going to send jobs overseas, destroying the foundation for success for millions of American families. This money is going to be used for stock buybacks and dividends, enhancing the wealth of the already wealthy. That is why the experts say this is not going to create a phenomenal growth in our economy, a phenomenal number of jobs.

I would like to see us fight for middle-class Americans, fight for infrastructure and jobs, fight for healthcare, and fight for education. These are the foundations for thriving families, but that is not what we have tonight, and that is why anyone who believes in government of, by, and for the people should defeat this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, tonight the Senate will vote on a tax bill that will provide large corporations and wealthy individuals with a massive tax cut. The bill will result in well over $1 trillion in debt that will be passed on to our children and our grandchildren.

The bill will result in dramatically lower taxes for people who earn their living off of stocks and investments, for people who inherit millions of dollars from their parents, and for the CEOs of multinational companies. By the time the bill is fully implemented, it will lead to higher taxes and higher healthcare costs for millions of hard-working Americans who show up each and every day to do their job and to earn a living.

This bill we are voting on today was written in secret in an entirely partisan fashion, without input from nearly half of the Senate.

But it didn't have to be this way. If we wanted to give middle-class families a real tax cut, we could have. Instead, we are voting on a bill that has benefits for middle-class families that will expire just to pay for permanent tax cuts given to multinational corporations.

If we wanted to reform the Tax Code, to take away loopholes for offshoring our jobs, and to help create good-paying jobs here in the United States, we could have. Instead, we are voting on a bill that does nothing to target offshoring or job creation.

What will it do? Well, CEOs have told us directly that they are going to buy back stock, which mostly benefits the wealthiest shareholders and the CEOs with stock options.

When we know that over a third of the stocks that trade on the market are held by foreign investors—foreign investors are holding half of the value of the stock market—it is just impossible to argue that this bill is focused on Michigan families.

If we wanted to make the Tax Code simpler for small businesses, we could have. Instead, we are voting on a bill that includes some of the most complicated provisions you could possibly imagine for a small business owner.

If we really wanted to tackle our fiscal challenges in a responsible way, we could have. Instead, we are voting on the most fiscally irresponsible bill that I have ever voted on, adding $1.5 trillion to the debt that our children and grandchildren will be responsible for, all while doing next to nothing for middle-class families.

This is not the way we are supposed to make policy in this country. The bill that is on the floor tonight is here without any hearings. We didn't hear from a single expert on the specifics of the bill—not a single economist, not a single small business owner, not a single middle-class family. It is simply wrong.

I urge my colleagues to vote no and to defeat this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, we need bipartisan tax reform. We should simplify our Tax Code. It has been filled over many years with all sorts of junk that was put there by high-powered lobbyists, rather than because of the public interests.

Unfortunately, this bill has nothing to do with tax reform. In fact, it is hard to believe you could take a tax code that is already stacked in favor of the very wealthy and the very powerful and make it even more favorable to the very wealthy and very powerful, but that is exactly what this Republican tax plan does.

Exhibit A about how this has nothing to do with tax reform has to do with the carried interest loophole. Many may recall that during the last campaign, whenever Candidate Trump talked about the need to reform the Tax Code, what was his No. 1 example? He said: We have to get rid of the carried interest loophole for hedge fund managers. Go back and run the tape. Every time somebody asked him what was broken about the Tax Code, that is what he said. In fact, he said:

> The hedge fund guys are getting away with murder. They're making a tremendous amount of money. They have to pay taxes.

That was Candidate Donald Trump.

Well, here we are. Shortly, we are going to vote on the final Republican tax plan. And guess what. In a tax plan that is over 500 pages, nowhere do they get rid of the carried interest loophole for hedge fund managers. Hedge fund managers are still going to get a better tax rate than the people who work for them—a better tax rate than their secretaries and a better tax rate than their assistants. So in Candidate Trump's words, in this tax bill, it looks like those hedge fund managers are still ''getting away with murder.''

That is why it is a farce to call this tax reform. It is stacking the Tax Code more in favor of the very wealthy and the very powerful. In fact, if you are a millionaire in America, you are going to get an average annual tax cut of $70,000. That is great if you are a millionaire. At the same time, millions of middle-class taxpayers are going to pay more.

The folks who get the biggest windfall are big corporations. Their tax rate will go from 35 percent to 21 percent. Who are these folks? Well, primarily, they are the folks who are already the wealthiest people in this country, but I bet a lot of people will be surprised to learn that 35 percent of the stockholders in those American corporations are foreign stockholders. Thirty-five percent of the folks who have stock in these companies are foreigners.

In the year 2019, foreign stockholders are going to get a $48 billion windfall from that big corporate tax cut. In that same year, 11 million Americans will pay more taxes. So money out of the pockets of middle-class American families will go into the bank accounts of foreign stockholders. That doesn't sound like America first to me. It doesn't sound like middle-class taxpayers first to me.

In fact, I want my colleagues to see just how skewed this tax bill is. I mentioned that about 11 million Americans are going to see their taxes go up right away, but if you take the tax cut for every working-class family in every State Donald Trump won in the last election and you add up all of their tax cuts, it is still $5 billion less than what foreign stockholders get in the year 2019.

Think about that. These are families who make about $100,000 or less. If you take the tax cut that every family in every State that Donald Trump won, and you add them all up, all those tax cuts, it still comes out to less than foreign stockholders are going to get in the year 2019.

I will tell you, when the American public finds out what is in this tax plan, they are going to get madder and madder. I heard Speaker RYAN say: Well, people are going to see the result, and they are going to like it. The more they see the results, the madder they are going to get. Here is the thing, it gets worse with time. There are some things that do well over time; this gets worse.

When this bill fully kicks in, the tax cuts for American families expire. They are small, relatively, to start with, then they expire, but the tax cuts for corporations, they are big and they are forever. You know what that means. That means those foreign stockholders are going to have their tax cuts go on forever.

In fact, when this fully kicks in 10 years from now, those foreign stockholders are going to get a $23 billion windfall in that year, but average American families making $75,000 or less—$75,000 or less—on average, are going to see their taxes go up. They will see their taxes go up when this fully kicks in to give that windfall to foreign stockholders.

That is a bad deal for America. It is a bad deal for the middle class. We should say no to this tax bill. We should start over and do real tax reform that benefits middle-class families and those working their way into the middle class.

This is not it. Let's start over. Let's vote this down.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, tonight is a momentous evening, but it is also a sad evening. It is a momentous evening because the Senate is on the verge of passing historic tax cuts that are designed to bring back jobs and economic growth, to create millions of new jobs, to raise wages, and to cut the taxes on working families, but it is a sad day because it is a day of a demonstration of Democratic partisanship that is ill-befitting for the institution that is the U.S. Senate.

For two centuries, tax reform has been a bipartisan endeavor. For two centuries, Democrats have been willing to work with Republicans on cutting taxes.

In 1981 and in 1986, when Ronald Reagan enacted historic tax reforms and tax cuts, Democrats participated. Indeed, a Democrat, Tip O'Neill, was Speaker of the House. In the House, then a conservative Democrat, Bill Graham, carried the Ronald Reagan tax cuts. In the Senate, in 1986, one of the leaders was then a liberal Democrat, Bill Bradley, from New Jersey.

Those Democrats, the so-called conservative Democrats, the Democrats interested in cutting taxes on working men and women have disappeared from this institution.

When the House first passed tax cuts, zero Democrats voted for it—zero—not a single Democrat in the entire body. When the Senate passed tax cuts, zero Democrats passed it. We can expect tonight not a single Democrat will break from party discipline. Why? Because they are so united in their rage at President Trump that they are willing to tell middle-class voters in their State: We don't care.

Tonight every Democrat is going to vote against doubling the child tax credit. If you are a single mom at home and you have three kids, right now the child tax credit is $1,000. In just a couple of weeks, it is going to double to $2,000 per kid, which means $6,000 in tax credit in your pocket, and every single Democrat in this body is going to say to the single moms: Tough luck. We aren't cutting your taxes. What a sad statement.

We have seen floor speech after floor speech after floor speech where Democrats claim this tax cut is going to raise your taxes. There used to be a standard for veracity in this body, but the beautiful thing is, when one political party makes representations to the American people that aren't just a little bit wrong but are wildly outright falsehoods, that tends to become public.

The beautiful thing is in January the American people are going to see. So I am going to encourage the American people, in January, take a look at your pay stubs. The Democrats are claiming wildly, falsely that somehow your taxes are going to go up. Let me tell you, for virtually every American taxpayer in this country, your taxes will go down.

In the Old Testament, when someone came forward and claimed he was a prophet, the test the Old Testament provided is, if you claimed you were a prophet, the people were to demand, make a short-term prediction, and let's see if it comes true. Well, the Democrats have made a short-term prediction. They told the American people: Your taxes are going to go up. In January, take a look at it. I guarantee you, for that single mom, when you look at the child tax credit, your taxes are going down.

Every single income tax bracket is going down. Not only that, the standard deduction that you could take is doubling for a couple from $12,000 to $24,000. The first $24,000 you make, you pay zero, nothing, nada. Yet the Democrats, with their friends, their compliant friends in the media, have succeeded in scaring people to think a historic tax cut is somehow a tax increase.

The beauty of it is, for every voter at home, determine if they are telling the truth or if they are misleading you because they are so filled with partisan animosity for the President that they can't vote for a tax cut. It is a sad state of affairs.

Despite that, this bill is going to pass. Despite that, we are going to see job creators, we are going to see farmers, we are going to see ranchers, and we are going to see small businesses growing because the taxes on each of them are going to go down. We are going to see the taxes for working families go down.

By the way, there is one subset of people whose taxes will go up under this, the rich people in high-tax Democratic States. The irony of all the high dudgeon from our Democratic friends pounding the table about this is a tax cut for the rich, the only people whose taxes are going up are the really rich. The middle class, their taxes are all going down. The working class, their taxes are going down. Every taxpayer, their taxes are going down, except rich people in Manhattan and San Francisco. Some of them, their taxes may go up.

You see this Kabuki theater of Senators on the Democratic aisle pretending: We won't defend the rich people by claiming we are defending the working class. Well, the facts are the facts are the facts, and the facts are the taxes for the working class are going down. Those are the facts, and you will see that.

I ask everyone watching at home, go look at your pay stub in January. If they weren't telling the truth, if you see in your pay stub you are paying less taxes, you ought to stop and ask: Gosh. Why did 48 Democrats in the Senate all tell me something that was false? Why did they say something that is not true in my family?

It is even sadder than that. One of the most important elements of this tax reform bill that we are getting ready to pass is an expansion of educational opportunities for parents. It is an amendment I introduced and this body passed. It was divided 50–50, and the Vice President cast a tie-breaking vote. It expanded 529 college savings plans.

Right now, 529 plans are immensely popular. Parents and grandparents can save for college education for their kids and grandkids in a tax-advantaged way. The amendment I introduced that this body adopted expands 529 college savings plans to also include K–12 education, to also include letting parents spend up to $10,000 per child per year from a 529 plan on public school, on private school, on parochial school, or on religious school, and as the amendment was passed, on homeschools. It puts the parents in charge; it puts the grandparents in charge, saving their own money—not taxpayer money—their own money.

It is the most significant Federal school choice legislation that has ever passed the U.S. Congress.

You know what we are in the middle of, right? The Democrats have raised an objection. They raised an objection to all of it. They were horrified that a benefit could go to 50 million schoolkids, that parents would be able to save for those schoolkids. They raised an objection under the Byrd rule, which is an obscure procedure rule that nobody at home knows what it is, but they objected to it. They said: You can't benefit 50 million schoolkids.

Indeed, as we argued in front of the Senate Parliamentarian, one of the arguments the Democrats said is: This is really popular with the American people. We don't want to do something that is really popular with the American people. This is a big policy change. They love 529 plans, and now the parents of 50 million schoolkids—schoolkids in Texas and every other State—will be able to save for the education of their kids, and that has the Democrats horrified because every single Democrat voted against the parents in their State saving in a 529 system for K–12 education.

Well, the Senate Parliamentarian issued a ruling earlier tonight rejecting most of the Democratic claims but, sadly, adopted one small portion of it. I think that claim was an error. I think the Parliamentarian's ruling is contrary to Federal rule.

Let me tell you what the Democrats are objecting to because there was a moment for conscience to strike them. The Democrats' position—they have raised a point of order. The Senator from Vermont stood up and raised a point of order and said they want to exclude homeschoolers from 529 plans. There are 1.8 million kids who are homeschooled right now.

To every kid who is being homeschooled right now, to every parent, to every mom who puts in the time—some dads but a lot of moms who put in the time day after day after day homeschooling their kids, what every Democrat is standing up to do right now is saying: We are going to discriminate against homeschoolers. We are going to cut you out. Why? Because the Democratic Party can't stand the audacity of a parent who would take it upon himself or herself to educate their child free of centralized control. So their point of order is to carve homeschoolers out of this.

Now, one of the provisions they want to carve out is a provision that says homeschooled students can pay from a 529 college savings account for tutoring. Every Senate Democrat is getting ready to vote against tutors for children at home.

Another provision they are objecting to that is going to be carved out says that parents can pay for 529 plans for books, for additional materials, can pay for a student in high school who is duly enrolled in community college, can pay for that out of their own money in a tax advantage plan. Do you know what the Democrats are saying? If you are a student signed up in a community college, we, the Democratic Party, object to you paying for that out of the tax advantage plan.

Let me tell you what is most striking, a provision the Democrats are arguing to strike provides that parents with a child with disabilities can pay for educational therapy from a 529 plan that is their own savings that they put together, and the Democrats are saying to the parents with kids with disabilities, no, you can't.

Let me ask my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle, are you prepared to look into the eyes of a kid with disability and explain why you said you are cut out? Every other child in America has the ability to have their tuition paid for from these 529 plans, but children with disabilities being homeschooled, the Democrats—and not one, not two, every single Democrat—stand united. Why? Because they can't stand the President. They are angry at the President.

That is fine. If they are angry at the President, stand up and yell at the President, but don't take it out on kids who are homeschooled. Don't take it out on kids with disabilities. The Democrats have an opportunity to demonstrate they are not going to punish children with disabilities because of their partisan anger. We have right now a motion to waive this mean-spirited, vindictive point of order that discriminates against homeschoolers and carves out kids with disabilities.

I would ask my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle—there are going to be issues we disagree on, but the vote to allow parents of children with disabilities to spend their own funds in a tax-advantaged fund to provide for educational therapy for those kids with disabilities—that ought to be 100 to nothing. All of us should agree on that. We might disagree on other things, fine. The death tax, or as Democrats like to call it, the estate tax—we can disagree on that. But educating kids with disabilities—you are really standing up raising that objection?

I would ask my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle: Don't do that. Don't discriminate against the homeschoolers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I yield back all remaining time for the majority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican time is yielded back.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the issue with the Cruz amendment is straightforward. The Byrd rule states that the primary purpose of a budget bill is to address spending and taxes. If, on the other hand, you are debating a major policy change and the budget impact is merely incidental, the provision just doesn't comply with the Byrd rule. That is the case here.

The Cruz amendment has a modest budget impact, but the impact is vastly outweighed by the profound impact, as a matter of social and education policy, of providing Federal support for homeschooling for the first time. In fact, last week, the Senator from Texas called his section 529 homeschooling provision ''the most far-reaching Federal school choice legislation bill ever passed.'' I agree with the Senator's assessment of his amendment. The issue of Federal support for homeschooling is, in fact, major policy. There is no question that there are parents who want to homeschool their kids. I am certain that many of them are very conscientious. Yet this is the first time the Federal Government would provide Federal support for homeschooling. That is why the Parliamentarian ruled against Senator CRUZ.

I urge my colleagues to vote against the Enzi motion to waive the Byrd rule point of order, which we will vote on shortly.

I also want to close for the Finance Democrats on this tax issue with some brief remarks. My colleague from Texas once again has been saying, as many Republicans have done tonight: Middle-class folks, wait until February. Your paychecks are going to be bulging.

Here are the facts. We just got them from the Joint Committee on Taxation—a specific table that shows that 60 million taxpayers with an annual income of $200,000 or less will get $100 a year in tax relief or a tax increase. That looks to me like a third of all taxpayers are not exactly going to have bulging paychecks the way we have heard from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

The fact is that some of the rhetoric we have heard from Republican colleagues tonight didn't sound half bad, so it is a real shame that the rhetoric doesn't resemble the plan on paper.

As I indicated, this bill is not centered on a middle-class tax cut. The

fleeting sugar high the bill provides offers some middle-class families a modest amount of help, but it is basically a distraction from the giveaways to the multinational corporations and powerful donors.

One of our Republican colleagues tonight repeated that if passed, the deficit is going to drop when the bill is enacted. I just have to say that fantasy is over. Even independent conservatives are saying that there is no third alternate reality in which Republican tax bills perform magic.

I want to close tonight by saying to the public that I would really like to wrap this up with a warning: The American people should know that the far-right architects of this tax plan are going to be coming for your Social Security and Medicare before you take your Christmas tree down. That is the end game. That is what Americans need to know is coming next. And on this side of the aisle, we want the American people to know that we are going to be on their side.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague RON WYDEN for the excellent job he has done in leading the opposition to this bill. I am incredulous that someone on the other side of the aisle said that this will decrease the deficit. That is just amazing. The lack of factual fidelity for what is in the bill and what the other side is saying is unparalleled—unparalleled. I want to thank Senator WYDEN for his valiant efforts in pointing that out. I want to thank Senator SANDERS and Senator CANTWELL as well, the ranking members of our committees, who worked so hard on this bill.

In closing, very soon the Senate will vote for the final time on the Republican tax bill. When future generations look back at the short and messy history of the Republican tax bill, its most enduring lesson will be what it has taught us about how not to legislate. After only a few months of frantic, backroom negotiations by only one party, we are left with a product as sloppy and as partisan as the process used to draft it. Even today, three provisions of the bill were found to violate Senate rules. So now, all of a sudden, the House will have to vote again tomorrow. That is a perfect microcosm of the hasty and reckless process—can we have order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will be in order.

Mr. SCHUMER. It is a perfect microcosm of the hasty and reckless process that produced this legislation.

If my Republican friends think these are the only mistakes that will be found in their bill, they are sorely mistaken. Many more will almost certainly be unearthed. But the bigger issue is the failure of this legislation to live up to each and every one of the promises made by Republicans about what it would mean for our country.

What has been sold as a middle-class miracle will instead deliver a hefty windfall to the wealthy and only paltry, temporary relief for some in the middle class. Others will see an increase right from the get-go. So all of the talk—no middle-class person will pay a tax increase—gone, gone. And in a few years, a majority of the middle class will see their taxes go up. What kind of middle-class relief is that?

What has been sold as a deficit reducer will instead balloon the deficit by at least $1.5 trillion, maybe more. Our children and grandchildren will be asked to clean up the mess made tonight by our Republican colleagues in their eagerness to give the very wealthy, the very powerful corporations, a big tax break.

What has been sold as a bill to give people more freedom to choose their healthcare will instead raise premiums and reduce the number of Americans with health insurance by 13 million. The number of people who get a small tax cut and still have to pay more than that tax cut in premium increases is large. What a huge mistake my colleagues made by eliminating that provision in the healthcare bill, because the middle class is going to pay the price.

What has been sold as a job creator and wage-booster will do little of either, as companies—large, big, powerful companies—are already initiating stock buybacks instead of hiring more workers and raising wages. Is that what you intended? Give them more money so they can buy back more stock, increasing the wealth of corporate CEOs, increasing the wealth of the very wealthy, sending billions of dollars overseas to overseas investors. That is what is happening already. Corporation after corporation has said: Aha, with this new money, we will do even more stock buybacks.

Ultimately, the American people will learn that Republicans have squandered their so-called ''once-in-a-generation opportunity'' on corporate welfare and taxes for the rich, financed by tax increases and healthcare increases on the middle class.

The Joint Committee on Taxation just released a report that found that by 2027, nearly 145 million middle-class families earning under $200,000 will either get tax hikes—can we have order, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will be in order.

Mr. SCHUMER. This is serious stuff. We believe you are messing up America. You can pay attention for a couple of minutes.

Nearly 145 million middle-class families earning under $200,000 will get either tax hikes or a tax cut of less than $100. Eighty-three percent of the middle class will either pay more in taxes or get little but crumbs. Is that what you intended? Is that this great bill that is helping the middle class? Absolutely not.

Meanwhile, according to the Tax Policy Center, the top 1 percent of earners in our country will reap 83 percent of the benefits of the tax plan. The top 5 percent—the top 5 percent—will reap 99.2 percent of the benefits. Is that what you intended? That is what you are doing. The very, very wealthy—the highest spectrum—get almost all the benefits. Some bill for the middle class.

The raw numbers are a staggering indictment of the Republican tax plan, as they have been throughout the course of this debate. The data reveals what the Republican tax plan truly is—a tax scam that will rob middle-class families to pay for corporate tax breaks and giveaways to the wealthy.

In an age of extraordinary income inequality, when the upper echelons of our economy are capturing an ever-greater share of the pie, the Republican tax bill is like pouring gasoline on a raging fire, making income inequality, as bad as it is now, even worse. It will exacerbate all the bad trends in our economy that over the past few decades have produced dramatically more wealth for the already wealthy, while producing less work and less pay for working people. That fundamental imbalance in our economy will be made even more precarious. What a disgrace. That is what this bill is. It is an absolute disgrace.

It is not just an ideological difference; it is something dramatically opposite of what America needs. There is no reason for a single middle-class family to pay more while every single corporation pays less. If you want to help the middle class, give them a real tax break. The rich get far more dollars back than the middle class. That is fact—an irrefutable fact.

On top of that, as Senator WYDEN warned everybody a few minutes ago, this tax bill will endanger Social Security and Medicare. Republicans have already said, led by Speaker RYAN, that they will use the deficit they are about to create as an excuse to come after those earned benefits. The AARP is very reluctant to take stands on bills like this, but it was so bad for the elderly, the AARP felt compelled to publicly oppose it.

Elderly Americans are not the only ones who should be worried, although they certainly should be. If you are 40, 45, or 50, working hard, trying to put money away for retirement while sending your kids to college, and you are counting on these programs to be there when you retire, know this: Cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are likely to fall on your shoulders because of this monstrosity of a bill. The Republican tax bill is the first shoe to drop. The second will fall on the social safety net that allows millions of hard-working Americans to retire with dignity and security.

For all of these reasons, it is not a surprise that in poll after poll after poll, the American people overwhelmingly oppose this bill.

My Republican colleagues have done what is nearly impossible. It is a bad trick, but they have accomplished it.

They have managed to make a tax cut bill even less popular than previous tax hikes. Who would have thought they could accomplish that? Who would have thought? In fact, it is the second-least popular piece of major legislation in 30 years, opposed 2 to 1 by the American people, and the more they learn about the bill, the less they like it. By the way, what was the first? The Republican healthcare bill earlier this year.

It is not hard to understand why the dark heart of the Republican policy agenda easing burdens on those who already have so much, while punishing or ignoring those who have too little, is a profoundly unpopular idea. My Republican friends ought to listen to the American people, the fount of wisdom in our democracy, or there will be a reckoning.

The American people do not believe in trickle-down, as all of you seem to. Give the very top money, and they will create jobs. It hasn't happened. AT&T—do you know what their tax rate was over the last 10 years? Eight percent. Do you know how many jobs they created? Zero. They cut 80,000 people. Let's give them more money while hurting the middle class. It makes no sense.

The American people are saying in a loud, clear voice that they oppose tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy. They don't believe in trickle-down, as you do. They oppose gutting healthcare, as you want to do, and they oppose this one-party approach to legislating. The American people know that a slapdash partisan process will not result in good law. My Republican colleagues ignore the warnings of the American people at their own peril.

In just a short time, Republicans will have a choice whether or not to affix their name to this awful legislation. Although the Republican propagandists may call its passage a political victory, it will be very fleeting and illusory. The substance and polling are so rotten that a year from now, Republicans will be running away from this bill in shame for voting yes this evening.

There is an alternative: Vote no. Come to the table with Democrats. Begin serious, bipartisan talks on tax reform. Get a good bill, and work in the way this Chamber is supposed to work: bipartisan, moderate, thoughtful, open. You have done none of those—none of those.

I have little faith that, at this late hour, my colleagues will choose the better course, but if they do, we could do something great for the country and for this body at the same time. We could return to regular order, where the legitimate policy differences between our parties are argued in broad daylight, and with painstaking effort, we compromise even after we fiercely debate one another. Isn't that what we came here to do?

I challenge a single one of my Republican colleagues to say they are proud of the way this tax bill was written and passed. I challenge a single one. I know this isn't what they would like to see. I know this isn't what so many of you came here to do. I know it is not what you tell your constituents the Senate ought to be. I know so many of you lament the steady erosion of bipartisanship here in the Senate, as do I, as do my fellow Democrats. So rather than resign to the failures of the current moment, I plead—plead—with my Republican colleagues to imagine a better path forward. Vote no. Vote no and prevent taxes from going up on millions of middle-class families. Vote no and stop 13 million Americans from going without health insurance. Vote no, so we don't add $1.5 trillion to the deficit, putting the burden on our children and grandchildren. Vote no and say that you want to have the kind of bipartisan debate befitting the grand traditions of this United States Senate. Vote no. Otherwise, I believe the entire Republican Party and each of you will come to rue this day.

I yield the floor.

I yield back all time.

VOTE ON MOTION TO WAIVE

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). The question is on agreeing to the motion to waive the points of order.

The yeas and nays have been previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 322 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Strange
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young

NAYS—48

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

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 48.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The points of order are sustained. The material will be stricken from the conference report.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The question before the Senate is whether the Senate shall recede from its amendment to H.R. 1 and concur therein with a further amendment.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) would have voted ''yea.''

(Disturbance in the Visitors' Galleries.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Sergeant at Arms will restore order in the Gallery.

(Disturbance in the Visitors' Galleries.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Sergeant at Arms will restore order in the Gallery.

(Disturbance in the Visitors' Galleries.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Sergeant at Arms will restore order in the Gallery.

(Disturbance in the Visitors' Galleries.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Sergeant at Arms will restore order in the Gallery.

(Disturbance in the Visitors' Galleries.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Sergeant at Arms will restore order in the Gallery.

(Disturbance in the Visitors' Galleries.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Sergeant at Arms will restore order in the Gallery.

(Disturbance in the Visitors' Galleries.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Sergeant at Arms will restore order in the Gallery.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 323 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Boozman	Cassidy
Barrasso	Burr	Cochran
Blunt	Capito	Collins

Corker	Heller	Risch
Cornyn	Hoeven	Roberts
Cotton	Inhofe	Rounds
Crapo	Isakson	Rubio
Cruz	Johnson	Sasse
Daines	Kennedy	Scott
Enzi	Lankford	Shelby
Ernst	Lee	Strange
Fischer	McConnell	Sullivan
Flake	Moran	Thune
Gardner	Murkowski	Tillis
Graham	Paul	Toomey
Grassley	Perdue	Wicker
Hatch	Portman	Young

NAYS—48

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

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 48.

The Senate recedes from its amendment and concurs in H.R. 1 with a further amendment.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is passed.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). The Senator from Wyoming.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO BILL DAUGHERTY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, today I wish to congratulate Mr. Bill Daugherty of Lexington, KY, who was recently honored by Berea College with its distinguished alumnus award. Each year, the school recognizes notable alumni who have achieved success in their profession, contributed to the community, and have faithfully upheld Berea's mission. The college, founded in 1855 by abolitionists, fosters an educational institution that cultivates Christian values and challenges students to carry them into action in their community.

Raised on a cattle farm in Jackson County, KY, Bill graduated from Berea in 1976, and he used his degree in agriculture to succeed in the natural resource industry. Less than 10 years later, he founded his own small petroleum business. His company evolved and grew to focus on natural gas in the Appalachian region. After years of success, Bill and his business partner founded an independent oil exploration and production company.

Bill has served his community on the board of the Kentucky Energy Council, Kentucky Oil and Gas Association, and the Independent Petroleum Association of America. He currently serves as the vice chairman of the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission, which is tasked with helping States find environment-friendly ways to increase the supply of American energy.

Finally, Bill and his business partner founded a successful horse racing and breeding enterprise. His success in the natural gas industry was matched in the thoroughbred racing industry. In fact, Bill's own horse, California Chrome, won the Kentucky Derby in 2014.

The distinguished alumnus award is not only a recognition of significant accomplishment in the recipient's chosen profession, but it also serves as an inspiration to the current students at Berea College who are eager to make their own positive impact in the community. Bill and his wife, Zella, play active roles in the community by hosting events in support of the New Opportunity School for Women, an intensive 3-week program that offers coursework in job search skills, creative writing, and Appalachian literature. I want to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Bill for receiving this award and commending him on a successful career.

TRIBUTE TO CLARENCE FLOYD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, today I would like to recognize the efforts of Clarence Floyd, a proud Korean war veteran, from Pulaski County, KY. At the age of 84, Clarence still works to serve his community, taking up a campaign to erect reserved-parking spaces for area veterans. These signs are a salute to the men and women who served our Nation in uniform.

As the honor guard commander of Somerset's American Legion Post 38, Clarence cares deeply about America's veterans. To arrange reserved-parking spaces for veterans, Clarence works with local businesses and the city of Somerset's street department. Then, he and his wife, Nancy, install the signs themselves. He says, ''It takes me about 20 minutes to put up two signs.''

To date, there are 10 locations with veterans-only parking throughout Pulaski County. Clarence is also working with other local businesses to install more in the near future. I would like to thank Clarence for his service to our country and to his fellow veterans, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in doing so.

REMEMBERING LOHREN MARTIN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, today I wish to remember the life of Lohren Martin, of Corbin, KY, who passed away on November 21, 2017, at the age of 87. A man of many talents, Lohren will be remembered most by those who loved him as a caring friend.

A veteran of the Korean war, Lohren worked in his community as an attorney, a businessman, an entrepreneur, and a developer. Lohren's siblings and friends think of his humor, patriotism, and constant friendship.

Elaine and I would like to extend our condolences to Lohren's wife, Arvilla, his children Eddie and Cindy, and all who knew and loved him. His life left a lasting impression on all of those around him, and I hope that their fond memories of Lohren will bring comfort in this time of grief.

The Corbin Times-Tribune recently published an article on Lohren's life. I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Corbin Times-Tribune, Dec. 5, 2017]

LOHREN MARTIN REMEMBERED AS 'A GREAT FRIEND'

(By Angela Turner)

''The biggest thing I can tell you about Lohren Martin is how much he valued every individual,'' Shirley Chandler said about her brother.

Siblings often share a special bond and it was no different in the case of Shirley Chandler and her brother Lohren Martin. Martin, who was a local attorney, businessman, entrepreneur, developer, and Korean War Veteran (just to name a few), died on Nov. 21.

Growing up, Martin was the salutatorian of this high school class. He attended several colleges and universities including Sue Bennett College, Union College and the University of Kentucky.

According to Chandler, Martin's education was interrupted when he was drafted into the Korean War. After basic training he was selected to go into army intelligence. After training in army intelligence, he was sent to Korea to interpret aerial photographs. Chandler said while in Korea, Martin lived in a tent and was dedicated and focused on the task at hand.

''He was an awesome brother,'' Chandler said. ''He was a great mentor, a great friend and confidant.''

Martin's friends shared similar thoughts.

''He was a friend that would stick with you in good times and bad times,'' said Martin's friend and business partner Dave Huff. ''He was very patriotic.''

TRIBUTE TO JAMES RITCHIE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, today I wish to pay tribute to James Ritchie, of Somerset, KY, a brave Kentuckian who was honored by his community on Veterans Day. He was the feature of a newspaper story in the Commonwealth Journal, which detailed his life and his honorable career in the military. The article was a community's effort to thank him for his service to our country.

In 1947, James decided to join our Nation's military. Seeking to enlist in the Navy, James walked in the wrong door and was convinced instead to join the marines. After his training, James was deployed to join the 1st Marine Division Air Wing in Pusan, Korea. However, the trip to Korea by way of San Diego proved treacherous when James' transport collided with a steamliner.

Once he made it to Korea, James was responsible for providing protection for

the Marine air base. Against North Korean and Chinese guerillas, he bravely faced the harsh realities of war. After his enlistment and am honorable discharge, he returned home. The same month, however, James felt the call to serve once again, this time in the Air Force. Eventually returning to Korea, he helped in the U.S. effort to transfer responsibilities to the South Koreans.

In 1961, James chose to retire from military and answered another call, this time to serve as a minister. With his wife, Wilma, James raised five children. I would like to take this opportunity to thank James for his military service to our country, and I urge my colleagues to join me.

Earlier this year the Commonwealth Journal published an article detailing Mr. Ritchie's service to our Nation. I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Commonwealth Journal, November 11, 2017]

THE HEROIC LIFE OF A NOMADIC SOLDIER

(By Cline Calhoun)

During a somewhat nomadic life with his divorced mother, James Ritchie, born in Ellington, S.C., made it through high school in Alexandria, Va., as he jokingly says: ″In the front door straight through the back door.″

After three years in the seventh grade, he found himself turning 17 years old in the ninth grade. One day his basketball coach made him mad, so in 1947 he found himself in Washington D.C., looking for a military recruiter. He had his mind set on the Navy, but when he found the recruitment center, he stuck his head in the door of the Marine recruiter's office to ask direction to the Navy. The Marine recruiter said; ''Come in here boy, I want to talk to you.'' He went in the door asking directions and came out the door a marine.

After eight weeks of basic training at Paris Island, S.C., he was off to Camp Lejeune, N.C. With its 14 miles of sea shore, it is perfect for training in unloading the troops and equipment of shore landing military units during invasions. That was the job of the unit James was assigned to: The Pioneer Battalion.

In 1948 James was reassigned to the 1st 90 mm AAA (Anti-Aircraft Artillery) Battalion USMC on the Pacific Island of Guam. No training here; OJT (on the job training) as a gunner. Near the end of his enlistment he was transferred back to Camp Lejeune. With an honorable discharge he was given inactive reserve status, subject to recall in case of war. Guess what? War. North Korea with help from China, invaded South Korea.

James says he hardly had time to get out of uniform before he found himself back in it. Discharged in February, called back in June. The entire reserve unit was called up and trained for duty in Korea, being attached to the 1st Marine Division Air Wing in Pusan, Korea. But first you have to get there. One Marine didn't, and several were seriously injured.

James' unit was on a troop train going from Camp Legume, N.C. to a port in San Diego, CA. for transport to Korea. Following are excerpts from Associated Press and United Press:—''Lettsworth, La. (AP)–(UP) Aug. 1951—A New Orleans-bound streamliner and a troop train carrying 288 marines toward the Pacific collided head-on in a Louisiana swamp Friday and the Kansas City Southern railway reported at least eight dead and one missing. The crash happened about 7 a.m. (CST) on a double bend some miles northeast of Baton Rouge. Marines piled out of the wreckage and gave first aid to injured passengers of the New Orleans bound Southern Belle, as well as to their own. Rescue workers had to hack a road through the swamp to the wreck—most of the marines escaped because they were eating breakfast at the back of the train.''

At that time, troop movements were classified, so when the news hit the wires, Camp Lejeune was swamped with concerned family members wanting to know the status of their sons, husbands, fathers and brothers. The uninjured marines finally boarded undamaged railcars and went on to port in San Diego to a troop ship taking them on to Korea. Because of the delay, the troop train was given priority clearance to California.

Upon arrival in Pusan, S. Korea, it was the job of the 1st 90 mm AAA Battalion to provide protection for the Marine Air Base located there. Their four artillery batteries with twelve 90 mm guns were stationed on the mountains approximately 40–50 miles from Pusan. Transport vehicles carrying ammunition, generator fuel and supplies were constantly subjected to sniper fire.

James said the primary concern for the troops were the constant attempts by North Korean and Chinese guerillas to invade their air defense locations. He said one of his scariest times was when off duty and the alarm goes off. He grabbed his rifle and ran to his fox hole, only to realize he forgot his ammunition. Fortunately, his comrades prevented a breach of the compound or he would have really found out what hand to hand combat was really like, because he wasn't about to run back to retrieve the ammunition!

After 5 months, the Marines wanted him to reenlist and he would get some quality time, maybe in Hawaii. Upon learning he would probably come right back to Korea, visions of home took front and center and James decided to go home.

He was honorably discharged in June of 1952 but found he still had the desire to serve his country, so in the same month, June 1952, he found himself at the Air Force recruiter in Alexandria, VA. But this time he didn't ask for directions from the Marine recruiter. The Air Force sent him to 6 months of training as a Petroleum Specialist and he was off to Ladd, AF Base, Alaska, fueling jets in 55 degrees below zero weather for two years.

In 1955 he was transferred to Kirkland AF Base in New Mexico, where, one year later guess what? Back to Korea. He served at Osan and Kunson Air Bases because the protection of South Korea was being turned over to the South Korean military and the P51 Mustang were being replaced by the F86 fighter jets.

James said that promotion through the ranks in the Air Force seemed to be more political than proficiency driven. So, in 1961 he decided against a military future, said goodbye to the Air Force, and once again headed home. Besides, he felt he had a greater calling as an independent minister of the gospel.

James met his wife Wilma in Albuquerque, New Mexica in 1955. After a whirlwind romance, they were married after only 7 days. Love at first sight does work—they were married for 60 years. James lost Wilma to cancer in 2014. They raised 3 boys and 2 girls. James is enjoying his golden years in his home just outside Somerset, KY.

For every infantry combat soldier, there are at least 10 others in the background supporting him with food, ammunition, fuel, air-artillery, communications, intelligence and armor cover. These are the unsung heroes we seldom hear about.

BUDGETARY REVISIONS

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, section 3003 of H. Con. Res. 71, the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, allows the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee to revise the allocations, aggregates, and levels in the budget resolution for legislation considered under the resolution's reconciliation instructions.

I find that the conference report to accompany H.R. 1 fulfills the conditions found in section 3003 of H. Con. Res. 71. Accordingly, I am revising the allocations to the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and other enforceable budgetary levels to account for the budgetary effects of the amendment.

This adjustment supersedes the adjustment I previously made for S. Amdt. 1855 on December 1, 2017.

I ask unanimous consent that the accompanying tables, which provide details about the adjustment, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

BUDGET AGGREGATES—BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OUTLAYS

(Pursuant to Section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and Section 3003 of H. Con. Res. 71, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2018)

$s in millions	2018
Current Aggregates:	
Spending:	
Budget Authority	3,089,061
Outlays	3,109,221
Adjustments:*	
Spending:	
Budget Authority	−8,600
Outlays	−8,600
Revised Aggregates:	
Spending:	
Budget Authority	3,080,461
Outlays	3,100,621

BUDGET AGGREGATE—REVENUES

(Pursuant to Section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and Section 3003 of H. Con. Res. 71, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2018)

$s in millions	2018	2018–2022	2018–2027
Current Aggregates:			
Revenue	2,640,939	14,509,252	32,671,567
Adjustments:			
Revenue	−143,800	−1,109,800	−1,675,600
Revised Aggregates:			
Revenue	2,497,139	13,399,452	30,995,967

REVISION TO ALLOCATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

(Pursuant to Section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and Section 3003 of H. Con. Res. 71, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2018)

$s in millions	2018	2018–2022	2018–2027
Current Allocation:			
Budget Authority	2,281,616	13,510,107	32,116,900
Outlays	2,280,970	13,482,300	32,069,238
Adjustments:*			
Budget Authority	−8,600	−33,000	−193,000
Outlays	−8,600	−33,000	−193,000
Revised Allocation:			
Budget Authority	2,273,016	13,477,107	31,923,900
Outlays	2,272,370	13,449,300	31,876,238

REVISION TO ALLOCATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

(Pursuant to Section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and Section 3003 of H. Con. Res. 71, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2018)

$s in millions	2018	2018–2022	2018–2027
Current Allocation:			
Budget Authority	4,703	25,212	49,342
Outlays	4,391	24,909	49,112
Adjustments:			
Budget Authority	0	−300	−1,100
Outlays	0	−300	−1,100
Revised Allocation:			
Budget Authority	4,703	24,912	48,242
Outlays	4,391	24,609	48,012

PAY-AS-YOU-GO SCORECARD FOR THE SENATE

(Pursuant to Section 4106 and Section 3003 of H. Con. Res. 71, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2018)

$s in millions	Balances
Starting Balance:	
Fiscal Year 2018	0
Fiscal Years 2017 through 2022	0
Fiscal Years 2017 through 2027	0
Adjustments:	
Fiscal Year 2018	135,200
Fiscal Years 2017 through 2022	1,076,500
Fiscal Years 2017 through 2027	1,481,500
Revised Balance:	
Fiscal Year 2018	135,200
Fiscal Years 2017 through 2022	1,076,500
Fiscal Years 2017 through 2027	1,481,500

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD–423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17–68, concerning the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Poland for defense articles and services estimated to cost $200 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

GREG KAUSNER
(For Charles W. Hooper, Lieutenant General, USA, Director).

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17–68

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Poland.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* $0 million.

Other $200 million.

Total $200 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE): None.

Non-MDE: Follow-on support and sustainment services for Poland's F–16 fleet to include aircraft maintenance; system and software overhauls and upgrades; engine support; spare and repair parts; support and test equipment; publications and technical documentation; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistical support; and other related elements of program support.

(iv) Military Department: Air Force (PL–D–QAW).

(v) Prior Related Cases. if any: PL–D–QAO, PL–D–QAP, and PL–D–QAI.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered. or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: None.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: December 19, 2017.

*A defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Poland—F–16 Follow-on Support

The Government of Poland has requested to purchase follow-on support and sustainment services for its F–16 fleet to include aircraft maintenance; system and overhauls and upgrades; engine support; spare and repair parts; support and test equipment; publications and technical documentation; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistical support; and other related elements of program support. The estimated cost is $200 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to improve the security of a NATO ally. Poland continues to be an important force for political stability and economic progress in Central Europe.

This potential sale will continue the sustainment of Poland's F–16 capability. Poland will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment and support into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

Contracts will be awarded when necessary to provide the defense articles ordered if items ordered are not available from U.S. stock or are to be purchased further in the future. The potential prime contractors will be Harris Corporation of Melbourne, Florida; Boeing of Arlington, Virginia; UTC Aerospace Systems, ISR Systems of Charlotte, North Carolina; Lockheed Martin Missile and Fire Control of Orlando, Florida; Cubic Defense Applications of San Diego, California; L–3 Communications of New York, New York; Lockheed Martin Aero of Fort Worth, Texas; Exelis Electronic of Clifton, New Jersey; Northrop Grumman Corporation of Falls Church, Virginia; Raytheon of Waltham, Massachusetts; Honeywell of Morris Plains, New Jersey; Booz Allen Hamilton of McLean, Virginia; and BAE Systems of Arlington, Virginia. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of any additional U.S. Government or contractor representatives to Poland.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

CONFIRMATION OF JENNIFER NEWSTEAD

Mr. YOUNG. Madam President, I want to offer a few brief comments on the confirmation of Ms. Jennifer Newstead and the situation in Yemen. Ms. Newstead was nominated to serve as the legal adviser of the Department of State.

This is an incredibly important position. The legal adviser is the principal adviser to the Department of State on all legal matters, domestic and international. The legal adviser is also the principal adviser to other Federal agencies on legal matters involved in foreign relations. Through the Secretary of State, the legal advisor advises the President and the National Security Council. For an individual to serve well in this position, they must understand the law and be willing to provide objective and reliable legal advice.

I believe Ms. Newstead is well qualified to serve in this position. She has an impressive educational background, and she has served in senior positions at OMB, the Department of Justice, and in the White House. That is why I supported her nomination in committee.

With that said, before she received a floor vote, I wanted to confirm that she had a full and accurate appreciation for U.S. law as it relates to impediments to humanitarian assistance, and the clear application of those statutes to Saudi Arabia and Yemen. That is why, over several weeks, I engaged in three rounds of specific written questions and answers with Ms. Newstead related to the law.

After those detailed exchanges, I am confident that Ms. Newstead understands the proper application of laws like 22 U.S. Code 2378–1 to Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

I appreciate her written statements to me regarding that and other statutes, and I appreciate her commitments to be as transparent and responsive to my office as possible.

Before I conclude, allow me to offer a few words on the situation in Yemen. Yemen is experiencing the world's largest food insecurity crisis. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs published a report earlier this month. The report found that

almost 18 million people in Yemen are food insecure with more than 8 million facing starvation.

The war and Saudi Arabia's impediments to the delivery of food, fuel, and medicine are the primary causes for this crisis. Saudi Arabia's impediments to humanitarian assistance in Yemen violate international law, humanitarian principles, and U.S. law. They also undermine U.S. national security interests.

Since March, I have taken a number of steps to demand an end to the Saudi impediments to humanitarian assistance and to encourage the administration to use its significant leverage with Riyadh.

On December 6, the President said, ''I have directed officials in my Administration to call the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to request that they completely allow food, fuel, water, and medicine to reach the Yemeni people who desperately need it. This must be done for humanitarian reasons immediately.''

In my view, we now need to see action from the Saudis, not just assurances.

The Saudis must finally and completely end all impediments to the delivery and transport of humanitarian aid in Yemen. Each day costs many lives and patience is running out in Washington.

If Saudi Arabia continues to be unresponsive to the President's demands and demands from Congress, failing to permit the delivery of the U.S. taxpayer funded cranes to Yemen's most important humanitarian port and continuing to block the delivery of commercial fuel shipments, I stand ready to take legislative action.

I was proud to support Ms. Newstead's confirmation today, and I look forward to working closely with her.

Thank you.

CONFIRMATION OF OWEN WEST

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, equality of opportunity is one of our Nation's greatest pursuits and greatest struggles. Though the path has not been easy, our society has slowly and steadily become more just, more decent, and more powerful. President Obama's Defense Secretary Carter reaffirmed this principle when he stated that every qualified woman who met the high physical standards required of her would be allowed to serve our country in combat.

Owen West soundly rejected this policy and the ethic undergirding it in an inflammatory opinion editorial authored with his father in March of 2016. He asserted that integrating women into infantry platoons, including those who ''could run circles around the average Marine grunt'' with their ''physical prowess,'' would ''swiftly reduce combat effectiveness.'' He discounted the ability of women to contribute to mission effectiveness, equating them only with ''intimate scandals.'' He contended that women would ''introduce sex, affection, favoritism, protectiveness, jealously, anxiety and all the other co-ed dynamics to an infantry platoon.''

These chauvinistic views have no place in the Department of Defense, particularly in positions of leadership. As Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, Mr. West will be responsible for the integration of women into our Special Operations Forces. I appreciate that Mr. West offered a retraction of his views on women in the military during his Senate confirmation hearing, at the behest of Democratic members of the Armed Services Committee, and it is my hope that Mr. West will do his utmost to support and recruit qualified women into the military in the future. However, many of President Trump's nominees have reneged on commitments made during their confirmation hearings. Given Mr. West's public record on women in combat, I cannot take that risk by supporting his confirmation.

KEVIN AND AVONTE'S LAW

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, in the 114th Congress, we came very close to passing Kevin and Avonte's Law, a bill named in honor of two boys with autism who wandered away from their caregivers and drowned.

I reintroduced this legislation last month with Senators KLOBUCHAR, TILLIS, SCHUMER, and others to equip communities with important tools to help locate individuals who wander away from their families or caregivers due to dementia or a developmental disability. The bill we crafted adds new protections for children with developmental disabilities, like autism, which are linked to wandering.

The original version of this bill, which I authored with Senator SCHUMER, passed both Chambers of Congress late last year. It passed this Chamber by voice vote over a year ago, while a similar House companion garnered over 90 cosponsors before passing the other Chamber, 346–66, last December. Unfortunately, we ran out of time to resolve the differences between the two Chamber's versions before the 114th Congress adjourned.

This year, the Judiciary Committee approved Kevin and Avonte's Law by voice vote, and, before reporting the bill to the full Senate last month, we reached bipartisan consensus on an offset. Our offset consists of the Federal Register Printing Savings Act, which Senator PORTMAN introduced earlier this year. Senator PORTMAN's office agreed to work with us and incorporate S. 1195 into Kevin and Avonte's Law. We currently are seeking unanimous consent to pass both bills in one legislative package.

Meanwhile, the House has passed its own version of the Federal Register Printing Savings Act, introduced by Congressman RUSSELL of Oklahoma. The House-passed version of that bill won the approval of the Homeland Security Committee earlier this year, and that panel is seeking unanimous consent to pass it. I support this legislation, which is virtually identical to Senator PORTMAN's bill, but I placed a temporary hold on the House companion yesterday, so that we can find a way to pass that legislation and Kevin and Avonte's Law simultaneously.

By ensuring that both measures pass as one package, we can make additional resources available to equip first responders, law enforcement officials, and other community leaders with the training and tools necessary to better prevent and respond to missing person cases. By doing so, we also can make grants available to educate and train caregivers as well as other members of the community on how to prevent wandering by those with dementia or developmental disabilities.

HEALTHCARE

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I wish to call attention to several urgent and bipartisan health programs that Congress must renew without further delay.

The Republican majority has spent much of this year trying to pass partisan healthcare and tax legislation. As a result, they have neglected to extend numerous uncontroversial healthcare programs, threatening these programs' very existence and causing needless chaos and uncertainty.

It is past time that the Republican-controlled Congress extend these programs to provide healthcare access and certainty to millions of Americans.

First, I would like to address the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP. CHIP is a bipartisan healthcare success story. Enacted 20 years ago, thanks to the leadership of Senate Finance Committee Chairman ORRIN HATCH and the late Senator Ted Kennedy, CHIP brings affordable health coverage to children in families who are not eligible for Medicaid but struggle to afford private insurance.

Washington's successful CHIP program, Apple Health for Kids, covers about 60,000 children. Through CHIP, parents get peace of mind, and States and the Federal Government pitch in to share the cost.

CHIP means affordable healthcare for 9 million children. On average, a family of four pays $158 per year in premiums and deductibles for each CHIP-enrolled child. The same family would likely pay more than $1,000 in annual out-of-pocket costs on a commercial insurance plan, even after counting available financial help. That is a difference of more than $800 per year for millions of families across the country and represents real affordability.

Because of CHIP, children have a medical home. In fact, more than 90 percent of Washington children with CHIP coverage visited a primary care

provider at least once in 2014, the most recent year in which data were available. CHIP also provides kids with benefits that are often more comprehensive than those offered in the commercial insurance market, including immunizations, periodic screenings, hearing exams, and dental care. We know that prevention and early detection are key to reducing the burden of disease and health costs. CHIP emphasizes these early interventions during the critical early years of a child's life, helping kids grow up to be healthy, productive, and successful adults.

Yet, despite CHIP's near-universal popularity and lack of partisan controversy, this Congress has allowed CHIP to go unfunded since October 1, 2017. This long and unprecedented lapse threatens CHIP's very survival. Already, it has thrown States, including Washington, into crippling uncertainty and administrative disruption. Some States have been forced to send letters to CHIP families informing them that their coverage will end. Moreover, if Congress fails to extend CHIP, my State will be on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars to make up for Congress's failure to act.

Next, I would like to highlight the urgent need to reauthorize funding to community health centers.

Community health centers are a bedrock of the healthcare safety net and are the preferred medical home for tens of millions of working Americans. Washington's 26 community health centers serve 1 million people in every corner of my State, from Spokane to Seattle, Omak to Port Angeles.

Community health centers are a lean and efficient healthcare delivery model, focusing on primary care, prevention, case management and social services for their patients. They are also good for the economy, supporting more than 9,000 jobs and $1 billion in annual economic output in my State alone.

The Community Health Center Fund, which comprises the majority of these health centers' Federal funds, expired on October 1, 2017. As a result, community health centers in my State are at risk of having to turn off the lights and turn away patients. Already, the expiration of the Community Health Center Fund has threatened these centers' ability to retain and hire nurses and doctors and make financial arrangements for the coming year.

The Community Health Center Fund was enacted in 2010 so that millions of newly covered Americans would have a medical home. The fund is doing just that. Moreover, the Community Health Center Fund was extended with strong bipartisan support in 2015, when an overwhelming majority of the House and Senate, myself included, supported its extension as part of the Medicare and CHIP Reauthorization Act, MACRA. It is past time for Congress to extend this program without delay.

In addition, Federal funds have been allowed to expire for a number of additional but equally important health programs. All enjoy a history of strong bipartisan support. These programs include the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, the Special Diabetes Program, the Teaching Health Center Program, and certain Medicare provisions.

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting—MIECHV—Program is an evidence-based grant that is helping States and Tribes improve early childhood and maternal health. MIECHV-funded home visiting programs, which are voluntary, have benefited 1,650 Washington families in 15 counties and have reduced in half the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. MIECHV is a prime example of evidence-driven policymaking that is improving the health and well-being of vulnerable mothers and children. It is also strongly bipartisan. Unfortunately, MIECHV's Federal funding expired on October 1, 2017.

The Special Diabetes Program and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians are modest investments with a proven track record of combatting diabetes. As a senior member of the Senate Diabetes Caucus, I recognize that diabetes is a leading cause of death and a major driver of healthcare costs. In particular, the Special Diabetes Program for Indians supports 27 community-driven grant programs in Washington's Tribal communities, helping Tribal members prevent, diagnose, and manage this condition through lifestyle changes, counseling, and treatment.

The Teaching Health Center Program is also a small investment with a big return. Teaching Health Center funds are currently being used to train 722 primary care medical residents in 27 States and the District of Columbia. Data show that many physicians eventually practice close to where they train, and the Teaching Health Center Program is training physicians where they are needed most. In Spokane, Toppenish, Tacoma, Yakima, and Auburn, Teaching Health Centers are training a new generation of safety-net physicians to serve those most in need. While the Teaching Health Center Program has received a short-term extension, its funding will expire on January 1, 2018, if Congress does not act.

Lastly, several temporary Medicare provisions have expired and must be renewed. These provisions help rural Medicare patients get hospital, ambulance, and home health services where they live. Additional Medicare ''extenders'' prevent essential services like physical therapy from being arbitrarily capped for Medicare patients. Extending these provisions is important to preserving healthcare access in rural Washington State and empowering our healthcare delivery system to continue to improve and innovate.

The programs I have highlighted and many more are vital to my constituents, my State's economy, and our healthcare delivery system. They are also strongly bipartisan. I call on my Republican colleagues to work with us in a good-faith negotiation to extend these programs immediately.

TRIBUTE TO R. ANDREW MURRAY

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I congratulate Andrew Murray on his investiture as the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina.

Andrew graduated magna cum laude from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte with a bachelor of science in political science and received his juris doctor from the University of North Carolina School of Law.

Throughout his career, Andrew has dedicated himself to public service and leadership. Andrew enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard in 1980 and retired in 2015, serving his country faithfully for 35 years. During his service, he earned a number of decorations, including the Coast Guard Meritorious Service Medal, three Coast Guard Commendation Medals, the Coast Guard Achievement Medal, and the Coast Guard 9/11 Service Medal.

Andrew began his legal career at the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office as an assistant district attorney. Later, he worked in private practice before being elected to serve as the district attorney of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina's largest prosecutorial district. During his tenure as district attorney, he led the office with the utmost distinction and is highly respected for his leadership.

I am proud that Andrew is willing to continue serving western North Carolina in a new role as U.S. Attorney. Western North Carolina is lucky to have such an experienced prosecutor and effective leader to command this important office. He is a dedicated public servant whose extensive prosecutorial experience and relationships with law enforcement will bolster the mission of the Department of Justice and promote public safety.

Senator BURR and I proudly recommended Andrew to President Trump, and I know that he will lead the U.S. Attorney's Office with honor.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE JOHNSON

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, today I wish to pay tribute to Steve Johnson who is retiring on December 22, 2017, from his position as the manager of the U.S. Senate Dining Room.

Mr. Johnson is a well-respected member of the Senate family. For over two decades, Mr. Johnson has managed the Senate Dining Room with care, enthusiasm, poise, and the utmost hospitality. He understands the rich history and importance of this institution and has witnessed much of its tradition over the years, serving Supreme Court Justices, Vice Presidents, and many of my Senate colleagues.

Starting in 1995, Mr. Johnson's leadership has kept the Senate Dining Room running smoothly and efficiently. Whether it is tallying receipts

at the end of the day or providing specialized off-menu items to guests, everything Mr. Johnson does is done with the utmost attention to detail. Mr. Johnson treats everyone the same and always maintains a high level of professionalism.

Mr. Johnson's work ethic and perseverance are visible throughout his personal life as well. In addition to his impressive tenure, he has completed 18 marathons while working in the Senate Dining Room, including the Boston Marathon a total of seven times.

My colleagues and I would like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude for Mr. Johnson's 22 years of service. His institutional knowledge and unparalleled courtesy are greatly appreciated and will be deeply missed. Please join me in wishing Mr. Johnson and his wife, Joanne, a long and healthy retirement.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN E. HOEHNE, JR.

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, today I wish to honor a longtime and vital member of my staff, John E. Hoehne, Jr., for serving the people of Idaho and our Nation for 25 years, both as my chief of staff during my service in the U.S. House of Representatives and as my chief of staff during my service in the U.S. Senate.

John has been with me since before the beginning of my congressional service, leading my first congressional campaign. He officially became my chief of staff when I was sworn into office in the U.S. House of Representatives in January of 1993. His encouragement, wise counsel, and friendship have been invaluable in decisionmaking and advancing policy and legislative objectives. I cannot thank him enough for his dedication and ongoing assistance.

John has contributed greatly to all aspects of my work, and he has helped advance countless legislative and policy efforts of importance for Idaho. He is instrumental in his work on first protecting Idaho's water sovereignty and economy while trying to find a consensus solution to anadromous fish recovery. He works to preserve Idaho's natural resources and quality of life. His passion for collaborative problem-solving in addressing natural resources challenges has helped give collaborative efforts every opportunity to succeed. John has been a driving force in bringing stakeholders with often diverging viewpoints to the table to build common ground and has helped provide room for stakeholders to talk and resolve concerns rather than resort to litigation. His involvement was essential in the enactment and implementation of the Owyhee Initiative and has been of great assistance with other collaborative efforts, such as the Clearwater Basin Collaborative.

John has also been at the forefront of helping Idahoans who have had challenges with Federal agencies. Earlier in his tenure, he helped get reason to prevail to the benefit of an Idaho community in a dispute with a Federal agency over how to best address mining cleanup. He was also heavily involved in addressing problems a timber company in southeast Idaho was having with another Federal agency. John intervened on the company's behalf and helped resolve the issues. These are just a few of the many achievements John has assisted with for Idahoans.

Every step of the way, John has been there with reasoned counsel and a great sense of the bigger picture. I serve the people of Idaho in Washington, DC, and I believe in strong ties to the State. Although it seems to be a less common arrangement to have a chief of staff based in the State, I have been fortunate to have a principal member of my staff based in Boise fulltime and centrally involved in Idaho issues. His deep knowledge, understanding of Idaho, and ability to effectively represent me have been beneficial. John is well respected in all corners of our great State. In an era and political environment where turnover is common, John's 25 years of committed service is a testament to his deep dedication to Idahoans.

Thank you, John, for your extraordinary counsel and friendship all these years.

TRIBUTE TO SUSAN HAWKES WHEELER

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, today I wish to honor Susan Hawkes Wheeler, chief of staff for my Washington, DC, office, for her 25 years of congressional service. Susan's trusted, dedicated, and perceptive counsel have been of great value throughout my congressional service.

Susan is a native of Idaho and has always had the Gem State's interests in the forefront of her mind. I am fortunate that she chose to serve Idaho through my office. I first met Susan when she worked as a television reporter and news manager in Boise and Idaho Falls. She covered me when I first ran for public office. Later, after a job interview on a twin-engine plane flying between Boise and Twin Falls, I hired her to help me get elected to Congress. Her sharp wit and directness was and is refreshing and effective.

After my election to the U.S. House of Representatives, Susan joined my congressional staff as press secretary and moved from Idaho to Washington, DC. This was back at a time when faxes still came on thermal curly paper and speed dials were limited to 10 numbers per machine. Radio actualities were done by actually splicing audiotape and calling each radio station separately to play the soundbite for them over the phone line, which was a landline. As technologies advanced, she met those changes with imaginative approaches and implemented innovative ways to improve communications and outreach with Idahoans. Her responsibilities also increased in my office.

Susan served as my acting administrative assistant during my last year in the House. Then, in the Senate, she served as my communications director until June 2011, when she earned the job of chief of staff-DC. She proved herself someone who can always be counted on for a straightforward and reasoned approach, no matter the situation or the audience. She helped make the office more effective and has been integral to improving the way our office communicates with Idahoans.

She improved the quality of the communication in my office, both externally and within the office. Her extensive work making the website a better resource for Idahoans has also resulted in it being recognized through multiple awards. Another of her achievements is the focus she has given to establishing office procedures and working with Senate administrative offices to fine-tune policies that enable smooth office operations. She also serves as a great example of leadership, communicating well with staff, and empowering them to share insight. While helping me become more effective, Susan has also taken the time to mentor countless staff and help young people start their careers.

From day one, no matter the job title, Susan has always been a senior counselor with trusted insight given her deep familiarity with Idaho, experience, and sound judgement.

Thank you, Susan, for dedicating so much of your time and talent to serving the people of Idaho in Congress and for your strong support and steady friendship.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING DOUBLE L

• Mr. RISCH. Madam President, my great State of Idaho is known for excelling in many areas. We are a proud incubator of the American entrepreneurial spirit, with Idaho consistently being ranked as one of the friendliest States in the Nation for small businesses. Idaho is also renowned for our State vegetable, the potato. Millions of people around the world know that Idaho potatoes are in a class of their own. It is only natural that the innovation that Idaho is known for would lead a small business on a mission to assist potato farmers. As the chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, it is my pleasure to recognize Double L as the Senate Small Business of the Month for December 2017. Double L maintains a global presence while staying true to the core values of its farming roots in order to enable potato farmers to increase production, expand their harvest, and to achieve their American Dream.

Double L was originally founded in 1976 by potato growers Leland Klinger and Lynn Johnson, who initially started the company by building equipment

that would meet their own specific needs after being disappointed with the machines currently on the market. It was this entrepreneurial spirit that drove the two to expand into other handling equipment, and the rest is history. In the years since then, Double L has never lost the original manufacturing mindset with which the company was founded, while the company and its employees have certainly expanded their horizons.

In 2004, Chris Hunsaker became CEO of Double L and immediately sought an expansion of both manufacturing and clientele, leading the company to move from its original home in American Falls to Heyburn, ID. With the upbringing of a farmer and the training of a salesman, Chris has ensured that Double L has remained steadfast in its commitment to personalized service for each customer. For example, Double L does not maintain a standing inventory. Each order is built per the customer's specific wants and needs. Additionally, Double L has a commitment to excellence from providing a safe working environment for their employees, to catering to the unique needs of farmers and the equipment that they need. This company has proven consistently over time that, when the market sees a demand for a particular product or service, it is American entrepreneurs like those at Double L who will provide the solution.

With considerable success and trust earned from Double L's loyal clients, the company is still moving forward. Double L has shipped its equipment built in the United States to countries such as China, Thailand, New Zealand, Australia, Turkey, Egypt, and Israel. This equipment has enabled farmers all across the globe who just a few years ago were harvesting their potatoes by hand to now efficiently complete their harvest using the equipment designed for their unique farms and crop yields, helping them to become sustainable farmers. That simple commitment to providing solutions for growers to be more effective with their harvesting and storage of crops is what allows Double L to be the successful business that it is today.

As a company with a global presence rooted in the growing and handling practices of the Gem State potato farmers, Double L is a prime example of the American entrepreneurial spirit that works to find innovative solutions to empower consumers. By providing quality customer service, cultivating strong working relationships, and maintaining longevity of over 10 years with many of their employees, Double L has shown that not only can they manufacture powerful machines and solutions, but that they are in fact one of the many small businesses that are driving the American economy forward. I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations to Chris and all of the employees at Double L for being selected as the December 2017 Small Business of the Month. Not only do you make our great State proud, but you also allow for millions more to enjoy Idaho potatoes as well. I look forward to watching the continued success of this strong Idaho business.●

300TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE LIBRARY

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, New Hampshire takes pride in its many firsts among the States, including our first in the Nation Presidential primary. This year, Granite Staters have been celebrating the 300th anniversary of the New Hampshire State Library, the first State library in America. It all began in Portsmouth on January 25, 1717, when the 27th General Assembly directed ''ye Law books be distributed among ye severall towns of this Province in proportion according to their last Prov. tax, except two books which shall be for ye use of ye Govr & Councile and house of representatives.'' Three centuries later, the original books are surrounded by a modern collection of more than 600,000 items, housed across from the State house in Concord. The State Library is one of our most handsome public buildings, built in 1896 of New Hampshire granite, American steel, and Italian marble.

We Granite Staters love our libraries, and we have led the Nation in making books available to all citizens. As State librarian Michael York told New Hampshire Public Radio: ''We often use the term 'anchor institutions.' There are 234 communities in New Hampshire and there are 234 public libraries. Nobody else can make that claim. Not McDonald's, not 7–11, not Dunkin' Donuts.''

In 1833, Peterborough established the first tax-supported public library in the world, a central collection of books owned by the people and free to all residents of the town. In the early 1800s, so-called social or parlor libraries sprang up across our State—places where dues-paying members came together to share books. A century later, wealthy philanthropists built free public libraries all across our State, including nine impressive Carnegie libraries. Phillips Exeter Academy, a private school in Exeter, NH, is home to the largest secondary school library in the world. Today every city and town in New Hampshire has a public library, and a key mission of the State library is to provide professional development for local librarians to keep them abreast of the latest developments in library science and technologies.

The State library serves as a centralized location for State and government documents, and its collection specializes in New Hampshire newspapers, authors, and books on New Hampshire history and culture. It includes an archive of Granite State political history, including posters, buttons, and bumper stickers from New Hampshire Presidential primaries dating back to 1952. One of its most prized possessions is a 20-foot, floor-to-ceiling ''Hitchcock map'' of New Hampshire, with the State's mountains, valleys, and lakes carved in relief by Dartmouth College—students in 1877.

During my years as Governor, I had the daily pleasure of looking out on our beautiful State library from my office windows in the State capitol. Both the building and its collection are among our State's most prized cultural treasures. I am grateful to State librarian Michael York and his professional staff for their dedicated service to our State and for their loving stewardship of this special building. I join with people across the Granite State in celebrating the first 300 years of America's first State library.●

TRIBUTE TO CONNOR BARRETT

● Mr. THUNE. Madam President, today I recognize the hard work of my Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee intern Connor Barrett. Connor hails from Bend, OR, and is an aspiring law student.

While interning for the Commerce Committee, Connor assisted the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation. He is a dedicated worker who was committed to getting the most out of his internship. I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Connor for all of the fine work he did for the committee and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:20 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3759. An act to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a Family Caregiving Strategy, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3979. An act to amend the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to reauthorize the volunteer services, community partnership, and refuge education programs of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4661. An act to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 95. Concurrent resolution expressing support for the use of public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms.

At 3:07 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agreed to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3759. An act to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a Family Caregiving Strategy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 95. Concurrent resolution expressing support for the use of public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CRAPO for the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mark L. Greenblatt, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Export-Import Bank.

*Spencer Bachus III, of Alabama, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2019.

*Spencer Bachus III, of Alabama, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2023.

*Judith Delzoppo Pryor, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2021.

*Kimberly A. Reed, of West Virginia, to be First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2021.

*Claudia Slacik, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2019.

*Claudia Slacik, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2023.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. NELSON (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 2246. A bill to designate the health care center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Tallahassee, Florida, as the Sergeant Ernest I. ''Boots'' Thomas VA Clinic, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2247. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a consistent eligibility date for provision of Department of Veterans Affairs memorial headstones and markers for eligible spouses and dependent children of veterans whose remains are unavailable, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. HELLER, and Mr. UDALL):

S. 2248. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide certain burial benefits for spouses and children of veterans who are buried in tribal cemeteries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 2249. A bill to permanently reauthorize the Rio Puerco Management Committee and the Rio Puerco Watershed Management Program; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BOOKER, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2250. A bill to ensure due process protections of individuals in the United States against unlawful detention based solely on a protected characteristic; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 2251. A bill to require the United States Postal Service to designate a single, unique ZIP code for Swanzey, New Hampshire; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. 2252. A bill to amend the Animal Health Protection Act to support State and Tribal efforts to develop and implement management strategies to address chronic wasting disease among deer, elk, and moose populations, to support research regarding the causes of chronic wasting disease and methods to control the further spread of the disease, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2253. A bill to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to ensure access to mental health services for children under the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2254. A bill to prevent unfair double taxation by ensuring that the deduction for State and local taxes is not reduced, suspended, or eliminated; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. ROBERTS:

S. Con. Res. 31. A concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Bob Dole; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 109

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 109, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of pharmacist services.

S. 294

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 294, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to clarify the Food and Drug Administration's jurisdiction over certain tobacco products, and to protect jobs and small businesses involved in the sale, manufacturing and distribution of traditional and premium cigars.

S. 497

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 497, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 654

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 654, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 793

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 793, a bill to prohibit sale of shark fins, and for other purposes.

S. 842

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 842, a bill to prohibit Federal agencies and Federal contractors from requesting that an applicant for employment disclose criminal history record information before the applicant has received a conditional offer, and for other purposes.

S. 1063

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1063, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish direct care registered nurse-to-patient staffing ratio requirements in hospitals, and for other purposes.

S. 1142

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana

(Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1142, a bill to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of certain hydroelectric projects.

S. 1263

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1263, a bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to prohibit oil-, gas-, and methane hydrate-related seismic activities in the North Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, and Straits of Florida planning areas of the outer Continental Shelf, and for other purposes.

S. 1503

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1503, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

S. 1524

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1524, a bill to improve the treatment of Federal prisoners who are primary caretaker parents, and for other purposes.

S. 1627

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1627, a bill to extend the authorization of the Highlands Conservation Act.

S. 1845

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1845, a bill to amend the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act to provide for additional procedures for families with children under the age of 6, and for other purposes.

S. 1901

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1901, a bill to require global economic and political pressure to support diplomatic denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, including through the imposition of sanctions with respect to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and any enablers of the activities of that Government, and to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, and for other purposes.

S. 1933

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1933, a bill to focus limited Federal resources on the most serious offenders.

S. 1989

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1989, a bill to enhance transparency and accountability for online political advertisements by requiring those who purchase and publish such ads to disclose information about the advertisements to the public, and for other purposes.

S. 1990

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1990, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the amounts payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs for dependency and indemnity compensation, to modify the requirements for dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain veterans rated totally disabled at the time of death, and for other purposes.

S. 2046

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2046, a bill to amend titles 5 and 44, United States Code, to require Federal evaluation activities, improve Federal data management, and for other purposes.

S. 2070

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2070, a bill to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, to reauthorize the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program, and to promote initiatives that will reduce the risk of injury and death relating to the wandering characteristics of some children with autism.

S. 2088

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2088, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the issuance of the Gold Star Installation Access Card to the surviving spouse, dependent children, and other next of kin of a member of the Armed Forces who dies while serving on certain active or reserve duty, to ensure that a remarried surviving spouse with dependent children of the deceased member remains eligible for installation benefits to which the surviving spouse was previously eligible, and for other purposes.

S. 2135

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2135, a bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

S. 2167

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2167, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran, and for other purposes.

S. 2174

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2174, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the Veterans Crisis Line.

S. 2194

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2194, a bill to remove a limitation on a prohibition relating to permits for discharges incidental to normal operation of vessels.

S. 2236

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2236, a bill to require covered discrimination and covered harassment awareness and prevention training for Members, officers, employees, interns, fellows, and detailees of Congress within 30 days of employment and annually thereafter, to require a biennial climate survey of Congress, to amend the enforcement process under the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights for covered discrimination and covered harassment complaints, and for other purposes.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 31—AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL FOR A CEREMONY TO AWARD THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO BOB DOLE

Mr. ROBERTS submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 31

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL FOR CEREMONY TO AWARD THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO BOB DOLE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The rotunda of the Capitol is authorized to be used on January 17, 2018, for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Bob Dole.

(b) PREPARATIONS.—Physical preparations for the conduct of the ceremony described in subsection (a) shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as may be prescribed by the Architect of the Capitol.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1863. Mr. ENZI proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1863. Mr. ENZI proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018; as follows:

(The text of the Conference Report (H. Rept. 115–466) to accompany H.R. 1 is printed in the proceedings of the House in the RECORD of December 15, 2017. The text of the amendment is the text of the Conference Report with the following provisions stricken:

Section 11000, subsection (a);

Section 11032, subparagraph (B); and

The phrase ''tuition-paying'' in Section 13701.)

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I have 3 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 19, 2017, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Scott Garrett, of New Jersey, to be President, Kimberly A. Reed, of West Virginia, to be First Vice President, Mark L. Greenblatt, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, and Spencer Bachus III, of Alabama, Judith Delzoppo Pryor, of Ohio, and Claudia Slacik, of New York, each to be a Member of the Board of Directors, all of the Export-Import Bank.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 19, 2017, at 2 p.m. to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Peter Hendrick Vrooman, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda, and Joel Danies, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, both of the Department of State.

COMMITTEE ON RULES

The Committee on Rules is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 19, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''A resolution to improve procedures for the consideration of nomination in the Senate''.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Nellie Jafari, a health fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 115th Congress.

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

AUTHORIZING USE OF THE CAPITOL ROTUNDA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 31, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 31) authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Bob Dole.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 31) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 11 a.m. on Wednesday, December 20; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M. TODAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:53 a.m., adjourned until Wednesday, December 20, 2017, at 11 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

LISA GORDON–HAGERTY, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR NUCLEAR SECURITY, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, VICE FRANK G. KLOTZ, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ANDREA L. THOMPSON, OF SOUTH DAKOTA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ARMS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, VICE ROSE EILENE GOTTEMOELLER RESIGNED.

SUSAN A. THORNTON, OF MAINE, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS), VICE DANIEL R. RUSSEL.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FRANK T. BROGAN, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE DEBORAH S. DELISLE, RESIGNED.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate December 19, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JENNIFER GILLIAN NEWSTEAD, OF NEW YORK, TO BE LEGAL ADVISER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF ARLENE SHERMAN'S 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Arlene Sherman on her 100th birthday.

I join her friends and family in extending my best to her on this day and in celebrating her life and contributions to our great state. I hope she uses this momentous day to do the same.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Arlene on her birthday. May her year be filled with happiness and blessings.

RECOGNIZING HOLY FAMILY ACADEMY AS A 2017 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Holy Family Catholic Academy in Inverness, Illinois on being named a 2017 National Blue Ribbon Award winner. The National Blue Ribbon Award is presented to schools for outstanding academic performance making Holy Family Catholic Academy well-deserving of this recognition.

This year AdvancED, a non-partisan organization that reviews educational institutions, named Holy Family Catholic Academy as the first middle school in Illinois to receive STEM certification. Notably, the school's group-based learning environment prepares middle school students for STEM programs with confidence, curiosity, and enthusiasm.

The success of Holy Family Catholic Academy would not be possible without qualified teachers and the support of a robust Parent Association. Over 75 percent of Holy Family Catholic Academy teachers have advanced degrees. The Parent Association hosts a week-long Teacher Appreciation celebration that recognizes the trust, appreciation, and dedication of these consummate professionals.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in congratulating Holy Family Catholic Academy on being named a 2017 National Blue Ribbon Award winner.

MILLIONS OF AMERICANS NEGLECTED UNDER TAX BILL

HON. DINA TITUS

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 1, the Republican tax scam. I voted against this bill a few weeks ago and again when it was brought before the House on December 19.

This bill was crafted behind closed doors, without regular order, and without thorough public input. The result is legislation that would dismantle our health care system, add significant complexity to the tax code, and harm my district's seniors, students, and virtually every middle-class family.

Many of my constituents suffered great economic hardship and are just beginning to recover from the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. This tax bill is not a way to bolster the recovery effort; it is a red herring that relies on the myth of trickle-down economics in order to give top earners more breaks.

Another way the Republican tax bill callously demonstrates a lack of concern for the average American that has been left largely out of the conversation, is the taxation of our citizens living abroad. I often hear from my overseas constituents and American expats I meet around the world about the burdens they face with the American citizenship-based taxation system. Like my constituents in Las Vegas, many of our citizens residing overseas are teachers, small business owners, and middle-class and working families who would be excluded from the benefits of the tax bill. They discuss being dually taxed under the current system: first by the local tax authority where they currently reside and again by the United States. This is a legitimate problem and unfair for the roughly 9 million Americans living abroad. No other developed nation has such a system.

As a member of the Americans Abroad Caucus, I have continued to support taking action so that U.S. citizens living abroad are not left with the choice of being drained of savings or having to renounce their citizenship due to unfair double taxation. Unfortunately, Congress has neglected to help this minority constituency for far too long. It is discouraging that the tax-writing committees would rather prioritize tax cuts on the foreign income of U.S. corporations than provide assistance to individual citizens abroad with tax reform.

I condemn my colleagues who voted for the tax scam conference report that will shift money from hard working families in Nevada and around the globe to the wealthiest in the nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed a vote. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 686 and YEA on Roll Call No. 687.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, on December 18, I was not recorded on two Roll Call votes due to travel delays beyond my control. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 685 and YEA on Roll Call No. 686.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MR. FRANK WILLIAMS, JR.

HON. CEDRIC L. RICHMOND

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mr. Frank ''Frankie'' Williams, Jr., a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, who passed away on December 6, 2017 at the age of 50.

Mr. Williams was born on July 21, 1967 in New Orleans, Louisiana. He was the oldest boy of six children to Mr. Frank Williams, Sr. and Mrs. Joan Williams. Mr. Williams received his education in the Orleans Parish Public Schools, graduating from George Washington Carver High School. He was employed by the Blue Crab Restaurant and Oyster Bar and a former employee of Margaritaville for ten years.

Mr. Williams went into the water near Lakeshore Drive to assist in rescuing two men. One of those two men died and another was hospitalized after their car plunged into a canal at West End, along with killing Mr. Williams as well. A co-worker of Mr. Williams stated that his actions that night were in line with his character.

It was said that, ''Frank was the true definition of a selfless person who always looked out for his fellow man, co-worker or friend—the type of guy who would give you the shirt off his back. His large stature perfectly matched his large heart.''

Mr. Williams loved the city and the people of New Orleans. His legacy will forever be a part of the city and his dedication to community embodies the spirit of New Orleans. We cannot match the sacrifices made by Mr. Williams, but surely we can try to match his sense of service. We cannot match his courage, but we can strive to match his devotion.

Mr. Frank ''Frankie'' Williams, Jr.'s survivors include his wife Doretha ''Kim'' Henry Williams, mother Joan Williams, son Frank Clark and two stepsons; grandchildren Adriana, Ma'Kye and Cam'ron Clark and two step grandchildren; and godchild Karionisha Polk. Siblings Karen Jones, Joan (Charles), Barbara (Will), Glenn (Chandra), Tyrone (Teidra) Willimas and Jessie (Brenda) Brue; eight brothers-in-law; and four sisters-in-law. He is

● This ''bullet'' symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

survived by a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and other relatives and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I celebrate the life and legacy of Mr. Frank ''Frankie'' Williams, Jr. a beloved husband, father, grandfather, uncle, and son.

CONGRATULATING LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID E. QUANTOCK ON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER 37 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Lieutenant General David E. Quantock, who is retiring after 37 years of exemplary active federal service in the United States Army on December 31, 2017.

LTG Quantock is a resident of New York and a 1980 graduate of Norwich University, with a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. He received Master's degrees in Public Administration from Troy State University, Computer Science from the Naval Postgraduate School, and Strategy from the United States Army War College. He was commissioned through ROTC and entered the U.S. Army as a Military Police Officer. LTG Quantock has served in multiple campaigns, including Operation Island Breeze in Grenada, Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti, and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq.

LTG Quantock culminated his distinguished career as The Inspector General, Office of the Secretary of the Army where he upheld the office's longstanding legacy as a fair and impartial organization. In all of his diverse assignments, LTG Quantock's dedication, integrity, and leadership had an immeasurable impact on the Army and our nation's allies.

On behalf of New York's 21st District, I want to thank LTG Quantock for his 37 years of faithful service, and wish him and his wife Melissa all the best in the years ahead.

HONORING MR. MARTIN TRUEX, JR.

HON. THOMAS MacARTHUR

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. MACARTHUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Martin Truex, Jr., of Ocean County as the 32nd driver in the NASCAR Cup Series history to be crowned Champion. Since his Cup series rookie season in 2004, Martin has racked up 15 wins, 67 top 5's and 160 top ten finishes with 6,519 laps led throughout his hard fought and resilient career.

Beyond his great success on the race track, Martin is committed to giving back to his community. In 2007, he and his longtime girlfriend, Sherry Pollex started the Martin Truex, Jr. Foundation to support children with pediatric cancer. When not driving for Colorado based Furniture Row Racing team, Martin and Sherry devote much of their time together to furthering cancer research and awareness. The Martin Truex, Jr., Foundation has committed over one million dollars in aid to help grow the emergency room at the Southern Ocean Medical Center in Manahawkin, New Jersey. Additionally, their efforts contributed to the grand opening of a new Pediatric Care Center at Southern Ocean Medical Center, in August of 2013.

Martin was raised in Mayetta, NJ, a very small and not so populated area inside of Stafford Township in southern Ocean County. In 1998, he graduated from Southern Regional High School, while racing for the Modified Division at Wall Stadium in Wall Township, always striving to accomplish his childhood dream, which was to become a NASCAR Cup Series Champion.

Mr. Speaker, the people of New Jersey's Third Congressional District are tremendously proud to have Mr. Martin Truex, Jr., as an involved member of their community. It is my honor to recognize his outstanding accomplishment of being crowned the 2017 Champion in the NASCAR Cup Series and his continued commitment to giving back to his community, before the United States House of Representatives.

THANKING THEODORE R. BECHTOL, JR. FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

HON. GREGG HARPER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to one of the truly outstanding individuals who works at the U.S. Capitol, Mr. Theodore R. Bechtol, Jr.

Better known to many of us as the Superintendent of the U.S. Capitol Grounds, Ted is responsible for preserving and maintaining more than 290 acres of the historic landscape and infrastructure across the U.S. Capitol campus.

Prior to being promoted to his current position in 2007, Ted served as the Deputy Superintendent for U.S. Capitol Grounds. As part of Ted's responsibilities, he ensures the routine and periodic landscape maintenance, comprehensive tree care, and upkeep of the supporting infrastructure, vehicles, and equipment are completed. Additionally, snow removal, trash collection, and support for major events, such as the annual December Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, are key responsibilities for supporting our U.S. Capitol campus. In total, Ted has taken part in 13 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree events.

Throughout Ted's years at the U.S. Capitol, he worked hard to bring recognition to the historical significance of the grounds and helped to produce cultural landscape reports. His depth of knowledge about Frederick Law Olmsted, the American landscape architect who designed the U.S. Capitol Grounds, has changed how each section of the grounds are cared for, with a focus on historical horticulture.

Ted has also consulted on historical horticulture work at many institutions throughout the east coast.

Under his leadership, the U.S. Capitol Grounds have received designation as an accredited arboretum, a notable industry standard.

On Friday, January 5, 2018, Ted Bechtol will retire from his position as Superintendent of the U.S. Capitol Grounds for the Architect of the Capitol.

In retirement, he will be spending more time with his granddaughter, working on home improvement projects, and enjoy hiking and beach trips. He will continue to explore American history trails—he and his wife recently hiked Gettysburg and Civil War trails.

Although we are sad to see someone with Ted's accomplishments leave the service of the institution, I offer him my sincere best wishes in his retirement.

IN RECOGNITION OF HELEN MACKES FOR THIRTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Helen Mackes, who will celebrate her retirement in January from her position as tax collector for Kunkletown, Pennsylvania. Helen has been a life-long resident of Kunkletown, Eldred Township, Pennsylvania.

Helen Mackes was a realtor, an elected tax collector, and the go-to person for information and assistance in her community for close to thirty years, and she was the recording secretary for a local political association for three decades as well. In addition to her service in government, Helen has always been very involved in her community in civic organizations, helping to preserve local history and important historic sites. As head of the Eldred Township Historical Society, she led the effort to secure a grant from the Commonwealth Finance Authority to renovate and restore the Kunkletown post office on Kunkletown Road.

In is an honor to recognize Helen Mackes for all the years of service she has given to the people of Kunkletown. I am grateful for both what she has done and what she has meant to this unique community. I wish her all of the best as she looks forward to an enjoyable and fulfilling retirement.

HONORING FIREFIGHTER AND PARAMEDIC JAMES MCDONALD FOR HIS COURAGE AND HEROIC ACTIONS

HON. RAUL RUIZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the heroic actions of firefighter and paramedic James McDonald. His courage, calm demeanor, quick reflexes, and solution-based approach saved the life of Riverside County Sheriff's Deputy David Solis.

On the afternoon of May 25th, 2017, Mr. McDonald and the rest of the members of Fire Station 79 were dispatched across town to assist Deputy Solis who had been shot multiple times during a foot pursuit in the City of Coachella.

Mr. McDonald reacted immediately and medically assisted Deputy Solis. He assessed the injuries, directed the medical support, and requested an air ambulance to transport Deputy Solis to the nearest regional trauma center.

As an emergency room physician, I am aware that when an individual is severely injured by gunshots, every second is vital to save his or her life. Mr. McDonald remained calmed and focused throughout the operation, and his leadership was essential in saving Deputy Solis's life. His courage and agility of mind is commendable.

Throughout his two years working with the Riverside County Fire Department, Mr. McDonald has demonstrated a strong commitment to public safety, earning the respect and admiration of his colleagues. Before becoming a firefighter, Mr. McDonald served our community as a paramedic since 2000. Mr. McDonald was recently recognized by the City of Coachella for his outstanding performance assisting Deputy Solis.

On behalf of California's 36th Congressional District, I am grateful for Firefighter and Paramedic James McDonald and commend his valuable contributions and arduous work strengthening our community.

IN RECOGNITION OF WILLIAM ERIC HERR, COLONEL, USAF (RETIRED)

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to use this time to recognize my constituent and friend, Mr. William Eric Herr for over 40 years of federal service beginning as a Reserve Officer Training Corps cadet in 1977 and culminating on January 14, 2018 with his retirement from federal civil service.

Mr. Herr received his engineering degree from the University of Colorado and was commissioned in 1981. He excelled as an Air Force pilot with most of his flight time in the F–15 Eagle, single-seat, air superiority fighter. Mr. Herr reached the pinnacle of his tactical training by graduating from the United States Air Force Fighter Weapons Instructor Course; as in his other flying training courses, he received top academic honors and was recognized as a Distinguished Graduate. He served 26 years in the Air Force including command, combat time over Iraq, duty on The Joint Staff, and senior positions on The Air Staff and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Staff.

Today, Mr. Herr serves as the Low Observable/Counter Low Observable (LO/CLO) Systems Program Director in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. He is responsible for managing the Department of Defense process for focusing LO/CLO technology development and reviewing requests for the release of LO/CLO technologies to U.S. allies and foreign partners.

Mr. Herr has been an active and involved citizen of Stafford County, Virginia. He served five years on the county's Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission including multiple terms as chairman and vice-chairman. An active member of the Stafford County Branch, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Mr. Herr currently serves on their executive board and as their political outreach chair. He has been a frequent speaker at meetings of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors and has been engaged at all levels of his local government and across the First Congressional District.

Mr. Herr and his wife Lisa will be moving to Texas after his retirement where he will continue to support our Nation's defense in a leadership role in the private sector. Both he and Lisa will enjoy being closer to family but will never give up their ties to the Old Dominion.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Mr. Herr's service to Stafford County, to the Commonwealth of Virginia, and to the United States of America, and wish him and his wife the best in their future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, December 18, 2017 I missed the following votes. Had I been present, I would have voted "NO" on Motion to Fix the Convening Times, and "YES" on H.R. 4375, STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE SCALISE

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 687.

HONORING DEPUTY LOPEZ ON BEING NAMED OFFICER OF THE YEAR FOR HER ALTRUISM AND HEROISM

HON. RAUL RUIZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize an outstanding member of my Congressional district, Riverside County Sheriff's Deputy Alicia Lopez. Because of her extraordinary altruism, she was recently named Officer of the Year by the Palm Desert Police Department. Her story is an inspiration and today, I want to recognize her exceptional dedication of service and sacrifice.

Deputy Lopez and Community Service Officer Angelina Castleberry became close friends when they were both working at the Palm Desert Police Department. In 2014, Ms. Castleberry gave birth to beautiful twins. Unfortunately, one of them was born with a kidney deficiency. For three and a half years, little Matthew has been subject to multiple dialysis treatments, 14 surgeries, and weekly visits to the Loma Linda University Kidney Center.

Throughout the procedures, doctors advised Ms. Castleberry that Matthew may not survive for too long without a kidney transplant. When Deputy Lopez learned about Matthew's troubles, she decided to participate in a blood drive to see if she could be a match. In March 2017, the results indicated that she was indeed a match. Without any hesitation, Deputy Lopez decided to donate her kidney to save the life of little Matthew.

When Deputy Lopez enthusiastically shared the great news with Ms. Castleberry, she was overcome with tears of joy. On July 31, 2017, Deputy Lopez donated her left kidney to little Matthew, and the transplant surgery was successful. Her selfness generosity saved Matthew's life, who is now recovering well with his new kidney.

Deputy Lopez has dedicated her life to serving the residents of the Coachella Valley. Her valuable contributions and arduous work strengthening our community are inspiring. As exemplified in this story, she goes above and beyond the call of duty.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of California's 36th Congressional District, I truly commend Deputy Lopez for her heroism and compassionate sacrifice. Her willingness to help little Matthew is an inspiration to us all. Her years of service and contributions to our community are an example of excellence and dedication that all should seek to emulate.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained for voting on Monday, December 18. Had I been present and voting, I would have voted:

Nay on Roll Call No. 685 (On Motion to Fix the Convening Time);

Aye on Roll Call No. 686 (On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 4375, STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act, as amended); and

Aye on Roll Call Vote No. 687 (Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 3979, Keep America's Refuges Operational Act).

IN RECOGNITION OF BETH CHAPPELL FOR HER SERVICE AS DETROIT ECONOMIC CLUB PRESIDENT AND CEO

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Beth Chappell for her distinguished leadership as the Detroit Economic Club's President and CEO as she leaves to begin her next chapter. She has been an effective leader and advocate for Michigan's businesses and entrepreneurs.

Born and raised in Michigan, Mrs. Chappell attended Michigan State University's Broad College of Business where she received her bachelor's degree in Marketing before entering the workforce. She spent 16 years at AT&T Corporation, where she served as Vice President of Global Services and cultivated relationships with a worldwide clientele. Mrs. Chappell also served as Executive Vice President of Compuware Corporation and led the Chappell Group before being named President and CEO of the Detroit Economic Club (DEC).

Throughout her 12 year tenure as DEC President, Mrs. Chappell has increased the connectivity of Detroit's business community.

The Detroit Economic Club was founded in 1934 to serve as an organization committed to growing Michigan's business community and providing a platform for international leaders to address global economic change. Mrs. Chappell was successful in growing the DEC and expanding its accessibility to a diverse group of local and national leaders. She launched a young leaders group to ensure that students and young business leaders have the opportunity to learn from successful local leaders and receive mentorship from those who have walked in their shoes. Throughout her career, she has been recognized for her dedication to the Michigan community and continued innovation to best serve business owners and consumers. Mrs. Chappell is a member of multiple boards including Detroit Regional Chamber, St. Joseph Mercy Foundation, Michigan Economic Growth Authority and Citizens Research Council. She has had a tremendous positive impact on the Detroit Economic Club through her work as President, and I look forward to seeing her continued contributions in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Beth Chappell for her distinguished tenure as Detroit Economic Club President and CEO. She has worked diligently on behalf of Michigan's business owners throughout the years.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRENDA L. LAWRENCE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, on December 18, 2017, I was not able to cast my votes during the vote series due to a prior obligation in my District. Had I been in attendance, I would have voted: NO on the Motion to Fix the Convening Time; YES on H.R. 4375—STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act, as amended (Rep. Comstock—Science, Space, and Technology); and YES on H.R. 3979—Keep America's Refuges Operational Act, as amended (Rep. Jeffries—Natural Resources).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KYRSTEN SINEMA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained yesterday.

Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 685, YEA on Roll Call No. 686, and YEA on Roll Call No. 687.

HONORING DEPUTY DANIEL DIMAGGIO FOR HEROISM IN THE LINE OF DUTY

HON. RAUL RUIZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Riverside County Sheriff's Deputy Daniel DiMaggio for his heroic and swift actions which ultimately helped save the life of Deputy David Solis.

On May 25th, 2017, Deputy Solis was shot five times during a foot pursuit in the City of Coachella. Deputy DiMaggio rapidly responded to the situation and assessed Deputy Solis's injuries. Two weeks prior to the incident, Deputy DiMaggio attended training on Tactical Field Lifesaving, where he received the necessary medical materials to apply a tourniquet to Deputy Solis's arm. This technique helped stem the blood flow and reduce the shock from his wounds.

Deputy Solis is now alive thanks to the collective efforts of our community's first responders and public safety officials. However, Deputy DiMaggio's medical assistance was key in helping save his life. He took care of Deputy Solis until the paramedics arrived and remained with him while he was transported to the nearest regional trauma center.

Deputy DiMaggio's rapid response and decisive actions are truly commendable. He maintained a calm demeanor and a deep level of concentration that allowed him to execute the advance medical training he had received. He also had the needed medical kit ready to be used, which exemplifies his judicious thinking.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of California's 36th Congressional District, I want to honor and recognize Deputy Daniel DiMaggio. His courageous and decisive response saved help the life of one of the members of our community. I commend his admirable contributions strengthening our community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast my vote for Roll Call votes 685, 686, and 687 on December 18, 2017. Had I been present, my votes would have been the following: Nay on 685 and Aye on Roll Call votes 686, and 687.

IN RECOGNITION OF WASHTENAW COMMUNITY COLLEGE RENAMING THE PLANT OPERATIONS BUILDING IN HONOR OF A DISTINGUISHED STAFF MEMBER

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career of Damon B. Flowers, Vice President of Facilities, Development and Operations, and the recognition of his lifetime of work by Washtenaw Community College's which renamed a plant operations building after him. This building is being renamed in celebration of Damon B. Flowers' work at the school, so that his legacy will inspire generations of students to come.

Damon B. Flowers has served Washtenaw Community College in various capacities for over 23 years, including his current position of Vice President of Facilities, Development and Operations. Throughout his time at WCC, two campus master plans were implemented. These plans allowed him to oversee more than $120 million in renovations and allowed for over 130 construction projects, including the Business Education Building, the Great Lakes Regional Training Center and the Health and Fitness Center. Vice President Flowers is known for his creative thinking and is recognized for the implementation of WCC's energy conservation campus standards and expanded recycling operations. Under his leadership, the campus has developed a partnership with the City of Ann Arbor and Ann Arbor Township to develop backup water resources and vegetated building roofs. He also secured WCC four Department of Energy grants through his dedication to implementing campus wide sustainability practices.

Vice President Flowers has received many awards throughout his tenure at Washtenaw Community College, including the Innovative Architecture and Design Award from Recreation Magazine, the Arbor Day Foundation Tree Campus USA Designation and the Grand Award from the Professional Grounds Management Awards Program. His years of hard work have impacted countless lives and forever bettered the design of WCC's campus. His leadership will be missed, and I look forward to seeing his continued contributions to our local community in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Vice President Damon B. Flowers for his outstanding service to Washtenaw Community College. His thoughtful leadership and influence will make a difference for decades to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, yesterday December 18, 2017, on Roll Call Number 685 through 687, The Motion to Fix the Convening Time, H.R. 4375, STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act and H.R. 3979, Keep America's Refuges Operational Act, I was unavoidably detained and missed the vote.

Had I been present, I would have voted: Motion to Fix the Convening Time: No; H.R. 4375: Yes; H.R. 3979: Yes.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, on December 18, 2017, I was in my district conducting official business and missed votes.

Had I been present, I would have voted in support of H.R. 4375, STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act, and H.R. 3979, Keep America's Refuges Operational Act.

Had I been present, I would have voted in opposition to the Republican motion to fix the convening times.

MUSIC AT KOHL MANSION 35TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Music at Kohl Mansion concert series, conducted each year at Mercy High School, Burlingame. This is the 35th year of Music at Kohl Mansion. Built in 1914, Kohl Mansion's stunningly beautiful hall and associated rooms are the perfect setting for sparkling holiday lights and the joyous sounds of chamber music.

Music at Kohl Mansion has a national reputation for presenting chamber concerts of the highest professional standards, featuring local, national and international ensembles. The allied program of Kohl for Kids has instructed over 100,000 students in interactive music programs through 22 K–12 public schools. The instruction has also been offered through concerts, master classes, and coaching. Kohl for Kids also serves the public in public libraries, community centers and senior residences. Hundreds of students have received musical instruments through the year-long instrument drive for schools, and a partnership with the Young Chamber Musicians since 2011 has strengthened the education and performance opportunities for advanced, teenage musicians.

The holiday production of Music at Kohl Mansion and the year-round production of music through Kohl for Kids strengthen America. Despite different cultures, backgrounds and experiences, music is a unifying language that every person can appreciate without regard to race, heritage or training. Music connects each of us with our inner spark, and encourages all to unite around a common source of inspiration.

Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of being an alumna of Mercy High School, and the proud trumpeter of its ongoing mission to elevate the human spirit. Music at Kohl

Mansion and its allied program of Kohl for Kids have spent 35 years making my community a more hopeful place in which to live. This holiday season, while viewing the lights around us, I want to celebrate the light within that is brought forth by the music emanating from Kohl Mansion. There is no finer location for music than the hall of Kohl Mansion where the love of God and country are palpable in the joyous renditions of this treasured winter festival in tiny Burlingame. Let the bells of this concert ring for as long as our human species have hope of joy and redemption.

IN RECOGNITION OF LINDA YOHN FOR HER DISTINGUISHED CAREER WITH WEMU RADIO

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Linda Yohn for her outstanding career with WEMU Radio. She has worked tirelessly on behalf of Michigan's music community for the past 30 years.

After receiving her bachelor's degree from Otterbein College in Ohio, Ms. Yohn started working at WKSU, a TV station in Kent, Ohio, where she discovered that radio was her true passion. Ms. Yohn has been a lover of jazz music her entire life and then took a job as a jazz music publicist in New York City where she stayed until joining the WEMU Radio team in April of 1987 as Music Director. She hosted Café Du Jazz on weekday evenings throughout her first few years at WEMU before taking the morning jazz slot which she has held for the past 25 years. Through Ms. Yohn's work, the station saw a sizable growth in the station's audience and its relationships with jazz artists and record companies. Ms. Yohn has fostered deep relationships with members of the jazz community, both locally and nationwide.

Ms. Yohn's work at WEMU has been critical to the growth and success of the station as well as cultivating the community of dedicated listeners that WEMU is known for. Southeastern Michigan's vibrant jazz scene is attributed to Ms. Yohn's work at WEMU and the relationships that she continues to cultivate. Her work has been recognized many times over the years and she serves as a board member for the Southeast Michigan Jazz Association and attends panels at various conferences and conventions throughout the country. Ms. Yohn has been named National Jazz Programmer of the Year five times, has received the Duke Dubois national award for service and has been named Ypsilanti's Ambassador for Jazz. Over the past 30 years, she has served as a mentor to the entire WEMU team; though her title was Music Director, she was also the heart and soul of the station. Ms. Yohn leaves behind a generation of passionate jazz listeners and on-air hosts. Her advocacy, passion, and hard work have made her a beloved leader in our Michigan community, and I look forward to her continued positive impact on our Michigan community in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Linda Yohn for a distinguished 30 year career with WEMU Radio. She has made a lasting impact on southeastern Michigan's jazz community.

CONGRATULATING MELISSA BURNISON

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Melissa Burnison on her recent confirmation to serve as the Department of Energy's Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs. Melissa is well known to Members of the House, and President Trump made an excellent choice when he nominated her for this important position.

Melissa Burnison is a native of Kentucky and she began her career on Capitol Hill working for Senator MITCH MCCONNELL. Melissa later worked for Congressman Zach Wamp of Tennessee where she focused on Department of Energy issues. She later served as a senior advisor at the Department of Energy and most recently represented the Nuclear Energy Institute as Director for Federal Programs. In that capacity, my staff and I have worked closely with Melissa to address challenges and opportunities facing the nuclear industry. Melissa also worked tirelessly to foster increased collaboration between the DOE national labs and the nuclear industry. I have especially appreciated her work in this area.

While Melissa Burnison is a respected and effective professional, she truly stands out as a wife and mother. Melissa is an adoring mother of three daughters and with her husband, Scott, they have formed a warm and close family.

One of the pleasures of serving in the U.S, House of Representatives is seeing young, talented people come to Washington to serve their country. I commend Melissa for her confirmation in this important position, and I expect we will be hearing more about this talented and gracious public servant in the years ahead.

TESTIMONY OF ANNA GOLDFARB

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD testimony of Anna Goldfarb.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished members of Congress and fellow citizens, good afternoon. My name is Anna Goldfarb and I am a student in the Council Rock School District. I am very honored to be speaking before you today about diversity and inclusion issues at my Bucks County, Pennsylvania school. I attend a school where most of the students look like me. I have heard many times from classmates and teachers that discrimination is not a problem within our district. It wasn't until the last couple of years, when I became old enough and opened my eyes and ears, did I see and hear that improvement is needed.

I do not think that most teachers and students are trying to be hurtful to students of color, different religions, genders, or sexual orientation. I also don't think that my friends who do not speak up in the face of discrimination are choosing to stand with those that discriminate.

I do believe that when we know better, we do better. I have made it my mission to call out discrimination when I see or hear it. I will always link arms with those being targeted and stand up for them when they are scared to do it alone.

I would like diversity and inclusion training to be added to our curriculum. We won't always attend school in this district, in this ''bubble.'' We need to be prepared to become global citizens. We need to be prepared and empowered to stand up and link arms.

IN RECOGNITION OF ILLINOIS' BICENTENNIAL

HON. ADAM KINZINGER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my fellow Illinoisans in celebrating 200 years of being the Land of Lincoln, the Prairie State, the heart of the Midwest, and the true microcosm of America.

With our varied landscape and diverse population, our location in the dead center of the country, and our historical significance, Illinois is home to the hard-working and the kind-hearted. On December 3, 1818, Illinois became the 21st state admitted to the Union.

Today, Illinois is the fifth most populated state in the country and the first state to ratify the 13th Amendment to abolish slavery. Our proud state leads the nation in agriculture, manufacturing, specialized license plates, and is home to superheroes. Yes, we boast about having the highest number of personalized license plates produced in the country, and the home of Superman really exists in Southern Illinois. We are home to the beloved 2016 World Series Champions, the Chicago Cubs, and the recently beleaguered but still beloved, Chicago Bears.

U.S. Presidents Lincoln, Grant, Reagan, and Obama all lived in Illinois. In fact, Ronald Reagan's boyhood home of Dixon is located in the district I represent. Illinois' 16th Congressional District is also home to the First Lincoln-Douglas Debate, which took place on August 21, 1858 in downtown Ottawa's Washington Square.

We're proud to celebrate this rich history, fortunate to call Illinois home, and honored to serve our communities here in Congress. As we kick off this bicentennial celebration of our Great Pumpkin State, we have a lot to be proud of and a lot of history to look back on.

Mr. Speaker, today I stand here to wish Illinois a very happy birthday and a wonderful bicentennial celebration all year long. Here's to our state sovereignty and national union.

HONORING ANDRE LACY

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend, Andre Lacy, who passed away this week on a trip in Botswana, Africa at the age of 78.

Andre was a well-known entrepreneur and philanthropist throughout Indiana and the nation. He served as Chairman of the LDI, Ltd. Board, a family business which evolved over the years into a successful business innovation solutions firm. With his business expertise, Andre devoted his time to Butler's Business Accelerator program by mentoring students and graciously donated to Butler's business school to promote their continued success. Throughout his life, Andre made a profound impact on countless Hoosiers by providing his guidance to many boards, commissions, and civic organizations.

On a personal note, Andre Lacy was my friend. He was a strong leader and a straight shooter that you could count on to be candid with you. Andre will be mourned most by those who knew him best, and he will be missed by all.

REMEMBERING HAROLD WEBB

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Harold Webb—Tuskegee Airman, North Carolina Director of Personnel, Wake County Commissioner—one of North Carolina's most distinguished leaders. Harold died this past Friday at the age of 92 after a lifetime of devoted public service. My wife Lisa and I extend our condolences to his wife Lucille, their family, and all Harold's extensive network of colleagues and friends as we express gratitude for his extraordinary life.

Born and raised in Greensboro, North Carolina, Harold attended public schools in Guilford County. Upon graduation, he served as a pilot with WWII's legendary Tuskegee Airmen, the first African-American unit to fly and maintain American combat aircraft. His unit received a Congressional Gold Medal in 2007 for its military achievements and was instrumental in paving the way for full integration of the Armed Forces. As the Raleigh News & Observer editorialized yesterday, ''Webb was proud to be a member of the Greatest Generation, and it may fairly be said that he was among those who made it the greatest.''

After the war, Harold received a Bachelor's degree in Biology and a Masters Degree in Education from N.C. Agricultural and Technical State University. He then became a teacher and principal in Orange County Schools and served in a variety of state-level education positions, including administrator of Chapter I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in North Carolina schools.

In 1977, Harold was appointed by Governor James B. Hunt to be Director of State Personnel, the first African-American to serve in this position. He then served on the Wake County Board of Commissioners from 2003 to 2010, and was Chairman from 2008 to 2009.

Harold Webb's board service included The University of North Carolina Board of Governors, Shaw University Board of Trustees, Wake Technical Community College Board of Trustees, Wake County Planning Board, and the National Association of State Personnel Executives. He received an honorary doctorate from NC A&T University and, with Lucille, was inducted into the Raleigh Hall of Fame in 2011. Harold was a faithful member of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church, where he held numerous leadership positions.

Harold Webb made life in Raleigh and North Carolina better for all of our citizens. I and many others valued him as a friend, collaborator, and colleague: a man you wanted on your team. He was a leader who got things done but was quick to share the credit, a kind and generous man skilled at bringing people together, and a great source of encouragement and inspiration. We join with Harold's family, his many friends and admirers, and members of the communities he served, in mourning his passing and honoring his exemplary life of leadership and public service.

TESTIMONY OF ASHTON NOONAN

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD testimony of Ashton Noonan.

Hello, my name is Ashton Noonan, I'm 13 years old and I'm transgender.

Throughout my life I always felt and said I was a girl. I loved Ariel and Wonder Woman; not Batman and Superman. People would make fun of me on the playground, or ask why I wanted to be a girl, but to me it just felt right.

Every year I got older, I felt more and more uncomfortable in my own skin. I couldn't look on the outside like who I felt I was on the inside. That was always very confusing, because why not? After all, this is MY identity.

The world is changing, and with your help we can change the perception people have of the whole LGBTQ community, but especially LGBTQ youth. WE need a safe space where we can be supported, loved and accepted. We can and need to make ALL schools that safe space for ALL children. We need YOUR support to model for everyone else in the world what it is to love and accept others for who they are. We could all live every day for better or for worse, but together we can thrive.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, December 18, 2017, I was unfortunately not present for roll call votes 685 through 687. If I had been present for these votes, I would have voted: Nay on roll call vote 685 on the motion to fix the convening time; Yea on roll call vote 686 on passage of the STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act (H.R. 4375); and Yea on roll call vote 687 on passage of the Keep America's Refuges Operation Act (H.R. 3979).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRENDAN F. BOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on December 18, 2017, I missed

rollcall vote No. 685, No. 686, and No. 687 on the floor of the House of Representatives. Had I been present, I would have voted Nay, Yea, and Yea, respectively.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber for Roll Call votes 685, 686, and 687 on Monday, December 18, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted ''Nay'' on Roll Call vote 685 and ''Yea'' on 686 and 687.

TESTIMONY OF MARGARET ZHENG

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD testimony of Margaret Zheng.

As a Chinese American, I may be hurt by affirmative action, but as a citizen of the global 21st century, I also feel that diverse representation in work and education is necessary to foster a sense of unity underlying diversity.

From this apparent contradiction of feelings, I have concluded that just like how it's difficult to cure advanced-stage cancer, we can't solve discrimination only after harm is done. Rather, we must treat the sickness of hate early on.

In school, we rarely study social minorities except as victims of history, omitting the positive, active roles that females, Muslims, Chinese, LGBTQ+ persons, etc. have had in culture and innovation. Liberal/Democrat students and conservative/Republican students tease and even taunt each other in school, and as a political independent, I often feel swallowed up in tribalized politics, afraid to be labeled a heartless conservative or naïve liberal.

The lack of discussion of socially and politically diverse perspectives in school perpetuates prejudice and endangers individuality, upon which value America was founded. That combined with the inequitable funding of schools and the billions of dollars wasted in high-stakes assessments that label rather than help struggling schools is what caused the need for affirmative action in the first place.

Educate us holistically, on citizenship and collaboration and empathy, and we will not only have diversity, but also a nation thriving.

REMEMBERING JAMES THOMAS ''JIM'' BEVIS

HON. STEVEN M. PALAZZO

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Mr. Jim Bevis, a friend and constituent from Mississippi's Fourth District.

Jim grew up, just down the beach from Mississippi, in Pensacola, Florida. He attended the University of West Florida earning a degree in banking and finance. In 1980, Jim launched what would become a longstanding career in finance and budget analysis at NASA Headquarters (Washington, D.C.), in the Budget Operations Division. Later, he spent a year at Goddard Space Flight Center, in Greenbelt, Maryland. Over the next decade, Jim's career would soar to new heights as a budget analyst responsible for the Office of Space Science programs, then as the lead analyst for the Comptroller for all of NASA's space science programs, with a budget of nearly $1.5 billion. From 1993 to 95, Jim served as a special assistant to the Chief Scientist at NASA, managing budget analyses for a variety of agency topics—Earth, space, microgravity, and life sciences.

Thankfully, Jim's success landed him a position at Mississippi's Stennis Space Center where, in 2002, he was named Chief Financial Officer. He was still serving in that position at the time of his unexpected death in November.

Jim earned numerous awards for his excellent performance and dedicated service to the NASA and Stennis communities. One especially memorable one, unique to our Gulf Coast, was the NASA Commendation Award for Hurricane Katrina Recovery.

Jim carried with him a passion for exceptional work and a rock solid commitment to serving well in his career at NASA. His full comprehension of the public's trust, as Chief Financial Officer, drew the respect and appreciation of NASA's leadership.

Regrettably, Jim's life was cut short just days before his 62nd birthday. I also wish to honor his sons, Nolan & Nicholas today, along with their mother, Sherri Carr Bevis, who is also a public servant and Gulf Coast friend.

Jim enjoyed playing tennis and strumming Beatles tunes on his guitar. He was also deeply involved in his beloved Jacob's Well church family. The life that was Jim Bevis is greatly appreciated and will be missed.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF COLONEL WILLIAM DAVID BARTON

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in honor of Colonel (COL) William David Barton's thirty-one years of service in the Mississippi Army National Guard (MSARNG). COL Barton began his military career on August 13, 1986, when he enlisted as a Cannon Crewman in Service Battery, 2nd Battalion, 114th Field Artillery in his hometown of Kosciusko, Mississippi. He later received his commission through the ROTC program at the University of Mississippi, where he graduated with a degree in marketing in 1990.

COL Barton has served the MSARNG in staff positions at the battalion, brigade and state staff levels, and held command positions at the platoon, company and battalion levels. In 2005, he was deployed to Iraq with the 155th Brigade Combat Team (BCT) where he first served as Brigade Personnel Officer for the 155th BCT, and then served as the Battalion Operations Officer for 2nd Battalion, 114th Field Artillery. He has held the position of Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel since February 1, 2015.

His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (with four Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Commendation Medal (with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), the Army Achievement Medal (with two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (with one Silver and three Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), the National Defense Service Medal (with one Star), the Iraq Campaign Medal (with two Campaign Stars), the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with Gold Hourglass, M Device, and Numeral 2), the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Combat Action Badge, the Air Assault Badge, the National Guard Basic Recruiter Badge , the Mississippi Magnolia Cross (with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), the Mississippi Magnolia Medal (with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), the Mississippi Commendation Medal, the Mississippi War Medal (with one Star), the Mississippi Emergency Service Medal, the Mississippi Service School Ribbon (with one Silver and one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), the Mississippi Longevity Medal (with one Silver and one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), and the Mississippi Recruiting Medal.

When asked about his years in the MSARNG, COL Barton said, ''I have been blessed to serve with some of the finest people in the world over the last 31 years. It has been an amazing experience and I am glad to have been able to serve my country and my state in both peacetime and during war. The service members I have served with truly embody the National Guard motto of 'Always Ready, Always There' and I could not be more proud of my service alongside them.''

Throughout his career and in preparation for his upcoming retirement, Colonel Barton has been supported by his loving family, including his parents, Gerald and Peggy Barton; his three sisters; his wife, Jennifer Barton; and his four daughters, Brittany Burnham, Ashley Smith, Kelly Barton and Hannah Kelly.

I am thankful for Colonel Barton's many years of military service, and I am proud to call him my friend. I wish him the best in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during rollcall votes No. 685 through 687 due to a death in my family. Had I been present, I would have voted ''Nay'' on the motion to fix the convening time, ''Yea'' on H.R. 4375, STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act, and ''Yes'' on H.R. 3979, Keep Americas Refuges Operational Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, on December 18, 2017, I missed three Roll Call votes because I was detained in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted:

NO on the Motion to Fix the Convening Times—House GOP Leadership has offered a motion to change tomorrow's convening time to 10:00 a.m. (Roll Call No. 685);

YES on H.R. 4375, the STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act (Roll Call No. 686); and

YES on H.R. 3979, the Keep America's Refuges Operational Act (Roll Call No. 687).

TESTIMONY OF ALIYAH SALLEY

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD testimony of Aliyah Salley.

Hello, my name is Aliyah Salley and I am from Bucks County, PA. First let me start off by saying Thank you. Thank you to Congressman Fitzpatrick, and his colleagues for giving us this opportunity to be heard today. I also want to thank Barbara Simmons of the Peace Center, my mom, Necole Salley and my grandmother, Linda Salley who is the president of the African American Museum of Bucks County. If it wasn't for these 3 ladies along with Congressman Fitzpatrick I believe my story as well as the stories you will hear today will have gone unheard. As I said earlier my name is Aliyah Salley. I was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, lived in Virginia for a few years and then moved to Bucks County, PA in 2011 with my mom and my sister. We move to Bucks County because my mom talked about how nice of a place it was to raise her children because of the experience she had living there when she was young. For all the years I lived down south, I never once had to deal with racism or the discrimination until I moved to Bucks County. My sister and I went to school in the Neshaminy school district and I am a proud graduate of the 2016 class of Neshaminy & I have been attending BCCC for the past 2 years. While attending Neshaminy High, I experienced many offensive situations. I've seen racists slurs written on school property, my friends and I have been called the N**** word to our faces by students, there has been students wearing a confederate flag throughout the school and no one says anything to them. Two months ago, I became a victim of a hate crime. I have a part time job that I have worked for the past 4 years, As I was walking to my car to go to work I saw handwriting on the car. As I approached the car I could see that the n*** word was carved on the front and back of my car. Imagine how hurtful this is, coming from the south, never having to deal with anything like this before and having it in your face every time you walk out of the door to go to school. It is out of control. We can't allow this to continue. Living in a small town is not meant for one race it is meant for all people. We need help. We have to educate the misinformed. The people that don't know any better. We have to figure out a way to teach people that diversity makes our community stronger. We have to open the doors to allow diversity to feel welcomed into the community. I went to a school with over 4000 students, but the faculty has only 1 African American principal in the entire building. Imagine what that feels like to as an African American student seeing only ONE African American faculty member in a school of thousands of students and hundreds of teachers. It hurts, it's sad, and we have to correct it. I am looking for change, annual diversity trainings for the teaching staff, more history of different cultures within the curriculum, a day of culture and food, counseling for the victims or even articulate a clear statement of expectations regarding racism within the schools, but don't ignore it and act like it is not happening because it is happening all the time. Today you will hear testimonies from other students from different school districts in Bucks County who had to deal with similar things such as myself. Please have an open heart and listen to these stories and then let's create true change for the next generation to grow in confidence of who they are and what they have to offer, regardless of the color of their skin. As the Constitution states, and I agree like all of you, that ''All men are created equal'' & all we want is equality.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JACKY ROSEN

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. Speaker, on December 18th, on roll call votes 685, 686, and 687, I was not present because I was tending to my husband, who is recovering from major spinal surgery. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on roll call vote 685, YEA on roll call vote 686, and YEA on roll call vote 687.

CONGRATULATING GEORGE AND RUTHIE EDWARDS ON THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate George and Ruthie Edwards on their 50th Anniversary this Christmas Eve, December 24, 2017. Marriage is one of the oldest institutions ordained by God; and George and Ruthie have proven to have endured fifty years as proof. George and Ruthie married in 1967 before his deployment to the Vietnam War in 1968. Upon his return from war, the Edwards' were blessed with five children; the late George, Jr., Vincent, Tomika, Yul and Corinthia. In addition, George and Ruthie are the proud grandparents of Jasmine, Devan, Danielle, London, Jordan and great-grandparents of Carter & K.T. Edwards.

George retired from the Georgia Pacific Corporation and Ruthie retired from the Texas Independent School District. They both are faithful, life-long members of the New Zion Baptist Church, spending countless hours in church-related activities to improve the New Town community. They enjoy traveling, spending time with family and friends, eating out at local restaurants and most importantly reading the Bible.

With age comes wisdom and with wisdom comes truth. Many years ago I recall some friends saying to me, ''to keep a marriage brimming, with love in the loving cup; whenever you are wrong—admit it; whenever you are right—shut up!'' I am most certain; every married couple understands this philosophy.

I congratulate you on achieving this milestone and wish you many years of happiness and joy in the future.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate agreed to the motion to recede from the Senate amendment to H.R. 1, Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and concur with a further amendment.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S8073–S8151

Measures Introduced: Nine bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 2246–2254, and S. Con. Res. 31. **Page S8149**

Measures Passed:

Authorizing the Use of the Rotunda: Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 31, authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Bob Dole. **Page S8151**

Measures Considered:

National Defense Authorization Act: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1519, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year. **Pages S8073–74**

Conference Reports:

Tax Cuts and Jobs Act: Senate began consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018. **Pages S8088–S8142**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 51 yeas to 48 nays (Vote No. 321), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill.

Page S8088

By 51 yeas to 48 nays (Vote No. 322), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to waive all applicable sections of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and applicable budget resolutions, with respect to the conference report to accompany the bill. Subsequently, the points of order that subsection 11000(a) was in violation of section 313(b)(1)(A) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974; that subparagraph (B) of section 11032, starting on page 75, line 17 and all through page 76, line 9, was in violation of section 313(b)(1)(D) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974; and that the phrase ''tuition-paying'' as it appears on page 309, line 12, and page 309, lines 14 through 15, was in violation of section 313(b)(1)(D) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, were sustained, and the material will be stricken from the conference report.

Page S8141

By 51 yeas to 48 nays (Vote No. 323), Senate agreed to the motion to recede from the Senate amendment to H.R. 1 and concur therein with a further amendment. **Pages S8141–42**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 88 yeas to 11 nays (Vote No. EX. 320), Jennifer Gillian Newstead, of New York, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State.

Pages S8083, S8151

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Lisa Gordon-Hagerty, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, Department of Energy.

Andrea L. Thompson, of South Dakota, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

Susan A. Thornton, of Maine, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (East Asian and Pacific Affairs).

Frank T. Brogan, of Pennsylvania, to be Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education. **Page S8151**

Messages from the House: **Pages S8148–49**

Measures Referred: **Page S8149**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S8149**

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S8149–50

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S8151–52

Additional Statements: Pages S8147–48

Amendments Submitted: Pages S8150–51

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S8151

Privileges of the Floor: Page S8151

Record Votes: Four record votes were taken today. (Total—323) Pages S8083, S8088, S8141, S8141–42

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, December 19, 2017 and adjourned at 12:53 a.m. on Wednesday, December 20, 2017, until 11 a.m. on the same day. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S8151.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Kimberly A. Reed, of West Virginia, to be First Vice President, Mark L. Greenblatt, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, and Spencer Bachus III, of Alabama, Judith Delzoppo Pryor, of Ohio, and Claudia Slacik, of New York, each to be a Member of the Board of Directors, all of the Export-Import Bank.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Peter Hendrick Vrooman, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda, and Joel Danies, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, both of the Department of State, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

CONSIDERATION OF NOMINATIONS IN THE SENATE

Committee on Rules and Administration: Committee concluded a hearing to examine S. Res. 355, improving procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate, after receiving testimony from Senator Lankford.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 10 public bills, H.R. 4680–4689, were introduced. Pages H10245–46

Additional Cosponsors: Pages H10246–47

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H.R. 4478, to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 to improve foreign intelligence collection and the safeguards, accountability, and oversight of acquisitions of foreign intelligence, to extend title VII of such Act, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–475, Part 1). Page H10245

Recess: The House recessed at 9:31 a.m. and reconvened at 10 a.m. Page H10186

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by a yea-and-nay vote of 227 yeas to 180 nays with one answering "present", Roll No. 696. Pages H10186–87, H10230–31

Suspensions—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures. Consideration began Monday, December 18th.

Women in Aerospace Education Act: H.R. 4254, amended, to amend the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 to strengthen the aerospace workforce pipeline by the promotion of Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program and National Aeronautics and Space Administration internship and fellowship opportunities to women, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 409 yeas to 17 nays, Roll No. 690; and Pages H10200–01

Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act: H.R. 4323, amended, to promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and scientific research, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 420 yeas with one voting "nay", Roll No. 693. Page H10215

Clerk to Correct Engrossment: Agreed by unanimous consent that, in the engrossment of H.R. 4375, the Clerk be directed to make the change placed at the desk. Page H10201

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To provide for a report on broadening participation in certain National Science Foundation research and education programs, to collect data on Federal research grants to science agencies, and for other purposes.". **Page H10201**

Tax Cuts and Jobs Act: The House agreed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 1, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, by a yea-and-nay vote of 227 yeas to 203 nays, Roll No. 692. **Pages H10189–10215**

Rejected the Neal motion to recommit the conference report to the committee of conference, by a yea-and-nay vote of 191 yeas to 236 nays, Roll No. 691. **Pages H10213–14**

H. Res. 667, the rule providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1) and the bill (H.R. 3312) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 233 ayes to 193 noes, Roll No. 689, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 233 yeas to 187 nays, Roll No. 688. **Pages H10189–H10200**

Motion to Fix Next Convening Time: Agreed by unanimous consent to the Graves (MO) motion that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, December 20 for Morning Hour debate. **Page H10215**

Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017: The House passed H.R. 3312, to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to specify when bank holding companies may be subject to certain enhanced supervision, by a yea-and-nay vote of 288 yeas to 130 nays, Roll No. 694. **Pages H10220–29**

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–49, modified by the amendment printed in H. Rept. 115–474, shall be considered as adopted, in lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill. **Pages H10220–21**

H. Res. 667, the rule providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1) and the bill (H.R. 3312) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 233 ayes to 193 noes, Roll No. 689, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 233 yeas to 187 nays, Roll No. 688. **Pages H10189–H10200**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure:

Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act: S. 1536, to designate a human trafficking prevention coordinator and to expand the scope of activities authorized under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's outreach and education program to include human trafficking prevention activities, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 418 yeas with one voting "nay", Roll No. 695. **Pages H10218–20, H10229–30**

Suspensions—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measures under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Jobs for Our Heroes Act: S. 1393, to streamline the process by which active duty military, reservists, and veterans receive commercial driver's licenses; and **Pages H10215–17**

No Human Trafficking on Our Roads Act: S. 1532, to disqualify from operating a commercial motor vehicle for life an individual who uses a commercial motor vehicle in committing a felony involving human trafficking. **Pages H10217–18**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Eight yea-and-nay votes and one recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H10199, H10200, H10200–01, H10213–14, H10214, H10215, H10229, H10230, H10230–31. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Committee Meetings

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a markup on regulations implementing H. Res. 630, requiring each Member, officer, and employee of the House of Representatives to complete a program of training in workplace rights and responsibilities each session of each Congress. The regulations implementing H. Res. 630 were adopted.

SENATE AMENDMENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Committee on Rules: Full Committee began a hearing on the Senate Amendment to H.R. 1370, the "Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017" [Further Continuing Resolution]. Testimony was heard from Chairman Frelinghuysen, and Representatives Visclosky and Polis.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 4242, the "VA Care in the Community Act". H.R. 4242 was ordered reported, as amended.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure, to hold hearings to examine freight movement, 10:30 a.m., SD–406.

House

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 4478, the ''FISA Amendments Reauthorization Act of 2017'', 4 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

11 a.m., Wednesday, December 20

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will be in a period of morning business.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Wednesday, December 20

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of the House Amendment to the Senate Amendment to H.R. 1370—Further Continuing Resolution (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Boyle, Brendan F., Pa., E1728
Cartwright, Matt, Pa., E1724
Cheney, Liz, Wyo., E1723
Davis, Danny K., Ill., E1730
Dingell, Debbie, Mich., E1725, E1726, E1727
Fitzpatrick, Brian K., Pa., E1727, E1728, E1729, E1730
Gonzalez, Vicente, Tex., E1726
Green, Al, Tex., E1725
Gutiérrez, Luis V., Ill., E1729
Harper, Gregg, Miss., E1724
Hudson, Richard, N.C., E1723
Kelly, Trent, Miss., E1723, E1729
Kinzinger, Adam, Ill., E1728
Larson, John B., Conn., E1728
Lawrence, Brenda L., Mich., E1726
MacArthur, Thomas, N.J., E1724
McCollum, Betty, Minn., E1727
Messer, Luke, Ind., E1728
Napolitano, Grace F., Calif., E1729
Nolan, Richard M., Minn., E1725
Palazzo, Steven M., Miss., E1729
Pascrell, Bill, Jr., N.J., E1730
Price, David E., N.C., E1728
Richmond, Cedric L., La., E1723
Rosen, Jacky, Nev., E1730
Roskam, Peter J., Ill., E1723
Ruiz, Raul, Calif., E1724, E1725, E1726
Sánchez, Linda T., Calif., E1726
Scalise, Steve, La., E1725
Simpson, Michael K., Idaho, E1727
Sinema, Kyrsten, Ariz., E1726
Speier, Jackie, Calif., E1727
Stefanik, Elise M., N.Y., E1724
Titus, Dina, Nev., E1723
Wittman, Robert J., Va., E1725

Congressional Record

The *Congressional Record* (USPS 087–390). The Periodicals postage is paid at Washington, D.C. The public proceedings of each House of Congress, as reported by the Official Reporters thereof, are printed pursuant to directions of the Joint Committee on Printing as authorized by appropriate provisions of Title 44, United States Code, and published for each day that one or both Houses are in session, excepting very infrequent instances when two or more unusually small consecutive issues are printed one time. ¶Public access to the *Congressional Record* is available online through the U.S. Government Publishing Office, at *www.govinfo.gov*, free of charge to the user. The information is updated online each day the *Congressional Record* is published. For more information, contact the GPO Customer Contact Center, U.S. Government Publishing Office. Phone 202–512–1800, or 866–512–1800 (toll-free). E-Mail, *contactcenter@gpo.gov*. ¶To place an order for any of these products, visit the U.S. Government Online Bookstore at: bookstore.gpo.gov. Mail orders to: Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197–9000, or phone orders to 866–512–1800 (toll-free), 202–512–1800 (D.C. area), or fax to 202–512–2104. Remit check or money order, made payable to the Superintendent of Documents, or use VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, or GPO Deposit Account. ¶Following each session of Congress, the daily *Congressional Record* is revised, printed, permanently bound and sold by the Superintendent of Documents in individual parts or by sets. ¶With the exception of copyrighted articles, there are no restrictions on the republication of material from the *Congressional Record*.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Superintendent of Documents, *Congressional Record*, U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, along with the entire mailing label from the last issue received.