

stripped 24 million Americans of healthcare, a cruel bill that would have disproportionately hurt those who voted for President Trump.

This is a dereliction of our responsibility here in the Congress. Not one of these issues is more important than getting to the bottom of possible collusion with the Russians or of the possibility that some in the White House have been compromised by a foreign government.

I want to praise the few on the majority side who have spoken out on the need for an investigation, including Senator GRAHAM and Senator MCCAIN. They noted early on the need for an independent investigation.

Today a majority of Americans also want an independent commission. I am again calling for the same. We need an independent commission, one led by American statesmen or women of unquestioned reputation, say Sandra Day O'Connor or Colin Powell.

We did this after the attack of September 11, and this attack and its unanswered questions demand nothing less again today.

#### JUSTICE AND THE RULE OF LAW IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last week I spoke about the importance of the rule of law in Guatemala and praised the work of Attorney General Thelma Aldana and the commissioner of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, Ivan Velasquez. These two individuals have helped to create hope among the Guatemalan people in the possibility of justice in a country where the justice system has too often been used to perpetuate corruption, impunity, and inequality.

The International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, or CICIG, has been strongly supported by the United States. I commended President Morales when, shortly after taking office last January, he extended CICIG's mandate. He has affirmed that he supports CICIG's mandate through September 2019, for which, again, I commend him.

Last week, I expressed a concern that had been conveyed to me by several individuals that President Morales might recommend against renewal of Mr. Velasquez as commissioner beyond September 2017, when Mr. Velasquez's current term expires. In response, according to press reports, President Morales denied this and said he supports Mr. Velasquez for as long as Mr. Velasquez does the job he is supposed to do.

Ivan Velasquez is a respected former judge from Colombia who has carried out his responsibilities as the commissioner of CICIG with professionalism. He and Attorney General Aldana have collaborated on sensitive, complex cases, which until recently would never have been prosecuted in Guatemala, given its history of impunity. It is important that their collaboration continue for as long as possible.

I welcome President Morales's public statement of support for CICIG and for Mr. Velasquez, particularly at a time when the U.S. Congress is again being asked to provide hundreds of millions of dollars to support the Alliance for Prosperity Plan. That plan, which is in its early stages, has the potential to make progress in combating the poverty, lack of opportunity, inequality, violence, and impunity that are among the key contributors to migration from Central America to the United States. These are deeply rooted problems that the Central American countries and the United States have a strong interest in working together to address.

For the Alliance for Prosperity Plan to succeed, each of the Central American governments needs to take steps that their predecessors were unwilling or unable to take. Those steps include ensuring that senior government officials and their advisers are people of integrity; redefining the antagonistic relationship between government and civil society, to one of mutual respect for each other's legitimate role; fully supporting efforts to combat corruption by CICIG and by the Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras—El Salvador should also recognize the important role these entities are playing and support the establishment of a similar commission to combat corruption and impunity in that country—increasing the budget of the Office of the Attorney General, so they have the necessary personnel, training, equipment, and protection to carry out their responsibilities throughout the country, especially in areas where they have never had the resources to operate; supporting the independence of the judiciary, including the selection of judges based on their qualifications and the principle of equal access to justice; and building transparent and accountable institutions of democracy that can withstand attempts to subvert the rights of the people, including demilitarizing law enforcement and building professional, civilian police forces.

It is the responsibility of the Central American governments to take these steps and, by doing so, create the conditions for building more prosperous, equitable, and just societies. If they do that and they meet the other conditions in U.S. law, the United States should support them.

#### CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTIONS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to express my disappointment in today's vote on H.J. Res. 67 and my strong opposition to H.J. Res. 66. These resolutions overturn rules issued by the Department of Labor that are essential to providing increased access to retirement savings programs at the city and State levels.

Among all working families in America ages 32 to 61, the median family in

America had only \$5,000 saved in 2013. This indicates to me that we are clearly facing a retirement savings crisis.

In California, 7.5 million workers don't have access to a retirement savings plan through their jobs, including 3.4 million women. Of those without a workplace retirement savings plan, almost 5 million are individuals of Color, and over 3.5 million are Latino.

The good news is that, when a person has access to a retirement savings program through their workplace, they are 15 times more likely to save for retirement.

In California, legislators have been working for more than 4 years to create the Secure Choice program as a way of addressing the retirement crisis we face. This program allows workers to easily save for retirement through a deduction made directly from their paycheck.

Those who need access to a workplace retirement program the most, individuals with lower incomes, are far less likely to have that access. These are the people who stand to gain the most from the Secure Choice program and lose the most by Congress halting its progress.

Let me share some examples of the people who would be impacted. Most eligible employees work for small businesses that might not be able to offer retirement savings plans on their own, and nearly half of eligible workers work in the retail, hospitality, healthcare, and manufacturing industries.

This program supports lower- and middle-class workers by providing access to the tools they need to control their financial future. The average wage of workers eligible for this program is \$35,000, and 80 percent of eligible workers earn less than \$50,000.

We are facing a time of deep income inequality and must stand up for programs that support the middle class, like Secure Choice. Nationwide, the bottom 90 percent of households have seen their income drop compared to what it was in 1970. Meanwhile, the top 1 percent has seen their household income triple.

As workers struggle to make ends meet, it is appalling to me that Congress would actively take away a key resource for financial planning.

Californians want to ensure that all employees have access to a retirement savings program. The Department of Labor's State rule clears the way for California to set up programs like Secure Choice by clarifying employers' obligations to the accounts.

This rule would also help small businesses compete for qualified workers who expect and deserve access to a workplace retirement savings program. Small Business California supports the Department of Labor's rule paving the way for these programs and opposes this resolution.

Finally, in California, our State chapter of the Chamber of Commerce specifically asked for an opinion from