

## NOT VOTING—2

Duckworth Murray

The nomination was confirmed. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Harmee Dhillon, of California, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

## VOTE ON DHILLON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Dhillon nomination?

Ms. SMITH. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 168 Ex.]

## YEAS—52

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Paul
Boozman	Hawley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeven	Risch
Budd	Husted	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Justice	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sheehy
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Lummis	Tillis
Cruz	Marshall	Tuberville
Curtis	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	McCormick	Young
Ernst	Moody	
Fischer	Moran	

## NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Reed
Baldwin	Hirono	Rosen
Bennet	Kaine	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schumer
Booker	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Lujan	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Fetterman	Murkowski	Warnock
Gallego	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden

## NOT VOTING—3

Duckworth Murray Sanders

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). 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 majority leader.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

ESTABLISHING THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND SETTING FORTH THE APPROPRIATE BUDGETARY LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026 THROUGH 2034—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 38, H. Con. Res. 14.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 38, H. Con. Res. 14, a concurrent resolution establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034.

## VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

Mr. THUNE. 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.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 169 Leg.]

## YEAS—52

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeven	Risch
Budd	Husted	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Justice	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sheehy
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Lummis	Tillis
Cruz	Marshall	Tuberville
Curtis	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	McCormick	Young
Ernst	Moody	
Fischer	Moran	

## NAYS—48

Alsobrooks	Heinrich	Paul
Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Peters
Bennet	Hirono	Reed
Blumenthal	Kaine	Rosen
Blunt Rochester	Kelly	Sanders
Booker	Kim	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schiff
Coons	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Lujan	Shaheen
Duckworth	Markey	Slotkin
Durbin	Merkley	Smith
Fetterman	Murphy	Van Hollen
Gallego	Murray	
Gillibrand	Ossoff	
Hassan	Padilla	

Warner  
WarnockWarren  
WelchWhitehouse  
Wyden

The motion was agreed to.

ESTABLISHING THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND SETTING FORTH THE APPROPRIATE BUDGETARY LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026 THROUGH 2034

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MOODY). The clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 14) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

## ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that for the duration of H. Con. Res. 14, the budget resolution for fiscal year 2025, the majority and the Democratic managers of the resolution, while seated or standing at the managers' desk, to be permitted to deliver floor remarks, retrieve, review, and edit documents, and send email and other data communications from text displayed on wireless personal assistant devices and tablet devices.

I further ask unanimous consent that the use of calculators—and I know we still have them—be permitted on the floor during consideration of the budget resolution; further, that the staff be permitted to make technical and conforming changes to the resolution, if necessary, consistent with amendments adopted during Senate consideration, including calculating the associated change in the net interest function and incorporating the effect of such adopted amendments on the budgetary aggregates for Federal revenue, the amount by which the Federal revenue should be changed, new budget authority, budget outlays, deficits, public debt, and debt held by the public.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, further, I ask unanimous consent for 2 minutes of debate, equally divided, prior to each vote during consideration of H. Con. Res. 14.

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

## AMENDMENT NO. 1717

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I call up my amendment No. 1717.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Carolina [Mr. GRAHAM] proposes an amendment numbered 1717.

Mr. GRAHAM. I ask that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H. CON.  
RES. 14

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that for purposes of debate time this evening, that all time be yielded off the resolution.

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

The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, a few minutes ago, for the second time this year, Senate Republicans began the process to pass legislation eviscerating Medicaid, abandoning our kids, failing our veterans, and squandering our future—all for the sake of tax cuts for the ultrarich. This is the Republican agenda: Billionaires win; American families lose. Billionaires win; American families lose in the Republican plan.

Republicans have failed to be honest with the country about the true nature of their plans. They have tried to hide their Medicaid cuts. They have tried to hide their billionaire tax giveaways with budgetary gimmicks and distractions. They are tying themselves in knots. They don't want the American people to know what their agenda is. Well, if Republicans won't be straight with the American people about their agenda, Senate Democrats are glad to do it for them.

Tonight, my colleagues and I will begin to put the Republican agenda on trial before the court of public opinion here on the floor of the Senate. It is going to be a long few days for Senate Republicans. Democrats will expose the dark corners of the Republican plan. We will explain the devastating consequences, highlight the many injustices that Republicans will inflict on people's healthcare, on their financial security, on their children's futures, and on the very future of the American dream itself.

We begin tonight with a topic close to home for all of us: Medicaid.

It is my honor to join my fellow Democrats to lay the case before the American people for how Republicans plan to destroy Medicaid as we know it and harm millions and millions and millions of Americans. We will share the stories of people back home. We will illustrate the full scale of the destruction these cuts would do. And we will make it clear to the American people that while Republicans work like hell to eliminate Medicaid to cut taxes for the rich, Democrats are fighting to protect the healthcare the American people deserve and need.

Medicaid will be the first—the first—of six different themes that we will focus on here on the floor.

Tomorrow, we will be focused, likewise, as we debate this bill, on Republicans' morally bankrupt tax breaks for billionaires and on Donald Trump's

dumb and costly tariffs, on the need to stand up for our veterans and our national security, on the unprecedented corruption Donald Trump has unleashed in our government, and finally on the existential fight to protect Social Security from the chain saw of Elon Musk. These are the themes we will cover today and tomorrow.

This is the fight the American people need to see because people's lives and livelihoods are at stake. The healthcare that protects our kids is in danger—our children. Their healthcare is in danger. The benefits that keep our seniors whole are at risk. Senior citizens, in their golden era, could have Medicaid—the rug—pulled out from under them, leaving them in dire straits. The investments that unlock America's future now stand on the edge of a knife.

Why? Why? Why are Republicans doing this? Why are they being so cruel? so callous? so thoughtless? Why are those in the billionaire bubble who seem to run Donald Trump and Elon Musk—why are they doing this? It is very simple. They are trying to give the ultrarich another tax break. The Republicans are enthralled with these very wealthy, very greedy people, and all they want is a tax break.

When Donald Trump became President, they got control of the Republican Party, and Elon Musk and Donald Trump are in the billionaire bubble. And when Democrats expose all of these cuts to healthcare and veterans' aid and benefits for the American people to see, the American people will think it is sickening.

So, tonight, let us begin with Medicaid.

Seventy million—seventy million—people rely on Medicaid in one way or another to provide medical care, and tens of millions more are their families and friends. That includes not just seniors who are within the 70 million but also newborns, parents, Americans with disabilities, rural communities that have access, perhaps, to a single hospital or clinic if they are fortunate. Medicaid—Medicaid—makes all these things possible.

I want to focus on a truly sobering experience I had earlier this week when visiting two nursing homes in New York: the Silver Lake Specialized Care and Rehab Center on Staten Island and the Carillon Nursing and Rehab Center on Long Island. These institutions alone—there are just 2 of them—serve over 600 residents together and employ 600 people. They are the lifeline to local communities. They help seniors with dementia, with postsurgical rehab, with physical disability support, and so much more.

My visit to these communities was clouded by a shadow of fear and anger. I talked to senior citizens who knew that if Medicaid were cut, they would lose their healthcare. In fact, the owner of Silver Lake—one of the most esteemed healthcare facilities on Staten Island—told me that if the cut were

even half what the Republicans are proposing, his home would close. Hundreds of senior citizens would have no healthcare, and 300 people would lose their jobs. They were frightened. They were scared. They were angry.

There is no question about it: Even if Republicans pass a fraction of the cuts they are pushing, it will devastate these communities.

We have the heads of major hospitals there—many of them not the same party as mine—telling us what would happen if these devastating cuts to Medicaid went through.

On Staten Island, we estimated 18,000 people would lose their jobs. Tens of thousands would no longer get healthcare. It would cause a recession on Staten Island—like that. Seniors at the centers—new seniors who are getting out of hospitals or have a new illness that they are just encountering—would be turned away. There would be no funding. There would be no beds. There would be no place for them to go.

It is not just the residents at these nursing homes; it is their children who now can breathe easy for their parents who helped raise them and worked so hard through the years to provide for them.

Staten Island is a middle-class community, and so is Long Island—the two places I visited—but their kids would not be able to care for most of them. Most of them need more healthcare than just going back to their kids' homes. It is not adequate healthcare for so many of them. Others said their children had no extra room for them. What are even the kids going to do? On both Staten Island and Long Island, these are middle-class communities. They are going to be devastated by these cuts.

Some of the residents said their children might be able to take care of them, but the burden would be immense. These families don't have the financial means to take care of their parents in their advanced ages. They don't have space at home. They don't have the medical know-how to meet the needs like a nursing home does.

For any of you—of the millions of Americans who have a parent who has struggled with dementia or physical disabilities—to those people, we know that our parents need the help of medical professionals to care for them properly. That is why Medicaid is so vital, so important, such a lifeline to tens of millions of families across America. The Republican Medicaid cuts would be a gut punch to these families.

It was the same story on Long Island. Senior citizens are scared, nervous, angry about what these budget cuts would do to them that the Republicans are proposing, that Trump and Musk are proposing. Workers worried they might lose their jobs—and they have worked so hard in these facilities because they care about the patients they are caring for—are told "No, no more funding" for no reason. They are doing a great job.

It is the same on Long Island as on Staten Island, and it is the same across all of America in poor communities, which, of course, depend on Medicaid.

For so many people, Medicaid is their only lifeline to healthcare—for middle-class communities and even well-to-do communities. All of them are nervous, scared, angry, furious at what these cuts would do to them.

Why? people ask. Why are they doing this? Why are they being so mean? Why are they being so cruel? Why are they being so callous?

We have to answer: For one reason—they want to give billionaires a tax cut. They want to take the money away from working families. They want to take things that working families need. They want to take them away so there are more tax cuts for the billionaires.

It angers me. It is infuriating that something so wrong, so callous, so detrimental to America could be right here on the Senate floor with the support of so many Republican Senators.

I say to the Republican Senators: Listen to your constituents. Listen to your constituents. They don't want this. You know that. Are you going to get up on the floor and make a speech that says you are cutting Medicaid because you want to give tax breaks to billionaires? That is what you are doing. Get up and have the courage to say it. Get up and have the courage to say it.

The senior centers I visited were represented, actually, by Republican Members of Congress on both Staten Island and Long Island.

There, I told every patient, every doctor, every nurse, every employee who works in these institutions to call their Congress Member and tell them that their jobs are at risk and, if they are a resident, to tell them their healthcare is at risk. If they are a child of a parent in one of these nursing homes, call.

I told them to make it clear to their Congressmen that the Republican Congressmen and Senators have the power in their hands to stop these cuts because there are narrow margins in both the Senate and the House.

A handful of Senators and a handful of Congressmen, if they have the courage to do the right thing—and most of them—or some of them, at least, know that it is the right thing even though they are afraid to vote yes—they are afraid to vote no and stop this, but they should have the courage to do it.

So I told them. I told everyone I encountered in these two nursing homes and in many other places in New York.

I went to a hospital in the Bronx—one of the biggest hospitals. It serves 1.3 million people in the Bronx. It is the only cancer care treatment for all of those 1.3 million. The leaders of that hospital told me the hospital would probably close if there were a 20-percent cut to Medicaid, and the Republicans are proposing a deeper cut than that in this budget bill. Close. The only

hospital. One of the biggest employers. It employs 18,000 people itself. This story could be repeated. The Bronx has poorer communities. Staten Island and Long Island have more middle-class communities. But every one of them will be affected terribly by these cuts. So I told them to call. I tell everyone: We have to stop this. Public sentiment is everything.

Every American in a similar position to those I spoke to should do the same. Call your Congressman. Call your Senator. Tell them you don't want Medicaid to be slashed. Tell them you don't want nutrition assistance to be eliminated. Tell them you don't want our seniors to be abandoned. Tell them you don't want to see these cuts—these cruel, heartless cuts—just so the wealthiest Americans can get another break they don't need.

That is what the next few days are about: fighting these awful cuts done to help the wealthiest Americans get a tax break. That is the fight Democrats will have here on the Senate floor. That is the fight we will have tonight. That is the fight we will have tomorrow and beyond.

Democrats are fighting every day in every way against these attacks against American families, against this plan, which says billionaires win; families lose.

Democrats stand united. We are unified in fighting this awful bill. We will fight the Republican anti-family agenda. We will shine a light on these terrible cuts that Republicans are trying to pass. The American people will be horrified at what they see.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, families lose, and billionaires win. That is the Republican plan. It is a plan that slashes \$1.5 to \$2 trillion from programs that families depend on. And why? To fund tax cuts for the very richest Americans.

But that is not all the bad news because there are additional tax cuts for the best and richest in the country—the richest Americans—and those are unpaid for, and that means debt.

How much more debt does this bill create? The current estimate—and the estimates keep going up—is \$5.3 trillion of unpaid-for tax cuts over the next 10 years—\$5.3 trillion—trillion with a “t”—over the next 10 years.

But that is not all. Their plan provides for \$37 trillion—at least \$37 trillion—in additional debt over the next 30 years. This is a phenomenal, phenomenal number.

And, third, they say: We will tell the American people it adds no new debt; passing this bill adds no new debt.

That is quite a set of plans: slash programs for regular Americans, enrich the richest Americans, run up an additional \$37 trillion in debt, and then lie to the American people and say it doesn't cost a thing.

It has become clear, over the last 2 days, about how Republicans are going

to justify this. They say they are going to use section 312—section 312—of the law. Section 312, they say, says that the cost of a program or the impact of a revenue cut through a tax giveaway to the wealthy only costs what the budget chair says it costs. Just take the chair's word for it.

This is the magic wand. It will add \$37 trillion to the debt, but if the budget chair says it doesn't, then you just pretend it doesn't. It is kind of like the situation where the king wears the magic robes—at least he thinks he is wearing magic robes, but he is actually walking down the street naked because he doesn't have magic robes—in this case, again, lying to the public about the cost.

In the real world, you have real math. In this special new world under the Republican plan, you have the magic math.

This was not the vision that was laid out back 51 years ago, in 1974, when the Senate created, along with the House, the Budget and Impoundment Control Act.

That act had three pillars. The first pillar was that in a 10-year period, you have to decrease the deficit with the provisions that were in the bill. And then, every year after, in every category, it either has to be deficit-neutral or reduce the deficit according to the provisions that are in the bill.

Then it said we are going to use honest numbers. Before, there had been a lot of smoke and mirrors. There had been a lot of gimmicks. And people on both sides said: No, no, we don't want to do that.

Democrats and Republicans said: Let's use honest numbers. Let's create a Congressional Budget Office to give us impartial numbers so we can be honest among ourselves, have a real debate about any given policy provision or any particular revenue provision, and we can be honest with the American people because, otherwise, we will just keep running up more and more deficits while pretending we are not.

My Republican colleagues initially said: Do you know what? We will just put a clause into the budget resolution. It is called a scoring rule, and that scoring rule will simply say that we are going to say this costs nothing, that there is no additional debt.

A scoring rule has been used in the past. OK, it has been used in multiple years, but it was used to resolve little anomalies in tricky, little twists and changes in revenue bills or in policies' programs. It was always narrow. It always was honest about what it was trying to solve and explainable to the public. It was always consistent with the law, and it was always involving modest sums—modest by standards of the national budget.

Certainly, now, this scoring rule that had been proposed by the Republicans, it was not bipartisan. It was not narrow. It was not improving the budget. It, in fact, was lying about the budgeting. It was not consistent with the law. And it was massive—\$37 trillion.

So my colleagues across the aisle, when we pointed this out, they said: Yes, we had better not do that. That is just wrong.

OK. Thank you. Thank you for deciding not to put in a scoring rule that was completely wrong and designed to destroy the budget process.

But now my colleagues across the aisle have said: We will use a different provision called section 312. We won't use the scoring rule. Instead, we are going to go in a different direction that says simply that the cost is what the chair of the Budget Committee says it is.

Now, I want to turn back the clock a little bit. I want to turn back the clock and point out that there were core principles in that 1974 bill, and they were driven by growing bipartisan concern about deficits and debt.

In the 1958 to 1968 decade, the average deficit was about \$5 billion per year. That doesn't sound like much now, by our standards, when we are looking at \$2 trillion per year, but it was a lot compared to the past. And folks said: Do you know what? That \$5 billion per year over that 10 years exploded to an average of \$20 billion a year in 1971 through 1973. Oh, my goodness, it quadrupled. We have got to get a handle on these deficits. We don't want to run up the debt—this fourfold increase in annual deficits adding to the debt.

So Democrats and Republicans came together, and they passed the 1974 Budget and Impoundment Control Act. It created a superhighway for this special effort to reduce deficits—a superhighway; a super, filibuster-free highway.

Now, you all may remember Robert Byrd of West Virginia. Robert Byrd was always the fiercest defender of the filibuster. But he, along with 99 other Senators, said: We will create one exception, and that exception will be to reduce the deficit.

And it had these three pillars, which I will mention again. It has to reduce the deficit. The provisions of the bill have to reduce the deficit over the first 10 years. They have to be deficit-neutral in every category in each year after the first 10 years. And we have to use honest numbers.

And to have those honest numbers, we will create the Congressional Budget Office, an impartial body. We will no longer use smoke and mirrors, pretend that things don't cost money when they do cost money.

But then what happened? I will tell you. For 22 years, it worked pretty well. Then along comes the Gingrich revolution, the 1994 election. Now we have the 1995 through 1997 biennium. Some things happened then that, well, one maybe couldn't have foreseen. Maybe they could have. There was an effort to do a balanced budget amendment. It fell one vote short here in the Senate Chamber. It needed 67 votes; it only got 66.

Then there was: We will do a line-item veto—and that was passed. But

that gave the power to the President to strike down any line.

The Supreme Court said: No, you can't do that. You can't delegate the power of the purse. The power of the purse belongs with Congress. So that fell.

Then the Republican caucus in charge said: We are going to, instead, do a big tax bill giving enormous benefits to the richest Americans.

Then they said: You know, the problem with that is the Democrats won't work with us. They won't give us 60 votes to do that. Oh, I know, they said, we will do a nuclear option. We will repurpose the deficit-decreasing bill from 1974 and say that it can be used in order to actually increase deficits with tax cuts.

And they succeeded. They had the votes. They repurposed the bill. They blew up the first pillar of those three pillars. That first pillar was the reconciliation process, this special process created in 1974 that can only be used to reduce deficits in the first 10 years.

They blew it up and said: OK. Nuclear option. We have reinterpreted the rule. It can be used to increase deficits.

Well, that was a huge, huge damage to the goal of reducing deficits, and deficits have gone up ever since.

When that happened—when that happened—there was a big protest on the floor. The first Budget Committee chair who passed the reconciliation bill consistent with decreasing deficits was South Carolina Senator Fritz Hollings. He said:

The whole idea of reconciliation—and I am giving you firsthand history: It is honest as the day is long—was to, by gosh, to cut back on the deficit.

That is what it was for. So the Republicans blew up that pillar, all designed to reduce the deficits, and, instead, repurposed it for increasing the deficits. Pillar No. 1 drops.

But, at the same time, the second pillar, that no increase in deficits could occur after 10 years, was sustained by the Chair sitting and presiding over the Senate, and that was Senator Daschle.

Senator Daschle said—well, actually, he asked the question. He was asking the question of the Republican Chair.

He said:

If this reconciliation bill does not find a way to end or offset its tax cuts in the years beyond 2002—

That is beyond 10 years—

would the bill violate the Byrd rule?

And the Presiding Officer responded:

Yes, it would.

So the second pillar, no deficits in any category beyond 10 years, was preserved—until now.

That was in 1996, and here we are, 29 years later. Now there is a goal to destroy the second and third pillars of the 1974 bill.

I must say, this is extremely extraordinary and disturbing that my Republican colleagues, who run on fiscal responsibility, destroyed the first pillar of the special system to reduce deficits

in 1996, and tonight, they are proposing to destroy the second and third pillars.

In that second pillar, no deficits beyond year 10; every category, every year has to be deficit-neutral or reduce the deficit.

We can compare that to the law that has just been put forward—or the guidance that has just been put forward. We can look at year 11, the instructions that go in every category—year 12, year 13, year 20, year 100. It goes on forever, into the future, and the Republican bill guidance fails the Byrd test.

Now, the Byrd test really gets applied in a second stage of the reconciliation process. We are in the budget resolution that sends instructions to committees. Those committees will send back specific revenue provisions: increase this revenue here, reduce it there, proceed to add this policy program, reduce this policy program. When it comes back, every category—that is, every title—of the reconciliation bill, in every single year, by the Byrd rule, has to be deficit-neutral or decrease the deficit.

So we will have that debate, but we will have that debate when the reconciliation bill comes back from committee to this floor because my Republican colleagues decided to postpone that debate by taking the scoring rule out of their proposed budget resolution and said: We will kick it down the road to the next stage.

And, certainly, we will be here, fiercely defending the deficit-reducing vision of pillars 2 and 3—pillar 2: no deficit in any category or any title of the bill beyond year 10; and pillar 3: use honest numbers from the Congressional Budget Office. That pillar has survived since 1974. We even put that pillar into law specifically in 1985 in a bipartisan way. We wanted to emphasize how important that was.

Just think about how much more important this process of deficit reduction, special rule of the reconciliation bill, is today than it was back in 1974. In 1974, the debt-to-GDP ratio: 23 percent. Tonight, in 2025, it is 100 percent. It is equal to the entire gross domestic product of the United States. In 1974, the annual deficit was about \$6 billion. Today, it is \$2 trillion. In 1974, total debt: \$475 billion. Today, it is \$37 trillion.

Now, consider this: All of the debt run up over the last 249 years since the Declaration of Independence, right now, is just a little bit less than \$37 trillion. In this single bill—this single bill—Republicans are saying we will add \$37 trillion more—at least that much. When the numbers really come out, we expect it to be higher, but \$37 trillion more to the debt. That is a much bigger burden on the future.

And what do the economists say about that bigger burden? They said it will increase interest rates that families have to pay on their mortgage and on their car loan since it will decrease the capital available to private industry and slow down our economy.

This magic math goes by the name of “current policy baseline.” It sounds very academic, but it is essentially the big lie.

Consider this: You sign a contract to rent a home for a year, and renting that home costs \$2,000 per month so you know you are going to have to pay \$24,000 over the year. And at the end of the year, you say: You know what, I am going to renew that agreement to rent this apartment. And your spouse says: You know what, that is going to cost us another \$24,000 in rent.

And you say: No. I am using the Republican magic math. It won't cost a single dime because we will just pretend that a year ago we had planned to rent the apartment for a second year; and therefore, it is no more than we thought we would pay a year ago—except a year ago you said you were only going to rent the house for a year. In other words, it is a big lie.

It is the very smoke and mirrors, the very gimmicks that Democrats and Republicans came together and stopped back in 1974. Fifty-one years ago, we said this game of lying to the public has to end. But tonight, my Republican colleagues are saying that game will continue if they have their way.

Well, we say they must not have their way. We are going to stand up and say no to families lose and billionaires win. We are going to say no to magic math that lies to the American people about the cost of their bill, driven by massive tax cuts to the richest Americans.

It is a simple request: honesty and integrity. We should not be engaging in a big lie, and Democrats will have no part of it. We are going to be honest about what every provision of the reconciliation bill costs. We are going to be determined to make sure that the Byrd rule stands.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, this has been an amazing week in the U.S. Senate, and I have served here for over 25 years. Just 2 days ago, our colleague CORY BOOKER, from the State of New Jersey, ended a filibuster on the floor after 25 hours—broke the record, longest speech in the history of the Senate. And an impassioned speech it was. I was happy to be here for a major part of it.

There was a big celebration on our side of the aisle. The Galleries were filled in a way I have never seen before, cheering CORY BOOKER for his achievement. It is a moment all of us who are lucky enough to serve in the Senate will remember the rest of our lives. But I remember another moment that affected more people than this miraculous feat by CORY BOOKER.

It was July 28 of 2017. It was 2:30 in the morning. I was seated at this desk, and a historic vote was about to take place. The vote was whether or not we would keep the Affordable Care Act—or ObamaCare, as it was known then—extending health insurance to millions of

Americans, some of whom had never had it.

At the time, President Trump was in office, and he and the majority of the Republicans were determined to eliminate the Affordable Care Act, to eliminate the insurance that millions of American families depended on to protect their kids and themselves.

It was the closest possible vote. In the end, at least three Republican Senators voted to save the Affordable Care Act, but the one key vote and the one I remember was John McCain's. John McCain, an extraordinary man, served this country in ways that we could hardly ask anyone else to serve: a prisoner of war for over 5 years during Vietnam, came battling back, and was elected to the U.S. Senate from Arizona.

And he was a real maverick. You never knew where John was going to end up, but you always wanted to end up with him, if you could, because it was always a spirited contest, and he usually won it.

And this vote was dragged out for a long period of time—2:30 in the morning, for goodness' sake. And somebody said: John McCain is the last person to vote, but he has been called off the Senate floor to go into a room behind and take a telephone call from Donald Trump.

Donald Trump, President, in his first term, was asking John McCain to cast the deciding vote to eliminate the Affordable Care Act, health insurance coverage for millions of Americans.

Madam President, I sat here, and I watched as John McCain came in from that phone call. And no one knew what he was going to do. Really, no one knew. John was the kind of person, you could never quite be sure.

And he walked in the well near the table where the Republicans gather for votes, and he stood there. And he barely raised his left arm—because it was broken while he was a prisoner of war—just enough to get his thumb up and go “no.” No. That was it.

John McCain, with that “no” vote, saved the Affordable Care Act, and millions of Americans' health insurance was protected.

This was during Trump's first administration, and he had other priorities, and they certainly didn't include ObamaCare. He wanted to eliminate it. John McCain's courage came through that night. He broke with his party because he knew what was at stake. He knew that, for millions of Americans, there was no alternative when it came to health insurance—it was the Affordable Care Act or nothing—and he had the guts to vote no.

Oh, he was pilloried and criticized by the Republican faithful from one end of the country to the other, but those of us who believe he did the right thing will never forget that moment of courage.

In a strange way, today—Thursday, April 3, 2025—we are returning to that moment in history. The Republicans

under President Trump, in his second term, want to perpetuate his tax cut that he gave primarily to the wealthiest people in America and add to it at the expense of healthcare for America.

When we talk about healthcare in America, one of the programs that is so critical is called Medicaid. In days gone by, Medicaid was a rarely used health insurance plan for the poorest and disabled people in America, but it has changed. It has become much different. And let me tell you why that is an interesting context for where we stand now.

Many Americans from coast to coast followed the stock market today. The reaction of the stock market to the Trump tariff tax and the chaos that has been created since he announced we were going into a trade war with virtually every nation on Earth—they watched carefully as the stock market reacted to it today.

The Dow Jones Average, which is supposed to be an indicator of the state of the economy, lost 4 percent of its value today. I don't know what that means for most people, but I know that most people watch it because it involves their own retirement plans: IRAs and 401(k)s and other plans that they have based on the value of stock. There has to be a sinking feeling—I am sure there is—in many households and families across America to see so much of the value that they have saved up for a lifetime disappear in one day reacting to the Trump tariff tax and what it meant across the country.

And here we come this evening, the same day as this Dow Jones plunge of 4 percent, to discuss—what?—healthcare, again, under President Trump. And this time it is connected to retirement and savings and the future of a lot of families.

Let me tell you a story about one. I am going to try to mask the details because I don't want anyone to reflect on the actual person. But he is a friend of mine, and he is a professional in Illinois, a wonderful guy, a community leader. And he had a beautiful family—he still does, for that matter—but his wife developed Alzheimer's. This lovely woman reached the point where she had to be put into a care facility to take care of her day-to-day. It breaks my heart to even think about it, but it was a fact. He didn't see it coming. There is no way he could have.

But, for years now, she has survived physically while mentally she has deteriorated to the point where she cannot communicate with him or others. It is an expensive undertaking, that type of care facility. He can afford it, but many people can't.

So what do they do? What happens when your mother or grandmother, when someone you dearly love in your family, reaches a point where they need this kind of care? Well, you do what you can, the best you can, with your own savings and your own resources. But, ultimately, the major source of funding for people who are in these facilities is Medicaid.

If you cut the Medicaid reimbursement, it limits the opportunity for these people to get good, professional care—people you love, people who it has broken your heart because of their illness, but you want to give them the very best in the parting years of their lives.

So when you cut Medicaid, which is going to be proposed by this Republican budget resolution, it is at the expense of families' peace of mind and resources they have saved for their own future, their own retirement.

That isn't the only one. In the State of Illinois, half of the children who are born in the State are paid for by the Medicaid system. What happens if you cut back on Medicaid reimbursement in those cases? It means less prenatal care; the likelihood, I am sorry to say, that kids, some, will be born with problems that could have been avoided and, more seriously, whether or not these children will even survive birth. That is what Medicaid is all about.

We are talking about cutting health coverage for those in care facilities, as well as those in hospitals or giving birth.

Why? Why would the Republicans even suggest that we cut this just like they did years ago when John McCain cast that deciding vote? Why under a Trump Presidency do they go after healthcare first? Why is that their target?

They believe that the vulnerable people who receive this kind of healthcare assistance won't be able to fight back—and they are desperate to raise more revenue for what purpose? To give tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the America.

For goodness' sakes, Elon Musk does not need a tax cut. He is a multi-multi-billionaire, the wealthiest man in the world. Why in the world would he cut back on any kind of healthcare for Americans to give a man in that station in life a tax break? That is what it is all about. But there is more to the story.

I am honored to represent Illinois. I love the whole State. It is where I was born. And I am honored to represent the great city of Chicago. Oh, it is controversial. There are some people in downstate Illinois that say they ought to go off and be their own State, retire them. I am not one of those people. I am proud of the fact that Chicago is part of our State.

But my roots are in downstate Illinois, born in St. Louis, raising my family in Springfield. I have lived in and represented the smaller communities downstate in the rural areas. That is how I got to Congress in the first place, and that is how I stayed in the U.S. Senate.

What are these cuts Republicans are proposing in Medicaid going to do to rural and downstate Illinois and other rural and downstate areas around the Nation? The reality is very clear: Fewer resources to hospitals in sparsely populated areas mean that many of

those hospitals will not survive. Today, more than half of those hospitals are hanging by a thread, operating in the red. To cut Medicaid reimbursement to those hospitals is literally going to close their doors and turn out their lights.

How important is a little hospital in a community downstate? It is the economic engine. It is the hub of life for the economy of that area. Take away that hospital, and it not only endangers the people living around it, it also means a lot of jobs are lost, too, and businesses that the people frequent often are going to be threatened as well.

So why would we cut Medicaid reimbursement and close these downstate hospitals, giving a tax break to the wealthiest people in America? It makes no sense. Where are our priorities? Where is our humanity to even consider that?

I don't understand on the other side of the aisle how Republican Senators—many of whom represent smalltown America, too, and really care in their hearts about it—can stand by and let this happen. The net result of this is going to be the quality of life threatened by the people who live in those areas.

I want to tell you a story about a community I visited 2 weeks ago—two communities. One was Taylorville, IL. And I asked the hospital administrator in Taylorville, which is about 30 miles from Springfield, to come and invite other hospital administrators from the area and tell me what the Medicaid cuts proposed by the Republicans to give tax breaks to the wealthy will mean to these hospitals. To a person, they said the same thing: They may survive, but it is a big question.

And what difference will it make? Well, in some of these hospitals, it means that, instead of 30 minutes' drive to the hospital to deliver the baby, it will be an hour and 30 minutes. I can still remember our first babies in my family. The thought of being in the car for an hour and a half with my wife in labor would scare me to death. That would be the reality for people, and alternatives are just not available.

Why in the world would it reach a point where we would cut that kind of coverage, that kind of protection, that peace of mind to give tax breaks to the wealthiest people? It makes no sense.

Medicaid and the CHIP program cover nearly 40 million children, half of all the kids in America. Medicaid provides health coverage for 60 percent of seniors in nursing homes, the ones I mentioned earlier, and it is the largest funder of addiction and mental health treatment.

I will tell you, I know the cases pretty well of people who are desperate for addiction treatment. They realize that they are addicted. They realize they have a problem, and they are anxious to get started and cleaning their lives up. Medicaid is the source of funding for that kind of counsel, and to cut

back on that is to really sentence these people to a lifetime of fear and, sadly, cost many of their lives.

In Illinois, 3.4 million people are enrolled in Medicaid, 1.5 million children. Under the Republican plans to slash Medicaid, 775,000 adults in Illinois who gained health insurance thanks to the Affordable Care Act, the same one that John McCain saved in the first Trump Presidency, would lose their coverage almost overnight. How would you like to be in a situation where you don't have health insurance at a critical moment?

I know. I was there. I was a student at Georgetown Law School. I got married in my second year. God sent us a beautiful little baby girl right away. We were so happy. And then a few weeks after she was born, we learned she had a serious congenital heart defect. I was a law student. I didn't have much income, and I had no health insurance. So my wife and I took our baby girl over to Children's Hospital here in Washington, DC.

We sit in the charity ward, and we waited until our name was called. And we saw a doctor who I prayed to God would be able to save our baby's life. I never felt more helpless in my life than I did at that moment, to have this little girl come into this world and her father couldn't provide health insurance.

Luckily, she survived. Great people did great favors for our family that I will never forget. I have never forgotten when there is a health crisis or health issue that is debated on this floor.

All of us want good health insurance, and to cut the programs for no reason other than to give tax breaks to the wealthiest people makes no sense whatsoever. It is not sensible. It is not thoughtful. It is not humane. That is what this debate is all about.

Are we going to protect health insurance for Americans so that they have some peace of mind that they have access to good care, or are we going to cut them off, and tell them they are on their own, whether it is mental health counseling, addiction counseling, or the birth of a child, or basic healthcare? That is what is at stake here. That is what is at stake.

So I would plead with my colleagues—and I know that it is unlikely. I have seen the votes. I know the party discipline. I have seen it on my side of the aisle. I am sure it is on the other side of the aisle. I am praying to God there is going to be one or two John McCains who are going to step forward and lift their hand enough to vote and save health insurance for Americans across the board. I know some people would be unhappy; in fact, some may threaten to defeat you politically because of it.

But I am sure that after John voted no to save the Affordable Care Act despite President Trump's telephone call in his first term, John had the satisfaction of knowing that, for millions of Americans, he was the man and his



vote was the vote that made the difference. It might have denied some tax breaks for some wealthy people, but for others, it gave them peace of mind. John was just enough of a maverick to be willing and able to do it. He will be fondly remembered in history as a result of it.

Madam President, I am going to close by saying that this is an issue that is near and dear to my heart, and I think a lot of other people too. They have gone through experiences much like my own. I know they realize that we have few moments of opportunity of service in the Senate to really make a difference in the lives of American families, to give hope to people who have given up because of a mother who is in a nursing home or because of a child with an illness.

I received letters. Sophia, a single mom from Palatine, IL—17 years of age, she gave birth to a baby boy. Her son was born with many medical complications. He had to undergo two surgeries in his first day of life. Can you imagine?

By the age of 4, he had undergone eight separate surgical procedures to address ongoing medical challenges. How did Sophia of Palatine afford the lifesaving care for her son? He was covered by Medicaid.

She wrote to my office. She said:

I don't want Medicaid. My son needs [Medicaid]. I could not be able to afford the thousands of dollars of medical care [to keep him alive without it].

Amber from Springfield, IL, told my office in no uncertain terms: You cut Medicaid, you endanger my sick child's life.

That is what it is. It is a life and death issue. It is not how many dollars you have leftover when you file your taxes. It is a life and death issue that we are debating.

I want to thank those who have spoken this evening already—Senator SCHUMER and Senator MERKLEY—for their leadership on this issue. I plead with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Please, there has got to be someone over there who will step up and have a McCain moment that will save healthcare for millions of Americans, and I am praying that it happens. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam President, I rise today on behalf of the 1.2 million Wisconsinites who rely on Medicaid—or as we call it in Wisconsin, BadgerCare—for their health insurance. And I rise today in their defense because their healthcare is under attack.

I really want to focus right now kind of taking off where Senator DURBIN left off talking about our children, our babies. One in three children in Wisconsin rely on Medicare for their life insurance. That is one in three children in Wisconsin's urban, suburban, and rural counties who need Medicaid just to see a doctor to get regular checkups or to get vaccines and to stay healthy.

I have traveled across Wisconsin, meeting with constituents who are terrified about what these cuts will mean for their families, their finances, and their health. I would like to share a few of those stories with you this evening.

I think about people like Megan from Wisconsin, a single mother of two young children who relies on Medicaid so that her kids can get regular checkups to see the dentist. She reached out to me to share that without Medicaid, her entire paycheck would go to just keeping her children healthy—with nothing left over to pay for rent or keep food on the table.

I heard from Shelley in Lake Holcombe, WI, who reached out to me about her 17-year-old daughter Chloe. Chloe was diagnosed with leukemia last October. Chloe receives chemotherapy 5 days a week, and her parents drive her almost an hour each way to Eau Claire, WI, so that she can get the treatments that she needs. Without Medicaid, the cost of Chloe's treatment would force Shelley and parents like her to make an impossible choice between financial ruin or not getting the care that they need for their children.

I have also heard from dozens of Wisconsin families whose children live with disabilities. They are terrified of what financial cuts will mean for their kids' future and their family's finances.

Jennifer in Wauwatosa wrote to my office about her son Will. Will is a 15-year-old sophomore at Wauwatosa West whom she described as vibrant and loving. Will also has Down syndrome which, among other medical care, has meant that he has needed a total of 11 ear tube surgeries just so that he can hear. Jennifer wrote me that the math on those costs to their family is pretty simple. Eleven surgeries which cost \$10,000 each, without insurance, would cost her family \$110,000. She said without Medicaid, she and her husband would struggle to give their children the lives they deserve, including paying for their other son's college tuition.

She wrote:

If Medicaid is cut, we will struggle financially. We will not be able to get Will the support he needs to be independent, get a job, and go to college. It could even mean one of us having to leave our full-time employment which could hurt even more. Please don't cut Medicaid.

I also heard from Brooke in Thorp, WI. She shared that because of Medicaid and the speech therapy for her 4-year-old son that he receives, she has, for the first time this year, heard his voice utter more than one syllable.

Imagine that.

She wrote:

It marks the first time I have been called Mom by him, and I have heard "I love you" come from him three times—all occurring in the last 12 months. He receives speech therapy five days a week to learn how to express himself, [to] process emotions, and [to] regulate. This has changed his life. And these therapies are paid for by Medicaid. Don't

allow people like me to only hear "love you" a handful of times simply because of a budget cut.

We can talk about the number of children who will be impacted by cuts to Medicaid, a total of over 30 million nationwide. While that number is staggering, it is important to remember that every single child who relies on Medicaid has a story like Chloe's or Will's. And they have parents like Megan and Brooke who just want what is best for their children and are terrified about their future if Medicaid is taken away.

If my colleagues on the Republican side want to go through with cuts—the ones laid out in the House's budget plan—it is these families Republicans must answer to.

Donald Trump and congressional Republicans can explain why they are planning to rip away healthcare for children so that the top 1 percent can get richer.

I, for one, would like them to answer for the chaos, for the fear, for the heartache that they are causing families in my State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Madam President, I want to thank my colleague from Wisconsin, Senator BALDWIN, for such excellent, poignant, moving descriptions of the real cost of this budget plan that we are on the floor to consider tonight.

I rise today to join my colleagues and the people of New Hampshire in standing up against the attempt by the Trump administration and some of my Republican colleagues to effectively end Medicaid as we know it and add \$37 trillion over the next 30 years to our national debt, all in order to pay for more tax giveaways for corporate special interests and billionaires.

Americans of every political stripe are alarmed because this bid to end Medicaid as we know it will lead to more families, more children becoming sick and unable to get care, and because ending Medicaid as we know it will devastate our economy, weaken our workforce, and, most of all, make our people less free.

Medicaid is a pillar of America's healthcare system. Tens of millions of Americans, including working Americans, pregnant women, and millions of children depend on Medicaid every day for routine care, for treatment for chronic illnesses, for lifesaving care from serious illnesses, for treatment for addiction, and for much more.

No legislation has done more to allow more Americans to live longer and healthier lives than the bills that established Medicaid and Medicare and the efforts that followed to strengthen both of these landmark laws.

So before we proceed, let's take a step back for a moment and remember that Congress created Medicaid for two simple reasons. Prior to Medicaid's creation, a great swath of our country—tens of millions of Americans—were

forced to try and get by without healthcare. For many working people and their families, the kind of routine and preventive care that many today take for granted, were luxuries. Serious illnesses were often left untreated, becoming virtual death sentences.

We established and later expanded Medicaid because we understood that, in a country as great as ours, we don't turn our backs on our neighbors. But we also created Medicaid because we know that it is in all of our economic interests to have more healthy people. When more people are healthy and able to work, they can get ahead and stay ahead, provide a better life for their family, join the workforce, and, in so doing, make our economy stronger.

There is, of course, much more work to do to make healthcare more affordable for all of our people. But Medicaid saves lives. Over the course of the program's history, Medicaid has allowed hundreds of millions of Americans who otherwise would be uninsured to live healthier lives and to build a future.

But now the Trump administration and some of my Republican colleagues are poised to end Medicaid as we know it in order to pay for tax breaks for corporate special interests and billionaires.

The Republican plan to eviscerate Medicaid would be devastating to our country. The Republican plan is, unsurprisingly, short on details. But they have put forward proposals that, if you do the math, mean cutting a third of Federal Medicaid funding, all to give billionaires and corporate special interests a tax break.

Now, let's look at what this decidedly unreasonable, outrageous, and dangerous plan would do. Cutting Medicaid by a third means living in a country where millions of children no longer have healthcare; a country where more of our friends and neighbors get sick and can't afford to see a doctor; a country where more of our friends and neighbors stay out of the workforce because they can't afford treatments for chronic conditions like lupus, making them too sick to work; a country where families who have children with disabilities can't find adequate coverage to provide the kind of complex care, both at home and in school, that these children need. One issue, in particular, I want to highlight is the way in which slashing Medicaid would weaken our fight against addiction.

New Hampshire has been hit hard by the fentanyl crisis. These Medicaid cuts could kick hundreds of thousands of people struggling with addiction off of Medicaid, out of treatment, and off the road to recovery. This will, among other things, make law enforcement's job even harder, and it will make our children less safe.

So let's be clear about what the Republican plan to slash Medicaid will do. It will make people less healthy. It will weaken our workforce and hurt our economy. The fight against fentanyl

will only get tougher, and more people will die who otherwise could have lived.

In the administration's plan to eviscerate Medicaid, the cuts only appear on the page as percentages and dollar signs, but their impact will be felt by real people.

My office, as has Senator BALDWIN's, Senator KIM's, and Senator DURBIN's, has been deluged with letters and calls from constituents who are concerned about the administration's attack on Medicaid.

I could tell you hundreds of stories, but instead I will just give you three.

There is Michelle from Manchester. She was diagnosed with a rare and frequently fatal form of cancer that upended her career and her life. To go through the long process of cancer treatment by paying out of pocket would be daunting, perhaps even prohibitive for most anyone. But Michelle was covered by Medicaid. She got the care that she needed. She got healthy. She was able to go back to work. She is now cancer-free because of her courage and strength and because she was covered by Medicaid.

Then there is Noa from Merrimack. Now, Noa is 20 years old and experiences disabilities and is blind. She has had to face challenges that few of us can imagine. But thanks in part to the support that she has received through Medicaid, she has been able to have many of the opportunities that all parents want for their kids and that all kids want for themselves.

She has a part-time job at a nearby bank. She does charity work delivering flowers to seniors. She loves horseback riding and has competed as a Special Olympian. She accomplished all this thanks to her bravery, optimism, and generosity, but she may not have even gotten that chance without Medicaid.

And then there is Cheri from Lebanon. Like other Granite Staters, she has had struggles with addiction, as well as mental health challenges, but Cheri was eligible for Medicaid. She got treatment and went into recovery. She was able to go back to work. Today, Cheri is a perinatal peer support educator and coordinator for Dartmouth Health. She helps families every day. Because she got care when she needed it, she is now working to provide care for others, touching untold and unknown numbers of lives through her work. And she was my guest this year at the President's joint address to Congress. But none of her recovery, employment, and lifesaving work would have been possible or happened without Medicaid.

So if the administration intends to eviscerate Medicaid, if they intend to go through with their plan to cut Medicaid by a third to pay for a tax break for billionaires, then before they do, they should at least stop and explain to these three people—Michelle, Noa, Cheri—who is the one that they want to kick off of Medicaid.

How would any of us be better off if any of these three people are forced to go without healthcare?

Most Americans are proud of our capacity to come together and ensure that our friends and neighbors can get healthcare and be able to work and raise families. But this administration evidently considers the provision of lifesaving healthcare to Americans from all walks of life to be a problem.

Now, beyond the huge pricetag of this budget plan—a plan that explodes the deficit by 37 trillion more dollars over 30 years—and let's be clear: The Republican budget writers are going to use accounting gimmicks to try to hide this cost. And let's be clear too that the \$37 trillion in additional debt won't be used to improve healthcare. It is to pay for tax breaks for billionaires.

But there is another cost to the President's attacks on Medicaid, because as important as it is that we protect the healthcare provided by Medicare—and that is tremendously important—protecting Medicaid healthcare marks neither the beginning nor the end of what we need to do to improve healthcare in our country and make it more affordable.

We need to confront real challenges in our country's healthcare system. Big Pharma keeps drug prices too high. We have the best doctors in the world, but too few people can afford to see them. Too many Americans live with chronic diseases.

Labor and delivery centers across our country are more and more scarce, and rural hospitals are struggling. Americans need to summon our best ideas and our best efforts to meet these challenges, but we will not make progress so long as this administration continues to keep us trapped in old debates and tries to unravel bipartisan support for the progress that we have already made.

Of course, it doesn't have to be this way. When I was Governor of New Hampshire, we managed to expand Medicaid and balance the budget at the same time, and we did both on a bipartisan basis. We did it with the support of many business leaders and law enforcement leaders who didn't always vote the same way come November, but they did agree that we are all better off when people are healthy.

President Trump and congressional Republicans are presenting us with a false choice. We don't have to choose between keeping the status quo on the one hand and blowing up our healthcare system on the other. We don't have to buy the falsehood that, somehow, we have to close rural hospitals and throw seniors out of our nursing homes to improve our healthcare system. There are better ideas, and a whole lot of them are bipartisan.

There are bipartisan bills right now to lower the costs for patients when they go to the doctor by implementing something called site neutrality. There are bipartisan bills that will lower drug



costs by bringing more generic drugs to market. But these ideas only help if there is a functioning healthcare system to build on—a functioning healthcare system, as challenged as it is, that includes Medicaid.

As Americans, we don't shrink from challenges. We don't surrender to cynicism and lies. We work together. We do hard things. We do what it takes to build a better future for our country, and we do it in a way that brings all of us along together, and that includes ensuring that all of us have healthcare. That is the way we created Medicaid. That is the way we expanded Medicaid. And it is through that same spirit of hard work and optimism that we can overcome the healthcare challenges of today if we can summon the political will to do it.

A will has been so sorely lacking since this President arrived on the scene. The Senate should not pass a budget that rips healthcare away from millions of Americans—60,000 of whom live in my State—just to give tax cuts to billionaires, but that is what this budget will do. It is un-American, and it is shameful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. KIM. Madam President, I rise today to tell the stories of the nearly 2 million New Jerseyans who rely on Medicaid for their critical care. I do this because their care is at risk. I do this because the care of more than 72 million Americans across our country enrolled in Medicaid is at risk. They are at risk because Republicans in the House and the Senate have chosen to take away their care so that Elon Musk and the very richest Americans can pay a little less in taxes.

That is the choice they have thrust upon the American people. It is a choice that I don't believe they truly understand, so I would like to take some of my time today on the floor to explain what happens when we choose Elon Musk's well-being over the people we have sworn to serve.

To truly understand this, you need to understand that for tens of millions of Americans, Medicaid is their lifeline from the womb to their final years.

In New Jersey, nearly one out of three births is covered by Medicaid. But even before that birth takes place, mothers receive prenatal care covered by Medicaid. That means that for millions of parents across the country, the first images they see of their child in those early ultrasounds are because of Medicaid. It means that prenatal vitamins that provide the folic acid necessary to ensure proper development are because of Medicaid. It means that if there is a complication in a pregnancy, those parents can focus on their health and the health of their unborn child, not whether or not they will be able to cover the costs of their care. That is because of Medicaid.

So when Republicans are saying we need to cut Medicaid, remember that it

is Elon Musk who wins and those expecting parents who lose.

When those children are born into the world, tens of millions rely on Medicaid. Nationally, about 40 percent of children are enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP. In New Jersey, one-third of children—one in three kids in my State—are enrolled in Medicaid.

As a father of a 7-year-old and a 9-year-old, I can tell you that the most important thing is knowing that your kids are healthy.

There are a lot of things that are outside of your control as a parent. You can do everything right, but sometimes you just need help. Kids get sick, and having that assurance that they can get the care they need is an important thing.

When you take away Medicaid, you are not just taking away care, you are taking away the peace of mind that parents deserve. You are taking away the ability for parents to look their kids in the eye and say: It is going to be OK.

I wanted to share with you two stories that have stuck with me. I heard from Nicole, a mother from New Jersey who has a developmentally disabled son, Jordan. Jordan is 24. His mother said that a Medicaid cut would be "catastrophic." She said that the care she receives from Medicaid is "vitally important."

That sense of importance and urgency I heard from Nicole I saw echoed from Jamie from Hazlet. Jamie's son David was born paralyzed, nonverbal, and he is relying on a feeding tube. Jamie told reporters that one of David's medications "can cost up to \$1,000 a month." She said that if Republicans are successful in cutting Medicaid, "we would have to choose—are we going to eat? pay the bills? or keep him alive?" She said, "It is a life-or-death situation."

So when Republicans are talking about cutting Medicaid to hand tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans, the choice they are making is to leave people like Nicole and Jordan, like Jamie and David behind.

At some point, our children grow up and leave, but even then, so many across this country rely on Medicaid for their basic care. In New Jersey, one in seven adults between the ages of 19 and 64 is covered by Medicaid.

When you look at the choice ahead of us between care and tax cuts for the superrich, I want you to think about Caroline from Mount Holly. Caroline called my office asking that I oppose this budget plan. When she outlined her reason for not cutting Medicaid, she spoke in the clearest possible terms:

I will die if there are cuts to Medicaid.

Caroline is disabled. Her daughter takes care of her through the Managed Long-Term Services and Supports Program.

She ended her message by saying:

Please, I need help. A lot of us need your help.

These are the people that need help, not Elon Musk, not the billionaires.

It is people like Caroline from Hackettstown. Caroline called my office because her brother is on Medicaid. He is scheduled to get heart surgery in the next couple of months—something that is scary enough when you have the certainty of healthcare. But Caroline doesn't have that if her brother's Medicaid is cut.

She said:

I'm really scared for him. I'm really scared for my parents who are about to retire. . . . I'm scared for myself, someone who also has multiple health issues and is trying to keep down a full-time job despite it all.

These are the people that need help.

Our neighbors who sometimes need the most help are those who are disabled. In New Jersey, one out of every three working-age adults with a disability is on Medicaid.

Just last month, I invited Kevin Nunez—a disabled New Jerseyman and an advocate for his community—down to the Capitol. Kevin relies on Medicaid for his care, his caregiver, his basic quality of life. I brought him to the Capitol because I wanted Donald Trump to have to face someone whose healthcare he was threatening to take away.

But it wasn't just Kevin there at the Capitol; we saw his caregiver Edna there. The work she does every day is truly incredible.

We should support our caregivers, should honor their service, and cutting the funding that allows them to do their job is not the way to do that.

Kevin is 1 of more than 15.5 million people across America with a disability who are covered by Medicaid. He is 1 of approximately 4.5 million people who use Medicaid for home care workers like Edna.

The choice we are facing is abandoning those Americans like Kevin and Edna, who just need basic care, or giving another tax cut to those at the very top. For me, that is not a choice.

Finally, as we go through adulthood and age, Medicaid becomes more important than ever. Seniors across our Nation are relying on Medicaid for the care they need to live. Sixty percent of nursing home residents in New Jersey use Medicaid to pay for care. When seniors are on a fixed income, like so many of them are, Medicaid can be the difference between life or death.

Annie, a teacher in New Jersey, called my office recently. Her mother is on Medicaid—71 years old, recently had hip surgery. She has no other income than her Social Security and asked that we do everything we can to make sure that her Medicaid isn't cut.

As someone who is not just a father of two young kids but as a caretaker of an older parent, it weighs on me, and I understand the challenges that are there, knowing that you have to do everything you can to make sure the people you love have the care they need.

Life is hard enough. Care is hard enough. The point of Medicaid, the

point of government, is to make it a little easier, a little more bearable.

So when Republicans come to the floor with a budget that threatens to cut Medicaid so they can give tax cuts and tax breaks to the ultrarich, the choice they are putting before us is making your lives worse and make their lives better. It is making your healthcare worse to make their bank accounts bigger. It is making your future more uncertain to make their futures brighter.

That can't be an acceptable choice, and it is not one we have to make. We can reject this budget resolution and save Medicaid and save healthcare. We can reject this budget resolution and choose to support that expecting mother who just wants to give birth to a healthy child. We can reject this budget resolution and choose to support that child as they grow. We can reject this budget resolution and choose to support our neighbors who work hard but just need that little bit of help to stay healthy and achieve the American dream. Finally, we can reject this budget resolution and choose to support our seniors. We owe the best care to them in their golden years.

This is the moment to show the 2 million New Jerseyans on Medicaid, the nearly 80 million Americans on Medicaid, and every other American across this country that we choose their well-being over the wealth and power of those who already have plenty. Let's reject this budget resolution and do the right thing for them.

I yield the floor.

## MORNING BUSINESS

### REMEMBERING DONNA EASTMAN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, when people ask me to describe my politics, I sometimes say that I try my best to follow the Gospel of St. Paul. By that, I mean I try to follow the examples of two good and wise men who showed me that politics, at its best, can solve real problems and advance our common good.

The first of these two Pauls was Senator Paul Douglas, the brilliant economist and World War II hero who served in this Senate—in the same seat I now hold—and gave me my start in government when he hired me as a college intern to work in his Washington, DC, office.

The other Paul was Senator Paul Simon, my greatest political teacher and dear friend. When he retired, he encouraged me to run to succeed him in this body. Paul Simon was the most decent public servant I have ever known—a man of uncommon integrity, vision, and accomplishment who was gifted with a capacious intellectual curiosity. And he was helped by a staff of men and women who shared his compassion and tireless work habits.

Donna Eastman was one of those helpers. She was also my friend. And I

was sad to learn that she passed away this past Saturday. She worked for Paul Simon for the 18 years he served in this body. And when he retired in 1996, it was my good luck that Donna agreed to join my staff. She ran my southern Illinois district office in Marion until she retired in 2008.

Donna loved helping people and making their lives better, like so many of the dedicated Federal employees who are being fired illegally today. No case was too hard for Donna. She knew how to cut through redtape and how to calm people who were frustrated, frightened, or angry. She treated every person with dignity and respect.

If you were lucky enough to meet Donna Eastman, you would not forget her. She was tall—5 feet, 11 inches—with a firm handshake, a warm smile, and an infectious laugh. She was quick-witted, caring, generous, and genuine. She also was a woman of many interests and seemingly inexhaustible energy.

She was active in her women's club, her church, and in the civic and political life of her community. She was a gifted "best of show" painter of portraits and still lifes and an award-winning gardener with a magnificent flower garden. For a few years, when she was a young mother, she wrote a humorous column for her local paper, the *Goreville Gazette*.

And those were just her hobbies. In addition to her public service work, Donna's primary occupation was co-owner with her husband Barry of Eastman's Orchard in Goreville, an 80-acre farm that produced some of the most delicious peaches and apples anywhere. Their secret was to wait until the fruit was perfectly ripe before picking it and selling it quickly to loyal customers. You couldn't miss the orchard's big red barn as you drove down Route 37.

Donna and Barry knew each other their entire lives. They were a year apart in school. When Donna was a junior in high school, she was prom queen, and Barry was her escort. Three years later, they were married.

Like Donna, Barry relishes new challenges, like grafting together two different trees to produce a better-tasting, heartier fruit. In the early 1970s, he ran successfully for sheriff of Johnson County.

Donna Kelley Eastman came from good, strong stock. When she was a young teen, she watched her mother Juanita swing a hammer as she helped Donna's grandfather build the Kelley family home.

Donna's father Bill Kelley was a person of many interests and accomplishments, like Donna. He was a World War II veteran and, at various times, an Illinois State trooper, long-distance truck driver, gas station owner, and board member of the local bank.

Her parents taught Donna to be tenacious, work hard, and pursue her passions. They also taught her to be generous to others in need.

The Kelleys were committed Democrats, and in 1960, Donna and her par-

ents were all dazzled by John F. Kennedy. Her parents were awed by his charisma. Donna was captivated almost equally by JFK's idealism and Jackie's elegance. She decided that she wanted to be part of Camelot; she wanted to work for a common cause and a greater good. And she spent the rest of her life doing just that.

Donna Kelley Eastman believed that a wise and compassionate government could help people live better lives and that she had a personal responsibility to help make that happen.

She loved being in her garden and orchard in the springtime and witnessing the promise of another new beginning. She loved her country and community and, most of all, her family.

Loretta and I offer our deep condolences to Barry, Donna's beloved husband of 62 years; their children Teresa, Matthew, and Melanie; and their families, including Donna and Barry's six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; to Donna's sister Pam; and to her countless friends. We will all miss her. I couldn't have asked for a better ambassador.

## VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I was necessarily absent for rollcall vote No. 162, on passage of the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 24. Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted nay.

## RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GOONIES

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the release of the beloved classic film, "The Goonies." With enduring and relatable themes of adventure, acceptance, and friendship, "The Goonies" has become one of the alltime great American underdog stories. "The Goonies" has withstood the test of time and firmly established its place in American culture. A large part of what makes this film unique and impactful is its iconic setting along the stunning Oregon coastline. Indeed, so significant is the film's location that thousands of fans from around the globe gather each year in Astoria, OR, for a multiday celebration to commemorate the magic that is "The Goonies."

One of the reasons for the enduring success of "The Goonies" is the lessons it has imparted on generations of viewers who come away inspired to stand up to bullies, accept people who are different from them, and "never say die" when it comes to fighting for their communities and the things they believe in. As I travel to my townhalls all over Oregon and hear the deep concerns that so many Oregonians feel about the state of our country and the world, I hope we can all take an important lesson or two from "The Goonies."

Fans from around the world will flock to Astoria this summer for "The Goonies" 40th anniversary celebration. All of them will be able to participate