

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

him, but I am beginning to think that is exactly what his party is angling for—a manufactured crisis to distract from the fact that they are not doing their job.

The Washington Post seemed to confirm this last December, when it reported the President privately told people that a government shutdown would be good for him politically. In all of my years in the Senate—I have been here under Republican and Democratic Presidents alike—I have never heard such damaging rhetoric come from the President of the United States.

Nobody wants a government shutdown—nobody. It is devastating to people not only throughout the government but to people throughout the whole country. However, that seems to be what they are vying for.

For months, I have been calling for a bipartisan budget deal that is based on parity—equal increases for defense and nondefense programs—that would provide relief from sequestration. I agree with the Republicans and Democrats who say military readiness has suffered under sequestration but so has our Nation's economy, so has our educational system, so has our infrastructure, and so has our care for our veterans.

If we want to combat the problems caused by sequestration, we have to raise the caps on both sides of the ledger. Fixing one side of the equation will not address the needs of our Nation and, even worse, will actually short-change our military.

If we don't invest in our economy, if we don't invest in the education of our youth, the military will not have expert, qualified soldiers, the men and women on whom they rely. If we don't invest in our diplomacy, our Nation and the world become less safe. If we don't improve our cyber security defenses and our physical infrastructure, we become soft targets for those who would do us harm, both in this country and outside this country. If we don't care for our veterans, we are not going to have young men and women who are willing to serve.

This week, the majority leader came to the floor making the case for increased defense spending. He asked us to listen to our nonpartisan military leaders about what they think is needed to keep this country safe. I couldn't agree more.

To that end, I have two letters signed by a combined 560 retired admirals, generals, and other former military members. I ask unanimous consent to have these letters printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

I have no idea what these admirals', generals', and others' political parties are, but they make the case that we have to increase our investment in domestic priorities—including education and childcare, as well as diplomacy—if we are going to keep our country safe and support our military. Secretary of Defense Mattis said even more bluntly: If we do not fully fund the State De-

partment, we should be prepared to buy more ammunition for our military.

The wisdom of our military leaders notwithstanding, Republicans appear to be dug in. They claim equal increases for both defense and nondefense programs would add too much to our deficit and burden our children. It is one over the other. It is hard to have somebody say that with a straight face in the wake of the President signing a tax bill to add \$1.5 trillion to our Nation's debt and to benefit primarily large corporations and the wealthiest Americans. You can't make the argument that we can't afford to take care of our domestic needs. It is simply not credible.

Budget negotiations are not the only place where Republicans haven't engaged in a productive way. President Trump's decision to end the DACA Program has put nearly 800,000 Dreamers in this country in an untenable position. The decision was as cruel as it was senseless. It may make a tweet that people look at, but if you are one of those Dreamers and you are on your way to school and are expecting a scholarship to college and you don't know if you are going to be in this country tomorrow, that is not a tweet.

The President should have worked with Congress. He should have found a permanent legislative solution while keeping DACA protections in place. I believe he terminated the program under false pretenses, yielding to xenophobic voices in his administration, and last night a Federal judge issued an order that said just that: Terminating DACA was not required under the law—far from it. But a court order that only temporarily halts the administration from dismantling DACA provides little comfort to Dreamers. They live each and every day uncertain of the future and with fear of deportation.

Now, I have heard Members of the Senate trying to decide at what time we are going to finish voting for the week. Their big fear is this: Are we going to make our flight home?

Dreamers have to worry if their flight is going to be out of this country and back to a country they don't even know. They worry if they will have to leave the country they know and love.

Dreamers are Americans in every way, except on paper. They were brought here as children, through no fault of their own. They are law-abiding members of our community. They attend school. They serve as doctors and teachers. They defend our homeland as brave men and women in uniform.

This is a crisis of the President's own making. Now, Congress needs to pick up the pieces. I hope, after the meeting yesterday, we will be allowed to pick up the pieces. We have spent months trying to find a path forward, but you can't find one if the administration keeps moving the goalposts.

We need to address the fate of the Dreamers now. You can take a poll in this country. The American people

want us to. Also, look at the broad bipartisan support on display yesterday at the White House. Republicans and Democrats want to fix the mess that the President created. A solution should be within our grasp.

The White House has made unreasonable demands, such as \$18 billion of American tax dollars to build a wall on the southern border, in exchange for Dreamers. The \$18 billion wall is last century's solution. It does nothing for this century.

If they really believe Mexico is going to pay for it, I have a solution. Open a bank account and, as Mexico sends us money, then use it to build a wall. Don't ask the American taxpayers, who are strapped at home, to pay for something the President says the Mexicans will pay for. Open an account, find out if they are telling the truth, let the money come into the account, and then build it.

But, worse, don't use the Dreamers as negotiable commodities. They are not commodities. They are human beings. They are people who deserve to have their dreams. Let's pass a bill—we could do it this week—protecting Dreamers now. Republicans control the House, the Senate, and the White House. This is their government.

We have a week and a half before the next continuing resolution expires. We have a lot to do. Let's get serious. Let's get to work. I am willing to work here every day, every night, right through the weekend. Let's get it done. We are not doing it for us. We are doing it for all the American people. Let's do it for all the American people—not for special interests, not for one party. Let's do it for all the American people. It could be done, if we want to.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MISSION: READINESS,
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA,
May 30, 2017.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: As retired admirals and generals, we know from our experience that no matter how much we spend to build our military and procure the latest and greatest technology, we will never be a secure nation if we do not have qualified and skilled men and women to fill the ranks of our Armed Forces. Therefore, investing in education for our youngest children, which is the foundation of our future national security, is essential. Accordingly, we urge Congress to prioritize investments in early childhood programs, including funding for Head Start, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and Preschool Development Grants in FY18 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

Mission: Readiness is the national security organization of retired top military leaders that recognize the strength of our military depends on our people. The stunning fact is that today, 71 percent of young adults ages 17 to 24 cannot qualify for military service because they are too poorly educated, medically or physically unfit, or have a disqualifying record of crime or drug abuse. If these issues are not addressed, the Nation risks a shortage of qualified recruits—one that will leave the country vulnerable for years to come.

Mounting research shows that the early years of life have an incredible impact on educational attainment, behaviors and health. High-quality early interventions can help vulnerable children succeed in school, stay on the right side of the law and achieve a healthy weight in the long-term. These outcomes open the doors for many career paths, including military service.

Long-term studies of early education programs show impressive differences in children's educational outcomes. A recent analysis of Head Start outcomes, comparing siblings who did versus did not attend the program, found participants showing increased probability of graduating from high school, attending college, and receiving a postsecondary credential. High-quality state preschool programs have also demonstrated lasting effects on students' elementary-school performance. New Jersey's preschool program, for example, found that children in the program were three-quarters of a year ahead in math and two-thirds of a year ahead in literacy in the fourth and fifth grades.

While Congress faces tough spending choices ahead to secure and protect our Nation, we know that the backbone of our military is, and will always be, our women and men in uniform. As a matter of national security, in order to grow the pool of eligible recruits, Congress must prioritize investments in early childhood programs, including funding for Head Start, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and Preschool Development Grants.

Signed by a combined 424 retired admirals, generals, and other former military members.

FEBRUARY 27, 2017.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Speaker of the House,
House of Representatives.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader,
House of Representatives.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader,
U.S. Senate.

Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,
Minority Leader,
U.S. Senate.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN, MINORITY LEADER PELOSI, MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL, AND MINORITY LEADER SCHUMER: As you and your colleagues address the federal budget for Fiscal Year 2018, we write as retired three and four star flag and general officers from all branches of the armed services to share our strong conviction that elevating and strengthening diplomacy and development alongside defense are critical to keeping America safe.

We know from our service in uniform that many of the crises our nation faces do not have military solutions alone—from confronting violent extremist groups like ISIS in the Middle East and North Africa to preventing pandemics like Ebola and stabilizing weak and fragile states that can lead to greater instability. There are 65 million displaced people today, the most since World War II, with consequences including refugee flows that are threatening America's strategic allies in Israel, Jordan, Turkey, and Europe.

The State Department, USAID, Millennium Challenge Corporation, Peace Corps and other development agencies are critical to preventing conflict and reducing the need to put our men and women in uniform in harm's way. As Secretary James Mattis said while Commander of U.S. Central Command, "If you don't fully fund the State Department, then I need to buy more ammunition." The military will lead the fight against ter-

rorism on the battlefield, but it needs strong civilian partners in the battle against the drivers of extremism—lack of opportunity, insecurity, injustice, and hopelessness.

We recognize that America's strategic investments in diplomacy and development—like all of U.S. investments—must be effective and accountable. Significant reforms have been undertaken since 9/11, many of which have been embodied in recent legislation in Congress with strong bipartisan support—on human trafficking, the rights of women and girls, trade and energy in Africa, wildlife trafficking, water, food security, and transparency and accountability.

We urge you to ensure that resources for the International Affairs Budget keep pace with the growing global threats and opportunities we face. Now is not the time to retreat.

cc: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.
cc: Secretary of Defense James Mattis.
cc: National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster.

Signed by a combined 121 retired admirals, generals, and other former military members.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, my colleague from Vermont, Senator BERNIE SANDERS, wrote what I feel was a terrific op-ed about why we should not and do not need to close down the government, why we can do our work and why we should, and that people rely on us, too.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the op-ed be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 8, 2018]

IT'S ON REPUBLICANS TO STOP A SHUTDOWN
(By Bernie Sanders)

I do not know why President Trump and the Republican Party—which controls the White House, the Senate and the House—are so willing to shut down the government. Maybe they think it will be good for them politically. Maybe they believe the chaos created by a government shutdown would be a welcome distraction from the ongoing Russia investigation being conducted by special counsel Robert S. Mueller III. Whatever the motives of the Republican leadership, one thing is clear: A government shutdown would be disastrous for the American people.

A shutdown would harm tens of millions of working-class families who would be unable to access vital services. It would disrupt the lives of hundreds of thousands of federal employees who would not receive the paychecks they expected. It would endanger members of the U.S. military who are putting their lives on the line defending our nation.

Congress has a responsibility to the American people to prevent a shutdown and work in a bipartisan manner to reach a fair budget agreement that addresses the very serious problems facing the working people of our country.

Unfortunately, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) ratcheted up threats of a government shutdown last week by insisting on ending the long-standing, bipartisan agreement over parity for defense and non-defense spending. This principle of parity is enormously important for working families and is something that cannot be terminated. If we do not act, funding for education, child care, health care, nutrition assistance, affordable housing and other important domestic programs will be at a 40-year low as a percentage of our economy.

As the middle class continues to shrink, cuts to non-defense spending would cause even worse economic pain to working families, the elderly, children, the sick and the most vulnerable. Meanwhile, as Trump and the Republicans demand an unbelievable \$100 billion increase in military spending over the next two years, the Defense Department has been inoculated from budget cuts over the past several years because of the Overseas Contingency Operations loophole—a special account not subject to spending caps established by Congress in 2011.

Providing parity in these budget negotiations means, among other things, fully funding—without offsets—the Children's Health Insurance Program for 9 million kids and community health centers for 27 million Americans. It means increased funding for the Social Security Administration and the Veterans Administration so they can provide guaranteed benefits to seniors and veterans who have earned them. It means keeping our obligations to more than 1.5 million workers and retirees who are about to lose a large part of the pensions they were promised. It means addressing the crisis of student debt, expanding child care, improving our crumbling infrastructure in rural America and protecting our national parks. It means providing help in the national struggle against opioid and heroin addiction.

Furthermore, as part of the budget negotiations, we must also provide adequate disaster relief to Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, as well as assistance to the Western states recovering from terrible wildfires.

Finally, Trump added even more fuel to the fire when he decided to use 800,000 "dreamers" as a bargaining chip for an \$18 billion wall that the overwhelming majority of Americans do not want. These dreamers are young people who have lived in this country for almost their entire lives. They go to school. They work. They serve in the U.S. military. The United States is their home; they know no other. For Trump and the Republican leadership to allow their legal status to expire, and to subject them to deportation, would be one of the cruelest acts in modern American history. It must not be allowed to happen.

This is not just my viewpoint. It's what the American people want. A recent Quinnipiac University poll showed that 77 percent of the American people, including a large majority of Republicans, support providing legal protections for the dreamers. The Republican Congress must act. A clean Dream Act must be signed into law as part of any budget agreement.

The American people are increasingly disgusted with a government that protects the interests of the wealthy and the powerful, while ignoring the needs of the vulnerable. The U.S. government must do more than provide huge tax breaks to billionaires, callously deport young people, greatly expand military spending, end net neutrality, deny the reality of climate change and threaten to cut Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, education and nutrition programs. We must pass a budget agreement that addresses the needs of Americans and not just billionaire campaign contributors.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, when we were debating the tax relief law at the end of last year, it was a very familiar debate in many ways.

Republicans came to the floor with facts and figures on how much extra money people were going to see in their pockets and their paychecks. Democrats came to the floor with the same old tired line that you always hear them talk about—the millionaires and billionaires.

Republicans pointed out economic studies that showed that workers right now pay more than 70 percent of the cost of corporate taxes. We talked about a study by the Tax Foundation that predicted that if we passed the tax relief bill, the average family would actually see a gain of about \$2,600 a year in their after-tax income. It was partly because of getting the tax cut and partly because their employers would then pass on much of the tax cut in higher wages. Democrats didn't believe it. They said that only rich people would benefit and that businesses would never share their tax savings with the workers. The Democratic leader said that "tax cuts like these benefit the wealthy and the powerful to the exclusion of the middle class."

Here we are. It is the month after we passed the tax relief bill, the tax reduction bill, and the tax simplification bill, and the question is, Who was right? The very day the tax bill passed in Congress, AT&T came out and said it was giving its workers a bonus. It said that 200,000 hard-working employees were going to get an extra \$1,000 each directly because of the new tax relief, tax reduction, tax cut bill. The Tax Foundation predicted that they would eventually get an extra \$2,600, and these people are already getting \$1,000 each on day one.

That has opened the floodgates to other companies doing the exact same thing and employees around the country experiencing the exact same thing. Businesses started sharing the tax savings with rank-and-file, middle-class workers, and it started on day one—not just the wealthy and the powerful, as Senator SCHUMER has predicted. Over 120 companies have said they are raising wages, giving out bonuses, and investing in their workers because of the tax law. It adds up to over \$980 million—\$980 million in the pockets of hard-working men and women around the country. How many people are seeing that? By last count, almost 1 million hard-working Americans—over 970,000 hard-working Americans have already gotten the good news.

There is more good news coming every day, with more announcements today. It is exactly what Republicans said would happen. It is happening for people who work at banks, who work at insurance companies, who work at airlines. It is happening for people who work at big companies, such as AT&T, Visa, and Comcast, but it is also happening for people who work at smaller companies, such as a winery in California and an aviation company in Texas. These are businesses and people in communities who are important parts of their communities and doing important jobs. The employees work hard, and now they are getting a share of the relief the Republicans had predicted they would get all along. And they are not just getting cash bonuses. There is a bank in Massachusetts called Berkshire Hills Bancorp. They announced last week that the people working there will be getting a \$1,000 bonus and will also see the minimum wage raised to \$15 an hour.

More is being invested in employee development and training programs. When you invest more in employee development and training programs, that means people are going to have additional skills that make them even more productive, better at their jobs, and qualify for even higher wages.

This bank in Massachusetts is also contributing an extra \$2 million to its charitable efforts, including scholarships. That helps improve the communities where the workers live and where they raise their families.

Democrats said it is not going to happen. It has happened. It is happening every day. They said that businesses would keep the money for themselves. That is not what we are seeing all across the country.

Ms. WARREN, the senior Senator from Massachusetts, went on PBS. The senior Senator from Massachusetts said that the idea that tax relief would lead to higher wages was, in her words, "the big lie that Republicans have been selling" for decades. She said that tax relief was "an insult to working families across America."

I would point out to Senator WARREN that many of the people who work at this bank are in her home State of Massachusetts. People have gotten wage increases. People have gotten additional money spent on training so they can become more valuable and make even more money. People have seen the minimum wage in that business go up. The workers getting these bonuses and raises in their pay are her constituents. Does she think these people are feeling insulted? Does she believe they have been insulted by getting a \$1,000 bonus and getting an increase in their salaries and having investments in terms of additional training? Is that an insult to those people? I don't think so. I bet they are feeling pretty glad to be supported and valued by their employer.

There is another business in Nevada, South Point Casino. Workers there are

receiving \$1 million total in bonuses. Previously, this business had actually planned to increase the share of health insurance costs that its employees would have to pay because health insurance costs have gone up.

Health insurance prices have skyrocketed ever since ObamaCare was passed. Companies have struggled with how to deal with these rising costs. Many have tried to pass these on to the employees.

This company in Nevada has said that because of the Republican tax relief law, they are canceling their plans to raise insurance costs—canceling their plans to raise the costs. That is more money in employees' pockets. The owner of the business said: "We want to be sure that our extended family is taken care of." That is the way these people think of the people who work for them—as part of their extended family. That is how employers are responding to tax relief all around the country, and that is what we said would happen.

We also predicted that one way businesses might deal with lower taxes would be to cut prices for consumers, let people who use their services or buy their products keep more of their hard-earned money. Americans are starting to see that prediction come true in the form of lower utility bills. Gas, electric, and water utilities across the country are getting ready to cut their rates because the taxes are going down under the law. Customers of the power company in Baltimore are going to receive millions of dollars in the form of lower rates. It has been a cold winter on the east coast, and a lower electric bill is going to be good news for a lot of people in that area. Customers are also likely to see the same thing in Missouri, South Carolina, and Louisiana.

These are the kinds of effects we are seeing all across the country, in various ways. It is all good news for consumers, all good news for people at home as a result of the tax reduction, tax relief, tax cuts passed by Republicans and signed by President Trump.

Americans are getting the benefits of tax relief. They are getting the benefit of regulatory relief and the pro-growth policies of Republicans in Congress and the Trump administration. People are seeing it in their daily lives. The polling company Gallup said that as soon as Donald Trump was elected President, economic confidence in this country soared. That is what the polls found. It has stayed positive almost without interruption ever since. It is the exact opposite of what polls were showing during the previous 8 years, in the previous administration. That was during the so-called economic recovery.

Why are people so optimistic now? It is because you can't open a newspaper or turn on a television without seeing more good news about the economy. New employment numbers came out last Friday. CNN had a headline: "U.S.