

(2) the application of criteria for designation as a critical access hospital described in clauses (ii) through (v) of section 1820(c)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i-4(c)(2)(B)).

(d) GAO STUDY AND REPORT.—

(1) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States (in this section referred to as the “Comptroller General”) shall conduct a study on the implementation of the amendments made by subsection (a). To the extent such data are available and reliable, such study shall include—

(A) an analysis of—

(i) the characteristics of facilities designated as critical access hospitals pursuant to section 1820(c)(2)(B)(i)(III) of the Social Security Act, as added by subsection (a);

(ii) an analysis of the financial status and outlook for such facilities based on their designation as a critical access hospital pursuant to such section; and

(iii) an analysis of any increase in expenditures under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) as a result of such designation, relative to the expected baseline expenditures under the Medicare program if such facilities had not received such designation; and

(B) an assessment of whether the authority to designate facilities as critical access hospitals pursuant to such section 1820(c)(2)(B)(i)(III) promotes access to care in rural areas.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 6 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study conducted under subsection (a), together with recommendations for such legislation and administrative action as the Comptroller General determines appropriate.

SEC. 3. MEDPAC STUDY AND REPORT ON PAYMENT SYSTEMS FOR RURAL HOSPITALS.

(a) STUDY.—The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (in this section referred to as the “Commission”) shall conduct a study, using data from 2018 through 2028, on payment systems for rural hospitals under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.). Such study shall include an analysis of—

(1) facilities designated as critical access hospitals pursuant to section 1820(c)(2)(B)(i)(III) of the Social Security Act, as added by section 2(a);

(2) features of payment systems for rural hospitals, including value-based payment systems, that would—

(A) ensure financial sustainability for the Medicare program; and

(B) preserve access to care for Medicare beneficiaries;

(3) if the Commission recommends any new payment system for rural hospitals under the Medicare program, to the extent feasible, the impacts of transition from existing payment systems to such new payment system.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 8 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to Congress a report on the study conducted under subsection (a), together with recommendations for such legislation and administrative action as the Commission determines appropriate.

(c) DEFINITION OF RURAL HOSPITAL.—In this section, the term “rural hospital” means—

(1) a critical access hospital (as defined in section 1861(mm)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(mm)(1)));

(2) a subsection (d) hospital (as defined in section 1886(d)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(1)(B))) that is located in a rural census tract of a metropolitan statistical area (as determined under the most recent modification of the Goldsmith

Modification, originally published in the Federal Register on February 27, 1992 (57 Fed. Reg. 6725);

(3) a sole community hospital (as defined in section 1886(d)(5)(D)(iii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(5)(D)(iii)));

(4) a medicare dependent, small rural hospital (as defined in section 1886(d)(5)(G)(iv) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(5)(G)(iv))); and

(5) a low-volume hospital (as defined in section 1886(d)(12)(C)(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(12)(C)(i))).

SEC. 4. SUNSET.

Not later than 9 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish a mechanism and provide guidance and technical assistance under which any facility that was designated as a critical access hospital pursuant to a certification by a State under section 1820(c)(2)(B)(i)(III) of the Social Security Act, as added by section 2(a), may transition within 1 year to one of the following payment models:

(1) Such new model or models recommended by the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission in the report submitted under section 3.

(2) The prospective payment model (or models) under which the facility received payment under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) prior to being so designated pursuant to such certification.

(3) Payment as a rural emergency hospital under section 1834(x) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(x)).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 68—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE UNITED STATES SHALL NOT DEPLOY UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSETS OR PERSONNEL TO GAZA FOR PURPOSES OF “TAKING OVER” GAZA

Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. WELCH, Mr. WYDEN, and Ms. DUCKWORTH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 68

Whereas the horrific attack by Hamas on Israel on October 7, 2023, killed 1,195 Israelis; Whereas Israeli military operations in Gaza have resulted in more than 45,000 Palestinians killed;

Whereas the January 15, 2025, ceasefire between Israel and Hamas resulted in the long-overdue return of innocent hostages taken by Hamas, the suspension of Israeli military activity in Gaza and the redeployment of forces, and an opportunity for the international community to surge humanitarian aid to Gazans in need;

Whereas, on February 4, 2025, President Trump suggested the United States will “take over the Gaza Strip” and forcibly relocate its people;

Whereas the Palestinian people have the right to self-determination and their own independent state, and to live with dignity and in peaceful coexistence with their neighbors;

Whereas the United States asserting control over Gaza would fracture relations with United States partners in the region and

around the world, validate the Iranian regime’s corrosive rhetoric, and foster higher levels of radicalization and terrorism that would only further threaten the interests of the United States and United States citizens and members of the Armed Forces in the region;

Whereas the people of the United States have no interest in a new and extended military deployment to the Middle East, a new forever war in the Middle East, expending untold billions of taxpayer dollars to support any United States military operations in Gaza, or the forcible displacement of 2,000,000 people from Gaza; and

Whereas there is no congressional authorization, as required by law, for the use of United States military force in Gaza: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the United States will not deploy United States Armed Forces, risk United States lives, or otherwise use United States funds to fulfill the pronounced objective to “take over” Gaza.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I understand the Chair has an announcement for the Senate.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces on behalf of the Committee on Finance, pursuant to section 8002 of title 26, U.S. Code, the designation of the following Senators as members of the Joint Committee on Taxation: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO); the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY); the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN); the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN); and the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL).

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 29

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 29) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

Mr. THUNE. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2025

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, February 11; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning

business be closed, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume Executive Calendar No. 18; that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and leader remarks count postcloture; further, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for weekly conference meetings.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator WELCH.

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

The Senator from Vermont.

2024 ELECTION

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, Donald Trump, as we all know, won the last election in November, and he is now the 47th President of the United States. But Donald Trump did not, contrary to what he and the Vice President want people to believe, win by anything close to a landslide.

As this chart shows, out of a total of 155,238,302 votes, Mr. Trump won 77,302,000, or 49.8 percent. Kamala Harris won 75 million, or 48.3 percent. President Trump won, but just slightly over 2 million votes more than Kamala Harris. The difference between them was 1.5 percent of the popular vote.

And although it was one of the smallest margins of victory since the 19th century, President Trump, in his inaugural address, and others in the inner circle of Trump repeatedly called the victory a “landslide,” a “blowout,” a “mandate,” “historic.”

Do you know what a real landslide is? Lyndon Johnson, in 1964, won by 22.6 percent. Ronald Reagan won by 18.2 percent. Those are landslides.

Why does it matter? Because facts matter. The truth matters. And we cannot survive in our democracy without respect—much more respect—for the truth. It is also really important because whether you are running for the U.S. Senate or for the Presidency of the United States, when one goes from candidate for office to the President or the U.S. Senator in office, the responsibility that we have is to all the people in our district and—certainly for the President of the United States—a responsibility to all the people in the United States. We serve all, whether they voted for us or against us.

But what has been happening with the assertion that this was this massive landslide is that it has become the justification for narrow policies that completely disrespect the reality that

so many other Americans need to be represented and heard and, also, is so narrow that even those who voted for President Trump for a variety of reasons are not getting policies they thought would be included.

The “America First” policies, so far, have cut funding for programs to protect water that all Americans need, clean air that we all breathe, whether it is a voter who was for Trump or a voter who was for Harris. We are cutting funding for medical research for cancer, cures for kids who have cancer, for food assistance to feed malnourished kids and parents who are in every district in this country—and, of course, most spectacularly, what we are seeing is the illegal termination of the USAID program, something the courts have rescinded but the administration is rushing pell-mell, nevertheless.

All of this, actually, is in service of being able to find offsets in order to pay for the Trump tax cuts that are heavily weighted to folks who are billionaires like Mr. Musk and, of course, to our major U.S. corporations. The folks who need a tax cut are the everyday Americans who have been trying to make ends meet and are having real trouble doing that.

The White House is not even trying to hide what they are doing. You have got Elon Musk—you know, it is pretty astonishing. He owns Twitter, which is a source of immense misinformation. He is now trying to buy ChatGPT. He has massive amounts of government contracts for Starlink and for his space program. And he has contributed \$280 million to the Trump campaign.

And now, without any elected authority, without any advice and consent to the Senate on a position that is very powerful, the so-called DOGE Administrator, he has access to the private information of millions of Americans—all that confidential information about your Social Security and mine that is in the Treasury Department.

So how is that happening? That is not in service of the folks who didn't vote for Mr. Trump. It is not even in service of people who did.

It is important that elections and the outcomes of elections be respected. In this last election, just like in 2020, the people who oversaw this election worked hard to ensure that it was free and fair. We don't all get the outcome that we want, but it was free and fair. The difference in this election is that we, on the losing side, accepted the result. We didn't falsely claim that it was stolen—the “Stop the Steal” narrative—as President Trump continues to assert about 2020 and most of his Cabinet nominees do as well.

We didn't try to prevent the outcome from being certified or to promote an insurrection by a violent mob, folks who actually attacked and injured people in this building and police offi-

cers—spit in their face, hit them, hit them with poles. And we had police officers who died after that attack.

Falsely denying the outcome of an election and then using violence to overturn the result of a free and fair election absolutely subverts the democratic process. And as every American voter knows, free and fair elections—like the checks and balances between our three coequal branches of government—are absolutely essential to the well-being and continuation of our democracy.

In the inaugural address that the President gave, I did not hear anything about childcare or the cost of housing or bringing down the cost of prescription drugs and making healthcare more affordable—things that everyday families in every single part of this country need help with to be able to pay those bills and, at the end of the month, have their checkbook still balance.

If and when the President starts focusing on those issues, I and my colleagues are absolutely ready to work with him and our colleagues on the other side of the aisle because those things—affordable broadband, affordable healthcare, affordable housing and rent, some economic security—those are things every single one of us needs. And the challenges that we face, whether it is in red America or blue America—to try to have better policies to make that happen are things that we must be working on together. But not where what comes first, last, and always are these tax cuts that explode the deficit and go to folks who are not now paying their fair share.

So as long as President Trump and his allies pretend that he has this massive mandate to literally disrupt and throw out the traditions and norms and guardrails of democracy, that is something I and so many of my colleagues will resist.

We can't do that. The law matters, respect for your opponents matters, and focusing on the everyday needs of everyday people is what matters most. It is what is the goal all of us should be looking to accomplish.

So there was no mandate—no massive mandate. There was a victory; but with victory, to describe it as this smashing mandate is a suggestion that what awaits us and has already arrived is overreach and failure.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:15 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 10 a.m.