

that the research on them is done and done well.

When his nomination for the role of Secretary at HHS was announced, Mr. Kennedy stated:

We have a generational opportunity to bring together the greatest minds in science, medicine, industry, and government to put an end to the chronic disease epidemic facing Americans.

I agree with him. We have got to get into the business of making America healthy again.

Mr. Kennedy's dedication to this commitment has been apparent throughout the nomination process. He will bring a fresh perspective to healthcare, prioritizing consumer choice, information transparency, and early interventions to strengthen the well-being of all Americans.

He has been responsive to a wide variety of questions from Members on both sides of the aisle, appearing before two committees and answering hundreds of questions for the record, not to mention going through the extensive vetting process of the Finance Committee, which I chair, which is the most extensive vetting process that any candidate for a position in this administration goes through in the Senate.

While some of my colleagues continue to question his financial agreements, Mr. Kennedy met and then exceeded the requirements set forth by the Office of Government Ethics. Mr. Kennedy has participated in one of the most extensive processes, as I have said, that our Senate puts a nominee through and has succeeded in meeting those standards, and I encourage my colleagues to support his nomination.

HEALTHCARE FUNDING

Mr. President, now, before I close, I want to respond briefly to the comments that we have heard today here on the floor and all day yesterday in a long, long Budget Committee hearing to set up the first reconciliation legislation to come before the Congress.

It was said today that Republicans are going to take Medicaid away from children; they are going to take healthcare away from seniors. It was said yesterday that we were going to go after pretty much old people, young people, middle-aged people, and every other kind of people because we are going to destroy the support base that they have here in the Federal system.

The fact is, this is the politics of fear, the politics of claiming things that are going to happen which are not going to happen.

The reality is that yesterday's Budget Committee meeting was not on healthcare. There was nothing done in the meeting yesterday that would have done any of the things that you have heard on the floor today. What we did do yesterday was to set up a process so we can provide some significant extra spending authority to our government to close the border and deport the violent criminals who have come into our country in the millions in the last few

years. We had another provision in it to give significant new resources to our national defense so that we can build back our Department of Defense and the ability of our armed services members to have the technology and the equipment and be capable of responding to threats to our Nation.

And, finally, we restarted and charged up our use and engagement in producing America's energy in America so that we can get back into the business of being independent and not relying on other nations for our energy policy.

Those are the three things that we focused on in the committee yesterday. And, by the way, each one of those was a little bit costly, and every one of those was offset so that there was no increase in Federal spending.

Mr. President, I think we need to argue over facts when we get into these debates. We are going to have a tremendous number of debates. And, yes, we will debate on healthcare at some point, but yesterday and what we did yesterday was focused on the border, on national defense, and on reboosting our energy production in America.

I encourage a strong "yes" vote for Robert F. Kennedy to be the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 minute for an opportunity to respond to my colleague from Idaho.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would only say to my friend from Idaho that he says this is not going to happen, that people are going to be safe and seniors on Medicaid and the like will be safe—I would just say to my colleague, it starts today—today—in the other body of Congress, I would say to my colleague. The process of setting in motion these cuts to essential healthcare services begins today. We can read about it in the publications about the congressional schedule.

I look forward to working with my colleague when we can find common ground, but on this point that it is not going to happen and everybody is going to be safe, the efforts to cut these vital programs, including Medicaid, begins this morning in the other body.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have 30 seconds to just respond.

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

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I would simply say that we hear this every time we look at trying to address the spending excesses in our government.

And I will just say to my colleague and to everyone: We are not going to take healthcare away from children. We are not going to take healthcare

away from adults, from seniors, or from middle-aged people. We are not going to attack the benefits that people get under Medicare.

And, frankly, we will reform some of the spending, yes, but we will not do all of the terrible things that are being spun up to try to attack this effort to control the excessive spending in our government.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the fact that we are here right now—that we are even here right now—voting on this wildly unqualified conspiracy theorist to trust with one of the most life-or-death jobs, HHS Secretary, charged with protecting the health of every single American should be an affront to every Senator and the millions of Americans that will be impacted by this horrific nomination.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I implore you, think one more time, one last time, about this vote. My colleagues on the Republican side, you know the consequences of what you are doing. My colleagues on the Republican side, you know how dangerous this is. My colleagues on the other side, you know you are not putting your constituents, their health, their families first when you vote yes.

To quote my colleague the junior Senator from Texas just a few years ago, he said:

We need an expert, we need a scientist, we need someone who knows something about healthcare leading the Health and Human Services Department.

Well, which is Robert Kennedy? An expert? A scientist?

Or what about the senior Senator from Louisiana, the chair of the HELP Committee and a well-respected medical professional himself? A few years ago, here is what he said:

Previous HHS Secretaries have had a pharmaceutical industry background, been a State health commissioner, run health systems, have been governors—somebody who has had a background in actually administering the programs that HHS administers.

I ask my colleagues: Which of these qualifications does RFK possess?

You know the answer: None of them.

The question in front of this body today—the question in front of this body—is not simply to confirm RFK to run the Nation's Health Department. The question before us is very simple: Which is more important to you—the health and well-being of your constituents or blindly obeying orders, knowing full well the dangerous impacts your vote will enable?

I plead with you one more time: Rethink this issue. This is dangerous. This is wrong—very wrong.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON KENNEDY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Kennedy nomination?