

and go, but we like to think they always remain part of what we call the Leahy Family.

Will's own family is growing. He and his wife Marisha and their wonderful son Mark await the arrival of their newest member early next year, though Marcus—as we call him—will be the Big Brother. As his family grows, he is always going to be part of ours.

Marcelle and I wish Will the best.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I read the papers down here and across the country. It makes it look as if the issue of whether we are going to move forward with the implementation of the health care bill passed a few years ago is just about politics. It is just a political football that is being tossed back and forth between the two sides.

While the threats are empty, there is no way we are going to pass a continuing resolution that is not going to include funding of this vital health care law, it still gets an enormous amount of play out there. I think it is important for us to come down to the floor and explain to the American people that this issue is not political, that the health care law is not just a piece of paper.

The health care law is a lifeline to millions of families out there across America who have been absolutely drowning in health care costs and an inability to access the system over the past several decades. We did not pass this law to score political points. We did not do it to make ourselves feel good. We did it because we saw almost immeasurable human suffering out on the streets of America to which this place needed to respond.

It is not OK that in the most affluent, most powerful country in the world, about 15 percent of our society has the potential to go to bed sick every night simply because they cannot afford to see a doctor. It is certainly not OK that 50 percent of the bankruptcies in this country historically have been caused by the misfortune of an individual or a family member to get sick.

So I think it is time that when we talk about the implementation of the health care law, ObamaCare, whatever you want to call it, we are talking about consequences that are not political. They are consequences related to life or death.

That is not hyperbole. There are people out there every week dying because

they do not have access to our Nation's health care system which, if you can find it, is and can be the best health care system in the world.

The problem is there are far too many people who have no insurance and no way to access it or who are vastly underinsured and cannot get the right access to it. So I just want to talk for a minute about what this is going to mean to our constituents, to your neighbors, and what it would mean if, by some miracle of politics, the tea party gets its way and this bill was no longer the law of the land come next month.

Let me tell you what it already means for a senior citizen who is living on \$20,000 a year in New Britain, CT. Today, that senior citizen gets to walk in to their doctor to get a wellness visit. They do not have to pay anything out of pocket any longer. Previously they did. You would think that is not a lot of money. But for someone in Connecticut who is living on a fixed income or somebody in Delaware who is taking home a pretty meager Social Security check every month, the costs escalate when you are just trying to pay your rent or your mortgage, put food on the table, be able to put gas in your car to get back and forth to see your grandkids.

That extra expense of having to pay for preventive costs can actually make a difference.

For those seniors who have pretty high drug costs, one of the worst things this Congress did over the last 10 years was pass a prescription drug bill that had this doughnut hole sitting in the middle of it. If you paid for a bunch of drugs through the Medicare benefit, eventually you would have to start paying out of your own pocket. That could be thousands of dollars that senior citizens don't have.

This health care bill closes the doughnut hole, eliminates half of it almost overnight and then essentially eliminates it over time. That is thousands of dollars in savings for seniors. That is medication that, frankly, a lot of seniors would never have been able to buy but they will now be able to access because of this law.

Those things go away if Republicans get their way and ObamaCare is defunded. All of a sudden, if that happens, tomorrow senior citizens have to pay out of pocket for preventive costs. Seniors who have high drug costs all of a sudden have to go back to paying 100 percent of the cost of generics versus 50 percent, which is what they are paying now.

What about the average family of four who today in Connecticut is paying about \$605 a month for health care? Probably the health care plan is not that good to begin with. It probably has some significant holes in it in terms of what it will cover.

If this health care bill is implemented, which it will be, that number goes down from \$605 a month to \$286 a month for the average family of four in Connecticut.

Let me tell you, the average family of four in Connecticut living in Stamford, Bridgeport, Norwalk, or Norwich, could use that extra \$300 in savings to help save for college, to help put a bit more nutritious meal on the table, maybe to pay some back credit card bills. Three hundred dollars is a big deal. That is the big difference this health care bill will make, \$605 a month down to \$286 in Connecticut. It is a big difference. It is an even bigger difference because the health care plan they are going to get for \$286 a month is going to be a good one.

We are going to finally have some standardization when it comes to the benefits you are getting. When you buy the health care plan in Connecticut or wherever you are, you are going to know what you are getting. There is going to be a minimum set of benefits that is going to be covered. You are going to be able to know that when you buy insurance you are getting ambulatory patient services, coverage for hospitalization, coverage for maternity and newborn care, your prescription drugs are covered, lab services, and rehab benefits. Every plan is going to be able to cover these things, but not if the health care law were magically repealed.

All of a sudden people who were counting on that number going from \$600 to \$300 in Connecticut will be paying \$600, probably \$700, \$800, and they will continue to have to deal with a dizzying array of benefit packages, many of which simply don't measure up to what families need.

What about for Betty Berger? What does this mean for her? She is a constituent of mine in Meriden. She doesn't want anyone to ever have to go through what she went through. She and her husband had health care coverage for themselves and their kids through her husband's plan. Her husband switched jobs. In the week of time between when he was at his first job and his second job, their son was diagnosed with cancer. Her husband's second job identified it as a preexisting condition and effectively refused to cover the son.

The Bergers lost everything. They lost their house, they lost their car, they lost their savings simply because their son was diagnosed with cancer during the 1 week in which the husband wasn't employed. That will never, ever happen again after this bill is implemented. No insurance plan regulated under this bill can deny a family access for health care simply because one of their family members is sick. It is unconscionable that ever happened in this country, and it will not happen again if this bill is implemented. But if the Republicans get what they want and this bill is defunded, if this bill is repealed in that magical fantasy world, the example of the Bergers happens hundreds of thousands of times over across the country.

Lastly, what about the McCullough family, another family in Connecticut?

Little Kyle McCullough, when I first met him, was 8. He is probably now 10 or 11 years old. He has a very complicated disease for which he has to take \$3,000 injections. He will hit his lifetime limit in a matter of years and his family will be on the hook for every expense thereafter. The health care bill says no more annual, no more lifetime limits for health care coverage. You could have health care insurance that is going to take care of little Kyle McCullough for as long as he needs those injections, at whatever cost it is going to be.

It is insurance. Because for people who have a bad lot in life and have a big, complicated, expensive, illness they are going to be covered. If the health care bill is repealed, defunded, or whatever Republicans want to do, Kyle McCullough's family has to pay for that out of pocket for the rest of their life, as will thousands of other families like them.

That is what the stakes are. It is not a piece of paper. It is not a political football. It is life and death. It is hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars that hard-working families throughout this country desperately need and a health care system they need to be much more fair and much more compassionate.

It is not going to happen. It is political fantasy that Republicans are going to be able to defund or repeal the health care law as a consequence of the budget debates we are going to have over the next few weeks.

Let's be honest about what they are asking. They are asking for higher costs for seniors; they are asking for higher costs for middle-class families; they are asking for more bankruptcies; and they are asking for more misery for the thousands of families who are struggling to keep their heads above water when they deal with a complicated illness. That is the true reality of what is happening out there today in our health care system that is getting better by the day and will get even better if we move forward with the implementation of the health care law.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we continue to see that special interest groups remain undaunted in their efforts to ram through an immigration bill that will do real damage to the wages and job prospects of working Americans. That is just a plain fact. Consider the economic situation we find ourselves in now. Inflation-ad-

justed wages—that is the way to compare wages correctly over time—are lower today than they were in 1999. This is a steady decline. Actually, new numbers indicate they are lower than they have been since 1995. Working Americans are not having their wages go up. Their wages are going down. Median household income is lower today—median income, which is the best way to account for how families are doing—than it has been every single year since 1989. The size of the workforce today has shrunk to a 35-year low. We have the lowest workplace participation since 1975, and a record number of Americans are on welfare, including almost one in six on food stamps.

But we still have this determination, it seems, by our masters of the universe—people who know so much better—that what we really need in America is more workers. I would contend it is quite plain—with high unemployment and low job prospects, declining workplace participation, and declining wages—that what we have a shortage of is not workers, but we have a shortage of jobs, and we need to put our people in those jobs. That is a very simple concept, and I think it is undisputable.

That is why I care about this issue, and I think we have to talk about it. What we are talking about, remember now, is not the end of immigration. We are not talking about anything like that. We are talking about maintaining the greatest immigration flow of any nation in the world—maybe in the history of the world—with 1.1 million a year, plus a very generous guest worker program, where people come in just to work. And we can support that, but this bill that passed the Senate would have doubled the number of guest workers and increased by at least 50 percent—over 1.5 million a year—those coming permanently, in addition to legalizing 11 million who entered unlawfully. I truly believe that cannot be sustained and that this is good for the vast majority of the American people.

What we are seeing routinely is the one interest that is being omitted in all of the debate is the interest of the average working American—the average citizen of this country who goes to work every day. Everybody else has their interest represented. Everybody else is raising money, putting ads on the television, spinning this and spinning that, but the average guy is getting hammered by this. It just is so.

Let me cite some of the things that are going on, and I will run through this because I think it is important for us to know. Here in Politico, September 17, it starts off saying:

Nancy Pelosi is huddling with Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, top labor leaders and former AOL leader Steve Case in separate meetings this week as supporters of immigration reform try to revive the issue.

After they got so badly hammered by the American people when it passed through the Senate, it is now dead on arrival in the House and they are trying to revive it.

The article goes on to state:

House Republicans bristled when a group of Senators met with outside groups supporting immigration reform and formulated a campaign-style strategy to target more than 100 House Republicans over the August recess.

To try to pound them into submission, I guess.

Despite the blowback, Schumer, the so-called leader of the Gang of Eight—

The leader of the Gang of 8, to be frank

continued to work the phones over the August recess with a clear message: Please get active on immigration and back reform in the Republican-led House.

The article says he reached out to all his allies to tell them to go forward. He said:

We had a very good August. But I don't think it's dead by any stretch of the imagination.

Well, I think he does not want it dead and I think he is working hard to keep it alive, but somebody needs to make it clear to the American people that it is not dead and it could be revived. There are special interests out there, traditional Republican allies as well as strong Democratic and liberal activists who are pushing for this legislation.

Our friends say they want comprehensive immigration reform, but what does this phrase really mean? What does it really mean? Isn't that what we should ask? They want a large increase in future low-skilled immigration combined with immediate amnesty for those here illegally and a promise of enforcement in the future. And that promise was proven to be worthless.

The first legislation, which stayed on the floor for weeks and went through the committee, would only have reduced the illegal flow by about 25 percent. They promised it was the toughest bill in history, but the Congressional Budget Office—our independent analysis—proved it would have only minor impact on the illegality while doubling the number of guest workers, increasing substantially the number in terms of annual flow of immigrants who want to be here permanently, plus amnesty for the 11 million. Instead of what we would normally expect to legalize over 10 years—10 million—we would legalize 30 million under this bill. That is what they proposed here in the Senate. Well, I don't think this is good for America, and I don't think the American people want that to happen.

Notice that the one group not represented in all of this is U.S. citizens—the American people. In a recent interview, the President of the U.S. Chamber of Congress, Mr. Tom Donohue—a great American, and I know him and respect him—said this about what is going on, and people who are concerned about this issue need to pay attention because he is one of the driving forces. He is meeting with La Raza and meeting with the Democrats and Senator SCHUMER and meeting with others. He wants more workers, apparently.