

CHIP AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about an issue that is critical to patients and families in my home State of Washington and across the country. Today, parents are wondering if they will be able to get the healthcare their kids need, and communities are wondering if they will be able to provide it.

That is unacceptable.

Congress has to swiftly and fully restore the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, and funding for other services families need, like community health centers, which have been waiting more than 100 days for a long-term solution. They should do so without making deep cuts to successful prevention programs in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that tackle avoidable conditions like heart disease and diabetes.

Democrats have wanted to get this done for months. By focusing on pushing through partisan tax reform at the end of the year, Republicans instead put massive corporations and the wealthiest ahead of making sure our children and their families have the healthcare they need. I hope they are now ready to give these issues their full and immediate attention. In case they aren't, I want to make sure they know exactly what this is about.

It is about children like Stella. Stella lives in Washington State. She is 5 years old. She has two brothers. She has a love of the outdoors, especially swimming and kayaking. She has a typical kindergartner's boundless energy and excitement. But Stella was born with spina bifida, an issue with how her spinal cord was formed. In the past year of dealing with that condition, Stella's family went through 5 catheters a day, almost 2,000 in total. They went on 10 different occasions to have MRI scans. They went to get her new leg braces. Given the cost of all that, they went through their \$5,000 deductible in the first 5 weeks of the year. That is right. It took just 5 weeks. Additionally, this year Stella is also scheduled to have bladder and kidney surgery.

As one can imagine, the expenses are really adding up. Even with both parents working, covering Stella's healthcare needs would be an unimaginable task. Fortunately, Stella does qualify for health insurance through CHIP. CHIP has helped her family afford the treatment she needs, including physical therapy.

Stella's story is just one of many examples of families who rely on this program. There are 60,000 children in Washington State who are now insured through CHIP. Nine million families nationwide rely on it to help address the healthcare needs of their children. Yet Congress has taken over 102 days and counting to restore it. There is no excuse for this inaction.

Families who rely on the CHIP Program are not alone in needing our immediate attention. Thanks to CHIP

and Medicaid, the uninsured rate among children is now at an all-time low. Jeopardizing this accomplishment by letting CHIP twist in the wind is simply unacceptable. This Republican-controlled Congress has also failed to renew other investments that our families rely on for the care they need—programs such as community health centers, which serve 25 million patients, particularly in our rural and poorer communities; the National Health Service Corps, which brings doctors and other healthcare providers to underserved areas through scholarships and loan repayment; and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Program, which brings primary care and dental residencies to communities in need. Leaving these programs without long-term extensions a minute longer is utterly irresponsible because this lack of certainty for them is already bringing a negative impact on our communities.

For example, the Northeast Washington Health Programs serve some of the most rural areas in my State, including Ferry County, which has fewer than four people per square mile. They are struggling to hire needed medical staff and managers because of this uncertainty that is now there. Ferry County cannot wait.

The Community Health Association of Spokane runs 12 health center sites and sees more than 70,000 patients a year. They recently began offering very much needed opioid addiction treatment. If Congress does not reauthorize the community health center funding, those efforts will be jeopardized and expansions will be halted. Spokane cannot wait.

Yakima Neighborhood Health Services served over 22,000 patients in 2016. Almost all of those patients were below 200 percent of the Federal poverty line.

If Congress does not act soon, three different clinics, including a clinic in one of the poorest cities in Washington, will be at risk. Yakima cannot wait.

I have heard additional stories of similar hardships from across my State. North Olympic Healthcare Network has had to put expansions on behavioral healthcare on hold. Another health center in Washington may have to reconsider building a new children's dental residency program. A center serving Whatcom County may have to cancel a project for medical, dental, and behavioral healthcare facilities as well.

Across the country there are a lot of examples for community health centers just like the ones I mentioned. Healthcare that people of all ages and backgrounds rely on is being put in jeopardy, all because Republicans prioritized tax cuts for those at the top before the health needs of millions of people at the end of last year.

It is far past time to show these families that we are willing to work to get this done. We need to give them the peace of mind that they can get the

healthcare they need. They deserve that.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. NELSON pertaining to the introduction of S. 2292 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. NELSON. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

DACA

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam President, I rise today to stand up for the hundreds of thousands of young immigrants known as Dreamers, whose lives President Trump has thrown into terrifying uncertainty.

Immigrant communities have long helped write the economic, social, and cultural story of my home State of New Mexico and, for that matter, the entire Nation. That is certainly true for Dreamers, undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States as children and are vital members of communities across New Mexico.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of meeting many of New Mexico's estimated 7,000 Dreamers. I have met with students who grew up here and are now striving to become doctors, scientists, teachers, and even serve in our military. These young people are our children's classmates. They are our next-door neighbors. They are our colleagues. They are family members, and many are truly rising stars. In fact, I would argue that these Dreamers are the future of a great America.

Every day these young people add to the strength of our economy, to the vitality of our country. More than 97 percent of DACA recipients are in school or in the workforce.

The DACA Program allowed them to work legally, to get driver's licenses, to go to college, to serve in our military and give back to their communities. DACA helped almost 70 percent of recipients secure a job with better pay, and better pay leads to real investments in our communities and our economy.

After their DACA applications were approved, nearly two-thirds of recipients reported buying their first car, and almost one in six reported buying a new home. DACA recipients also paid billions of dollars in Federal, State, and local taxes. Why on Earth would

we kick out these contributors to our economy and our country?

The economic impact of removing nearly 700,000 workers from the U.S. workforce would be staggering. It would cost our economy nearly half a trillion dollars in GDP loss over the next decade. But passing the Dream Act could add an estimated \$281 billion to the U.S. economy over the next 10 years. That, to me, sounds like putting America first.

I stand with these Dreamers, and I always have. One of my first actions when I was in the House of Representatives was to sign on as an original cosponsor of the Dream Act, which would create a pathway to legal status and citizenship for Dreamers who pursue higher education or serve our Nation in uniform. This commonsense, compassionate, and responsible policy is long overdue for a generation of young Americans.

Since President Trump made the heartless decision to end DACA, I have held his administration accountable for their mishandling of renewal applications for DACA recipients. My office has assisted Dreamers in New Mexico through the DACA renewal process and is actively participating in meetings with communities and local advocacy groups throughout the State.

I introduced legislation to safeguard Dreamers' private information, such as addresses and telephone numbers, so the Trump administration can't use those to target them or their families for deportation.

When my office learned that the Department of Homeland Security had arbitrarily rejected hundreds of renewal applications that arrived late because they were delayed by the Postal Service, I pressed the administration to take immediate action to reverse its decision. I am pleased to say that Dreamers whose applications were rejected due to Postal Service delays were allowed to resubmit their renewals for DACA. In fact, just last week, the first two DACA recipients in New Mexico, who brought this to my attention with the help of Catholic Charities, were told that they could move forward with their DACA renewal applications.

President Trump's decision means that until Congress passes the Dream Act, these young members of our communities still face deep uncertainty about whether they will be able to stay in school, keep working and contributing to our economy, and remain in the Nation that they call home.

Congress must pass the Dream Act now. Threatening to deport these young people who grew up in America and want to contribute to their Nation will not fix our broken immigration system. Making the American people foot the bill to build an unnecessary and wasteful border wall—which families in New Mexico's border communities have told me they do not want nor do they need—will not fix our broken immigration system.

President Trump and congressional Republicans wasted an entire year trying to take away American's healthcare and then rushing through tax breaks for the superwealthy in the final weeks of the year. By squandering an entire year, they pushed Dreamers aside and put their lives in jeopardy.

I voted to fund the government through the holidays in hopes that Congress could finally reach an agreement to pass the Dream Act. We also urgently need to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, fix wildfire disaster funding, provide disaster relief for Puerto Rico, which is still recovering from Hurricane Maria. Taking care of these long-neglected and bipartisan priorities is the bare minimum of governance. Republican leaders in Congress need to take this opportunity seriously, especially if they expect our support.

I will be fighting every step of the way to pass the Dream Act, and I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same.

Since President Trump shamefully pulled the rug out from under Dreamers when he hastily ended the DACA Program, I have spent time meeting with Dreamers in New Mexico, as well as here in Washington. You cannot hear their stories without realizing how morally bankrupt the administration's current policy is. It is impossible for me to convey the desperation and the fear they are feeling every day that passes without our passing the Dream Act.

Now is the time to give these young Americans a permanent place in this great Nation. Enough is enough. Their patience has worn thin with the President and congressional Republicans using them as political bargaining chips. It is immoral to play politics with the lives of these young Americans.

I will say it again. Congress absolutely must pass the Dream Act, and we have an opportunity to do it now.

We should not stop once we pass the Dream Act. Leaders in Congress have waited far too long to finally address our Nation's overall broken immigration system. I still continue to believe that our Nation urgently needs Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform, which includes a visa program that meets the needs of our economy. It is a tough but fair path to earn citizenship for the estimated 11 million people in our country who are undocumented and a plan that ensures community safety and security at our borders.

When I think about immigration, I always wonder how different my own life would be if America had turned my father away when he immigrated here as a young boy. Our Nation's enduring spirit has been built by the hard work and the dreams of so many striving young immigrants like my father in the 1930s and like so many Dreamers today. No Member of Congress should be able to rest until Dreamers are able

to rest easy, knowing they will be able to stay and to contribute to literally the only Nation they have ever called home.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, just last week we began the second session of the 115th Congress. We are now safely into 2018, and we should be talking about what we can accomplish for the American people in the new year. We simply face a long list of unfinished business from 2017—last year—and, unfortunately, we have a very short window in which to get it done.

We are 4 months into fiscal year 2018, and we still don't have a budget deal. I am vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee. We should have had this done long before now. Our agencies are operating under last year's funding levels. They have little flexibility to handle the problems they face today.

We still haven't reauthorized the Children's Health Insurance Program, what we call CHIP, so that puts the healthcare of 9 million children at risk. These are American children.

Nearly 800,000 Dreamers live under uncertainty and fear of deportation, living in the country they have known most of their lives. I don't know how anybody, Republican or Democrat, could call this acceptable.

Now, I know the Republicans control the House, they control the Senate, and they control the White House. They are in charge. They have to show responsibility and show leadership on these issues, but instead of addressing these issues, last year the Republican leadership spent time rolling back sensible regulations designed to protect the American consumer, designed to protect our environment, and designed to protect people from harassment in the workplace. They rolled those all back, and then they passed a massive tax cut for big corporations and the wealthiest of Americans.

We Democrats have been calling for bipartisan budget talks since June—7 months ago. We have passed three continuing resolutions since September of last year to give us more time to strike a deal on the budget and Dreamers and CHIP and disaster funding. These are just to name a few, but they are enormously important to the people who are experiencing the disasters or who have children who need healthcare or who are Dreamers. Yet, on the 102nd day of the fiscal year, there are only 9 days until the next fiscal cliff, and we don't have a budget deal.

President Trump said months ago that the country could use a good government shutdown. I don't agree with