

legislation. Small businesses such as ours must obtain as much available information as possible and do their best to live by the letter of the law. Then because this act is [complicated], hope and pray to not get penalized.

The law-abiding citizens of this country shouldn't have to pray for leniency from their own government. Last I checked, the government existed to help the public, not to antagonize it.

After ramming the law through Congress the way he did, ignoring the warnings all these things would happen, ignoring the will of the American people, honesty and transparency is the very least President Obama owes the American public at this point. What he needs to do, actually, is join with Republicans in agreeing to repeal this job-killing law. He needs to acknowledge the need to scrap it and replace it with the types of commonsense reforms that will lower cost, because this law is not working. I think he already knows that. Republicans certainly know it. And more and more Democrats are coming around to that realization too. So let's skip the scripted campaign events and actually work together to get something positive done for jobs, health care, and our economy. If President Obama is willing to work with us, we are here and ready to get to work.

I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each, and with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, following the leader's comments about the health care law, I found it interesting this morning to pick up the New York Times and see the headline above the fold, on the front page: "New Worries for Democrats on Health Law." In the very first sentence, it says:

Democrats are worried that major snags will be exploited by Republicans in next year's mid term elections.

I would say Democrats ought to be worried about the fact there are going to be major problems with this health

care law—a health care law that was forced through the Senate, forced through the House, without listening to the American people. That is the concern Democrats ought to have, because the American people's health is being jeopardized as a result of the law we are now facing.

So I come to the floor today to talk a little about what we have learned about the President's health care law over the last week—the week we have been away traveling our States, visiting with people at home. It has been all over the headlines and it is also on the minds of the American people. It certainly was in Wyoming. As I talk to colleagues from around the country, they have heard a lot about this as they traveled their home States.

When we go back home to our States, a lot of Senators hear from their constituents about how worried they are about how this specific law is going to affect their care, their jobs, and their paychecks. It is what I heard this last week, and it is no different than what I have heard week after week after week.

I practiced medicine for 25 years, and I hear from patients who are worried about a new layer of Washington bureaucrats who are going to be sitting now between them and their doctor. I hear from families who are worried they won't be able to keep the insurance they have now, even though the President promised them they would be able to keep the insurance they have if they like it. I hear from employers who are worried they won't be able to afford all of the law's new requirements. That is what people are telling me when I travel the State of Wyoming.

This is interesting. According to the newspaper "The Hill," which came out last week, Wednesday, May 1, I am not the only one. Here is the headline on the front page of the paper recently: "Botched ObamaCare Tops Dem Fears for '14.'"

Of course, that is a reference to the 2014 elections. The article talks about how anxious a lot of Washington Democrats are about the law they voted for. It talks about how, if the rest of the law's implementation doesn't go well, voters are going to know exactly who to blame.

Democratic candidates across the country know about it. That is why we see a Democratic candidate running today in this special congressional election in South Carolina trying to distance herself from the health care law. How did she do it? Let's turn the tape back to last week's debate in a congressional race: Special election, South Carolina. Here is what she had to say.

Obamacare is extremely problematic, it is expensive, it is a \$500 billion higher cost than we originally anticipated, it's cutting into Medicare benefits, and it's having companies lay off their employees because they are worried about the cost of it. That is extremely problematic.

That is a Democrat, running for Congress, who said that last week. The election is today.

Another Democrat, the chairman of the Energy Committee, had this to say.

There is a reason to be very concerned about what's going to happen with young people. If their premiums shoot up, I can tell you, that is going to wash into the United States Senate in a hurry.

Well, I agree with the chairman of the Senate Energy Committee. So what are the prospects for implementation? Well, one of the key architects of the law, another Democrat, says he sees "a huge train wreck coming down." That is what Senator BAUCUS said, and I think he is right; we are headed for a train wreck. That is what concerns the people I talk to—all those patients, the employers, the families I mentioned.

So what does the President have to say about this? Well, he was asked about it the other day at a press conference. The President's answer went on for more than 1,000 words, but it came down to one thing. He said:

For the 85 to 90 percent of Americans who already have health insurance, this thing has already happened. They do not have to worry about anything else.

Can that really be what the President thinks? He even repeated the idea a couple of times. He said 90 percent of Americans don't have to worry. I would say, with all due respect to the President, people are worried, and they have every right to worry. There are many parts of this law that still have not "already happened," in spite of what the President says. Those things are going to give the American people a lot more to worry about.

In fact, the Washington Post Fact Checker looked into what the President said—what the President claimed during his news conference. The Fact Checker found the President ignored the fact—completely ignored the fact—that 10 million people face the prospect of losing their current health care. The Fact Checker went on to cite a report from the Congressional Budget Office that said millions of people are going to be priced out of the insurance they have now—insurance that works for them. That is because of all the expensive extras the new government-approved insurance is going to have to cover, and which is also government mandated.

The Post pointed out:

... even unions, which were big supporters of the law, have grown wary because it may drive up costs for their health-care plans.

Twenty million people are covered by those plans the unions are worried about. The Washington Post Fact Checker also cited \$1 trillion in tax increases in the law, which is going to hurt a lot more people.

The Medicare Actuary predicts 15 percent of hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and home health agencies could leave the Medicare Program by 2019. These are our seniors. These are people who have continued to pay into the program. Yet we see these other groups saying we have had enough. Why? Because of the cuts to the programs and the payments the President

is counting on under his health care plan. Health insurance costs are continuing to go up, and that affects a lot of people, even though President Obama says they have nothing to worry about.

A leading Democratic Member of the Senate was interviewed the other day on New York television—his home State—and he conceded the health care law is contributing to those cost increases. But the President thinks it is nothing to worry about.

Here is how the New York Times last week summed up the President's attitude, under the headline: "Health Care Law Is 'Working Fine,' Obama Says in Addressing Criticism."

Working fine? Mr. President, tell that to the 22 million Americans who can't find a job or who can't get the full-time work they want. Tell that to the businesses that have to cut back their workers' hours. Why? Because of the health care law. They have to do that because the law says companies with more than 50 full-time employees have to provide this expensive one-size-fits-all health insurance. So we see small businesses have stopped hiring so they can stay below that number of employees. Other businesses are cutting full-time workers back to part-time status, and cutting their shifts to less than 30 hours a week.

Look at the latest jobs report that came out last Friday. In April, the number of people working part time because their hours have been cut back or because they can't find a full-time job across the country increased by 278,000. The shift to more part-time workers also means the average work-week is getting shorter. In April it dropped again. That is not good for our economy and it is not good for the workers. The statistics show we are going in the wrong direction.

The anecdotal evidence is even worse. Recently, the Regal movie theater chain sent a memo to all its employees saying it would roll back shifts to keep nonsalaried workers below that 30-hour cutoff. The company explained it was forced to take this step "to comply with the Affordable Care Act."

We are going to see more and more of this as employers start to figure out exactly how hard they are going to be hit by the expensive and burdensome health care law. Hiring during the past 4 years under President Obama has been weak, and it has also been concentrated in nonsalary fields such as retail.

We saw more of this in the latest jobs report. Nearly 1 out of every 13 jobs is now in "food services and drinking places." These are the kinds of places saying they are going to have to limit hiring and cut back shifts to less than 30 hours. Why? Because of the health care law; otherwise, they could go bankrupt trying to pay for expensive Washington-mandated insurance—insurance much more than is actually needed by their workers but insurance that is mandated by the law.

It is not just bars and restaurants. Let's look at the city of Long Beach in California. The Los Angeles Times reports the city of Long Beach is limiting most of its 1,600 part-time employees to less than 27 hours a week, on average. The city says if it doesn't cut the hours, the new health benefits would cost up to \$2 million more next year. The extra expense would trigger layoffs and cutbacks in city services.

It may be, in the end, that not every one of those 1,600 people will have his or her hours cut. Some of the city employees are probably already under the 30-hour limit. But for everyone else there is the uncertainty of whether their hours are going to be cut and when. The uncertainty is part of what is causing employers to hesitate or to cut now because nobody knows how bad this train wreck will actually be.

That is just one of the negative side effects of the President's health care law, but it is having ripple effects throughout our entire economy. We have seen wages continue to stagnate. We have seen awful economic growth. The new numbers for the first quarter GDP growth came out a few days ago. They show the economy grew at an annual rate of just 2½ percent. It has been nearly 4 years since the recession ended. We should have seen a much more robust economic recovery by now. The economy can't grow until we can get Americans back to work. People cannot get back to work if there are not more jobs, and employers cannot create enough jobs because of the health care law.

Here is a third thing the President said. He said: "Even if you do everything perfectly, there will still be glitches and bumps."

These are not glitches. These are people's jobs. These are people's lives. This is the health care of the American people. For a lot of American families, the President's health care law is not headed for a train wreck, it has already gone off the rails. They are not worried about what the health care law is going to do to them, they are busy worrying about what the health care law has already done. They know this law and the uncertainty it has created is an anchor on our economy. Here is how the Chicago Tribune put it in an editorial the other day. They asked the question:

Glitches or a train wreck?

Then they said:

Bet on the wreck. We're hurtling toward this massive restructuring of the health care insurance market, and no one has confidence about what will happen. There will be massive consequences, intended and unintended.

That is what the Chicago Tribune said.

The President says 90 percent of the American people have nothing to worry about from the health care law. He just doesn't get it. When I ask groups that I meet with back in Wyoming, I hear nearly 100 percent of the people say they expect to pay more under the President's health care law, and the

care they get—they expect lower quality and less available health care as a result of the law.

People are very concerned about what is going to happen, and they do not think it is going to be good for them or for their families.

A new poll just came out from the Kaiser Family Foundation. It found that only 35 percent of Americans have a favorable view of the President's health care law. It is less popular now than it was when it first passed. It has gone down, actually, 8 percentage points since just last November's election. More and more people are realizing what is in this law and how it will hurt them personally and they are not happy about it. For the President to say otherwise is absurd. He is either not paying attention to what the American people are trying to tell him or he is intentionally misrepresenting the facts.

The health care law is headed for a train wreck. Saying it is going fine is just the President's Washington spin. The American people deserve better than that. They deserve for the President to tell them the truth. They deserve to hear from the President, to have him come clean on how much his health care law is costing and how much damage it is doing to our economy.

The American people deserve a vote in Congress to repeal this disastrous law. Until this law is repealed, we are going to continue to see weak economic growth and the American people are going to continue to pay the price.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE SEQUESTER

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, on March 19 of this year, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported that Minnesota's tribal school districts were making plans to cut the school year short, increase class sizes, and let staff vacancies go unfilled. The White Earth Reservation is planning to consolidate its sixth, seventh, and eighth grades into a single class starting in the fall. This is happening because of the sequester.

On April 11, WDAZ, Channel 8 in Grand Forks, reported that special education programs in my State of Minnesota were going to be hit by a \$90 million cut. This is particularly painful in the Crookston, MN, school district, where 20 percent of students benefit from special education programming. This is happening because of the sequester.