

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