

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader marks, the Senate will resume consideration of the health care reform legislation. Following remarks by the chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee or their designees, the next 2 hours will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The Republicans will control the first 30 minutes and the majority will control the second 30 minutes. The remaining time will be equally divided and used in alternating fashion. No amendments are in order during the controlled time. Rollcall votes could occur this afternoon, but at this stage we have no knowledge that we have worked anything out and don't know if we will. We will do our best to give Members as much notice as possible.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, much of this momentous health care debate revolves around numbers, as it should. We read them in reports, see them in charts, and hear about them in speeches. The state of health care in this country is in such a severe crisis that these numbers are often quite overwhelming. Today, I want to talk about 1 number—31. It has a special significance, especially today, along the course of this long, historic pursuit to make it possible for every American to have health insurance and good health.

First, let's discuss the future.

The number 31 is a powerful reminder of both the great opportunity before us and the great cost of inaction, a tangible illustration of what we stand to gain and what we stand to lose. When we pass this bill, 31 million Americans who today have no health insurance will have health insurance at long last. That means they no longer will have to put off the surgery they need and will be able to finally use prescriptions as prescribed—not half a pill every day, a whole pill every day. It means 31 million Americans will have a decent shot at a healthy life.

If we don't act, if we let misinformation confuse us or let distractions divert us or refuse to answer the American people's call to action, many more will suffer. In Nevada, like every other State, health insurance costs continue to climb. If we don't act, in just 6 years, the typical Nevada family will spend more than 31 percent of their income on health care premiums. Almost a third of every Nevadan's paycheck will go right to his or her insurance company. That number is even higher on average throughout the country but only if we do nothing.

Second, let's talk for just a little bit about today, the present.

Right now, every 31 minutes insurance companies terminate insurance for 300 Americans. Sometimes it is because you lost your job, because you lost your health care when you lost your job. Sometimes it is because you change your job but your health care company doesn't come along with your job change. And sometimes, at the very time you need it the most, the insurance company says: Sorry. We are not going to continue the insurance we have given you before. Because they want to make more money, a greedy health insurance company looks at your medical history and says: I am sorry, but we are going to take it away from you. You have no recourse. Maybe you have had high cholesterol your whole life or maybe acne as a child or you had a C-section as an adult. Health insurance companies have used all these reasons to drop someone's coverage. Maybe you had minor surgery 10 years ago or your mother had breast cancer or your father had heart disease. That is all it takes. We all know that, much like our Republican colleagues, insurance companies will use any excuse in the book to say no.

But that statistic, that every 31 minutes in America more than 300 people lose their health insurance coverage, what does that really mean? Imagine if the Senate gallery—600 people can be seated in our galleries—imagine if every single one of these seats was filled by a good American citizen who wanted to look over the Senate and they all had health care when they came in here. Imagine that each of them came this morning to watch their government work, to observe the proceedings here on the floor for an hour or so. Then each of them went on their way when that hour came to a close, but on their way out the door they were told that no longer would they have health care. That is what is happening right now in America, the wealthiest and greatest country in the world. Every 31 minutes, 300 more people lose their health coverage.

Third and finally, let's talk about the past. Let's put the historical moment upon us in the context of history.

It was 31 years ago this day that Senator Ted Kennedy gave one of the most profound and stirring speeches both of his remarkable life and in the history of the Senate and certainly in the history of our Nation's long health care debate. In that talk, he made an observation that rings just as true today as it did more than three decades ago. He said:

One of the most shameful things about modern America is that in our unbelievably rich land, the quality of the health care available to many of our people is unbelievably poor and the cost is unbelievably high.

Senator Kennedy observed how out of control costs were back in 1978 and warned how quickly they would rise if we did not act.

Well, we didn't act. In the past 31 years, health care costs have sky-

rocketed, and that is a gross understatement. The number of uninsured Americans has done the same. We have 50 million now uninsured and more bankruptcies than ever. Three out of five are because of medical expenses. Other countries have no bankruptcies because of medical expenses. Germany, France, Great Britain, Japan—they don't have bankruptcies because of health expenses. The cost of prescription drugs has doubled in just the past decade, and far fewer small businesses can afford to cover their workers. One more thing has happened: The resistance of the health insurance industry and congressional Republicans to change the American people's demand has only become more tone deaf and more intense.

If we don't act at this time, those terrible trends will only continue. I can hear Senator Kennedy now. I wasn't here 31 years ago, but I can hear him because I listened to him very closely for more than 31 years. Costs will continue to go up without end. More Americans who have health insurance today will lose it. More patients will die of diseases we know how to treat. As the crisis spirals, insurance company executives will laugh all the way to the bank. One company made \$1 billion last year; the chief executive took home \$100 million. How is that?

Much of the health care debate revolves around numbers, but at its heart, it is really about people. On December 9, 1978, 31 years ago, Senator Ted Kennedy asked us to recognize that health care is "a basic right for all, not just an expensive luxury for the few." A generation later, good health is still a luxury in this country. We are working day and night to see if we can help the generation that is here now and generations to come. If we don't, they will have the same memories 31 years from now as Senator Kennedy prophesied 31 years ago.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

HEALTH CARE: IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the American people have now seen what Democrats in Congress plan to do with seniors' health care. They have looked on in total disbelief as the majority voted again and again to slash Medicare by nearly \$½ trillion.

Incredibly, these cuts represent just part of the pain caused by this bill. In addition to punishing seniors, it would punish businesses. At a time when 1 out of 10 working Americans is looking for a job, this bill would hit employers

with job-killing new taxes and mandates, and it wouldn't do anything to lower long-term health care costs. This is the very last thing business owners expected from this bill. It is the last thing America needs in the midst of a recession. And it is just one of the reasons more and more business groups are stepping forward and speaking out against this job-killing bill.

Yesterday, I mentioned a letter signed by 10 major trade groups pleading with us not to approve this bill because of the effect it would have on business. Later in the day, the National Federation of Independent Business, one of the leaders in the small business community, released a letter explaining why they opposed the bill. They said any health care reform faces two tests for small businesses: Does it lower insurance costs, and will it increase the overall cost of doing business. According to them, the Senate bill fails both of these tests and therefore fails small business. They have seen the CBO conclude that this bill would lead to higher premiums. They have seen the billions of new taxes that would fall unfairly on small businesses. And they have seen the mandates and the fines that would kill jobs. They have concluded that this bill would actually be worse for small business than the current situation.

It is abundantly clear that the more Americans learn about this bill, the more they oppose it. Now we know the same goes for business. Businesses that can't insure workers face stiff fines resulting in lost wages and jobs, according to the independent Congressional Budget Office.

What is more, studies suggest that this so-called employer mandate would have a disproportionate impact on low-income, entry-level workers. At a time of 10 percent unemployment, we should be doing everything we can to create jobs. This bill would only lead to more lost jobs.

Medicare cuts are bad enough, but this bill doesn't just hurt seniors, it hurts the economy as well. That is why Americans overwhelmingly oppose it.

Speaking of how people feel about this bill, we see signs of opposition everywhere. Public opinion is overwhelming. In all the polls across the country, the American people are saying: Don't pass this bill.

Last month's gubernatorial elections in New Jersey and Virginia were a stinging rebuke to the Democratic approach of more spending, more debt, higher taxes, and endless bureaucracy.

There is a new development. Just yesterday—just yesterday in my home State—there was a special election for the State senate. Why would that be worthy of commentary on the Senate floor? Let me describe the situation. It is a 3-to-1 Democratic district. Because of State issues, the Democratic State administration was intensely interested in winning that seat. They spent \$1 million cumulatively—the candidate, the Democratic State party,

and an outside interest group—in support of the Democrat—\$1 million on one side of a State senate race in a rural area of my State.

On the other side was a Republican candidate, who was outspent 5 to 1—outspent 5 to 1 in a 3-to-1 Democratic district. The Republican candidate for the State senate won by 12 points. How did that happen? He had one message—one message: oppose the Reid bill, oppose what PELOSI is doing, oppose what the Democrats in Washington are doing.

In other words, the candidate who was outspent 5 to 1 in a district where he was outregistered 3 to 1 made the sole issue in the State senate race what is happening here in Washington on this bill that is on this floor.

That ought to tell you on the heels of the Virginia and New Jersey elections what is happening in this country. People have seen enough and heard enough, and they want it to stop.

The message is simple. This health care bill is a losing formula all around. That is the message Americans are sending loudly and clearly. The signs are everywhere. We saw it yesterday in my home State. It is time to stop this bill and start over.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

SERVICE MEMBERS HOME OWNERSHIP TAX ACT OF 2009

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3590, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3590) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the first-time home buyers credit in the case of members of the Armed Forces and certain other Federal employees, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 2786, in the nature of a substitute.

Dorgan modified amendment No. 2793 (to amendment No. 2786), to provide for the importation of prescription drugs.

Crapo motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Finance, with instructions.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, following any remarks of the chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee or their designees, for up to 10 minutes each, the next 2 hours will be for debate only, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the Republicans controlling the first 30 minutes, and the majority controlling the second 30 minutes, and with the remaining time equally divided and used in an alternating fashion.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, for the benefit of all Senators, let me lay out today's program.

It has been nearly 3 weeks since the majority leader moved to proceed to the health care reform bill. This is the 10th day of debate on the bill. The Senate has considered 18 amendments or motions. We have conducted 14 rollcall votes.

Today the Senate will debate the amendment by the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. DORGAN, on prescription drug reimportation. At the same time, we will debate the motion by the Senator from Idaho, Mr. CRAPO, on taxes.

Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. today will be for debate only, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. Following the remarks of the ranking member of the Finance Committee or his designee, the Republicans will control the first 30 minutes and the majority will control the second 30 minutes, with the remaining time equally divided and used in an alternating manner.

We are hopeful the Senate will be able to conduct votes on or in relation to a second-degree amendment to the Dorgan amendment, the Dorgan amendment itself, a side by side to the Crapo motion, and the Crapo motion itself. Thereafter, we expect to turn to another Democratic first-degree amendment and another Republican first-degree amendment. We are working on lining those up.

Over the course of the debate, there has been too much misinformation about what health care reform is and what it will do. I wish to set the record straight.

The goal of health care reform is to lower costs and provide quality, affordable coverage to American families, businesses, and workers. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, our bill, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, is a success.

According to the CBO, this bill provides health insurance coverage to 31 million more Americans. That is a big success. It lowers health insurance premiums. Despite what some have said, what some have claimed about premiums rising, that is not true. CBO says this legislation lowers health insurance premiums but for 7 percent, and that 7 percent gets much higher quality health care insurance than otherwise they would get. CBO also says this legislation reduces the Federal deficit by \$130 billion over the first 10 years—it reduces the Federal deficit by \$130 billion over the first 10 years.

In addition, as the President promised, this bill does not raise taxes on the middle class. In fact, this bill is a net tax cut. Over the next 10 years, this bill will provide a total of \$441 billion in tax credits to help American families buy quality, affordable health care coverage they can count on. That is a tax cut, a total of \$441 billion in tax cuts. The chart behind me indicates