

ObamaCare. All it does is shut down the government and keep ObamaCare funded. And none of us want that. That would be the results of filibustering.

Four years ago every Democrat voted for this bill and had the excuse that they did not know how it would turn out. Well, they do not have that excuse now. I think we deserve to know where they stand now. Four years ago every Senate Democrat worked to jam this bill through the Senate, over the loud objections of their constituents. As the implementation of this law proceeds, their constituents remain just as angry about it, and it is important for their Senators to go on record once again. We are giving them a do-over—a second chance, if you will. Do they stand with the people of their States, who do not want this law to be implemented, or did they double down on this failed experiment? That is the question.

Everybody knows where Republicans stand on this issue. We may be divided on some things. We may not always agree on tactics. But on the question of repealing ObamaCare, we are totally united.

This law should be defunded. That is what the House bill does. That is why I plan to support it. But if we are going to repeal ObamaCare, we are going to need some Democratic votes to do that. That is the only plan I have seen in this debate that will actually get us to our common goal of undoing the law.

For the sake of our constituents, we need to unite to achieve it. So this morning I would like to make a plea to our friends on the other side: Join us in taking it off the books and replacing it with the kind of commonsense, step-by-step reforms that lower costs and that Americans will actually embrace. 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 11:15 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak, though the minority has this first half, and ask the 10 minutes I speak be taken off the majority time at the end of morning business.

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

OBAMACARE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I listened closely to the statement made by

Senator MCCONNELL of Kentucky, the Republican Senate leader. I applaud him and other Senators who have spoken out against the so-called filibuster that has been initiated by the Senator from Texas and at least one other Senator.

It is not technically a filibuster, as Senator REID said, but the object is to slow down the business of the Senate and it is somewhat similar to a filibuster. We are going to have that occur today when Senator CRUZ takes the floor this afternoon to state his position that we should shut down the government if we fund ObamaCare.

That, to me, is an irresponsible position. It is irresponsible because the Senators who support the House position are playing high stakes poker with other people's money. To shut down the government is disastrous, not only for hundreds of thousands of Federal employees who do important work to keep America safe and to keep us a leading nation on the economy but also because it is at the expense of American jobs.

When Senator REID, the Democratic leader, came to the floor and read a statement from the Business Roundtable, he was reading from the strongest business group that usually, without fail, supports Republicans. That group put out a statement yesterday—the Business Roundtable, the leading business executives in our country—that to shut down the government or to fail to extend the debt ceiling is devastating to our economy. The words they used were “calamitous” and “catastrophic.” That is how they described the Republican strategy, which Senator CRUZ and others are bringing to the floor of the Senate today—catastrophic, calamitous.

Why in the world would we have the self-imposed crisis created by the threats of the House Republicans on the floor of the Senate today? They are entitled to a debate. They are entitled to state their position. That is their right as Senators representing their States. But they are not entitled to damage our economy and hurt innocent people and shut down the government. That is a petulant political position.

What we need to do is take a more positive approach to governing this country. Senator MCCONNELL also talked about ObamaCare, known as the health care reform bill, one of the most important bills the Senate has passed in modern times and one I was proud to support.

What he is basically calling for is the repeal of ObamaCare. What the Republicans are calling for is to repeal, for example, that provision in ObamaCare which says that health insurance companies cannot discriminate against people with preexisting conditions. If you happen to be in a family with a child who has diabetes, it may be impossible for you to buy health insurance under the old law. Under ObamaCare, your family cannot be dis-

criminated against. The Republicans want to eliminate that provision of ObamaCare when they call for abolishing that program.

Secondly, when they defund and eliminate ObamaCare, they are going to change that provision which guarantees there will be no limits on our health insurance policy coverage. Who knows what tomorrow's diagnosis will bring, what bills it will bring our family. But some health insurance policies have a limit on what they pay. When that limit is reached, people face bankruptcy and worse. ObamaCare stops that from happening. The Republicans want to repeal that.

ObamaCare also says that if your young son or daughter, fresh out of college, is looking for a job and has not found one, they can stay on your family health insurance plan until age 26. The Republicans want to repeal that, leaving more and more young people—millions across America—vulnerable without the protection of health insurance.

When it comes to Medicare prescription Part D, seniors, because of the so-called doughnut hole, were paying sums out of their own savings, their meager savings, and out of their own pockets, for prescription drugs. ObamaCare fills that doughnut hole and gives those seniors more peace of mind when it comes to prescription drugs. The Republicans want to repeal that help for our senior citizens.

Finally, they want to repeal the insurance exchanges. Today, every Member of Congress who uses the health insurance available to us as Senators and Congressman is part of the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program. Each year Senators, Republicans and Democrats, have an opportunity under an insurance exchange to pick the plan best for their family. That privilege is something we appreciate and want to make available for everyone across America. That is what ObamaCare does. The Republicans want to repeal it. Republican Senators want to keep using the insurance exchange for their families and their benefit. They do not want to extend to it our families across America. That is what repeal of ObamaCare would do.

Those are the specifics. For Senator MCCONNELL to come to the floor and challenge those of us who voted for ObamaCare as to whether we still stand by it, I do. Is it perfect? Of course not. There are changes that can be made to this law and should be made but in a constructive and positive fashion. This is not just about the peace of mind of people, families and businesses and others when it comes to health insurance, it is about our deficit. If we took the Republican approach of doing nothing when it comes to the cost of health care, sadly, we are condemning ourselves to deficits as far as the eye can see.

Sixty percent of our deficits and looming national debt relates to the increased cost of health care. If we took

the Republican approach of doing nothing, ultimately, it would mean that deficit, those debts, would be even larger for future generations. So ObamaCare is a step in the right direction.

Finally, let me say I understand what is going on now with several Members of the Senate Republican caucus who want to take to the floor and argue that we should shut down the government if it means funding ObamaCare. I think they are wrong on the merits. They are wrong politically. Both the Wall Street Journal and Karl Rove admonished them not to take this suicidal strategy. I think they are right. It is a strategy which is not appealing to anybody across America except a handful of extremists. Those who are Independents and others believe that funding our government is a basic responsibility of the House and the Senate. It is important we accept that responsibility.

Standing to make a speech on your beliefs on the floor is certainly every Senator's right, but let's get on with the business of government. We should vote today on this motion to proceed instead of wasting an entire day and into tomorrow. If we can get bipartisan consent, we can come to that motion quickly. The sooner we satisfy America that we are not going to shut down the government, the better it will be for our economy to continue to grow and create jobs.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Dakota.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the economy generally and the negative effect President Obama's policies are having on the economy and its health and particularly on middle-class families. I do not think we have to look very far to see that impact; in fact, this economy, which is growing at a very sluggish rate, the slowest recovery in 50 years. In other words, the economy, in terms of coming out of a recession that we had a few years ago, is recovering at a slower rate than in any recession in the past 50 years.

The labor participation rate—in other words, the number of people in the workforce—is at a lower level, percentage-wise, than it has been in 35 years. We have to go back to the administration of Jimmy Carter to find a time when the labor participation rate was at a lower level than it is today.

In fact, in the last year, of the jobs that have been created, 60 percent of those jobs are part-time jobs. We are not creating full-time jobs, we are creating part-time jobs, meaning that American workers are having to work more than one job to make ends meet and are having lower take-home pay. In fact, the take-home pay, the average household income, is down by about \$4,000 since the President took office. So we have lower take-home pay, fewer jobs, at least fewer full-time jobs, a slow, sluggish economy.

Why is that the case? Frankly, it is because the policies the President is putting in place are making it more expensive and more difficult to create jobs. Obviously, one of those policies that is having a profound impact on the economy is the President's health care law, which we refer to as ObamaCare. Since that bill was debated, going way back many years ago in the committees in the House and the Senate, a number of my colleagues and I have been raising concerns about the impact it would have.

For 4 years we have warned about the negative effects, such as increased premiums, which we are now saying is actually the case, reductions in jobs, fewer jobs. We have fewer jobs being created out there. More and more businesses are saying the reason they are not hiring people, the reason they are reducing their workforce is because of the mandates, the requirements, the uncertainty associated with ObamaCare.

People are losing access to health care that they like and were promised they would be able to keep, but for 4 years this President and his administration have looked the other way. Today, it seems that even the organizations that strongly supported the health care changes are coming to terms with their impact.

In fact, in 2009, the Cleveland Clinic hosted President Obama during the height of his sales pitch to the American people. That same Cleveland Clinic last week announced plans to cut some of its 44,000 employees because of ObamaCare. The Cleveland Clinic is the largest employer in Cleveland and the second largest employer in Ohio. They are the premier hospital and medical research center that is now paying for the consequences of ObamaCare.

The Cleveland Clinic is not the only company cutting jobs or wages in order to deal with increased costs due to ObamaCare. According to Investors Business Daily, more than 250 employers have cut jobs or slashed hours as a direct result of ObamaCare's high costs and job-killing regulations.

That should not come as any surprise, when a 2,700-page law has already yielded 20,000 pages of regulations. Democrats overpromised on ObamaCare. Now their signature piece of legislation is underdelivering. It turns out, if you like your health care plan, you do not necessarily get to keep it—just ask the employees at GE or at IBM or at UPS or at Walgreens or at Home Depot.

Not only has ObamaCare failed to make health care more affordable, but family premiums have actually jumped by more than \$2,500 since ObamaCare became law. According to the Chamber of Commerce, nearly three in four small businesses plan to fire workers or cut hours as a result of ObamaCare.

All of these negative effects are shaping public opinion of this law. ObamaCare continues to be a gut punch to middle-class families who are

already struggling and public opinion is at an alltime low.

In a recent NBC-Wall Street Journal poll, 12 percent of Americans believe the Democrat's signature law will have a positive effect on their families. According to a recent CNN-ORC International poll, nearly 60 percent of Americans now say they oppose ObamaCare, which is up 17 percent since January.

Americans are opposing this law for good reasons. There is a CMS Actuary report that says: Health care costs are going to rise by \$621 billion. Just yesterday, Forbes published an article. The title of the article was "ObamaCare Will Increase Health Spending By \$7,450 For A Typical Family of Four."

By taking information from the non-partisan Medicare Actuary report which was published last week, Forbes concluded that ObamaCare will boost health care spending by roughly \$621 billion above amounts that would be spent without the law.

By spreading across all American families, the increase in health care spending between 2014 and 2022 will amount to \$7,450 per family of four.

Juxtapose that against President Obama's promise that premiums will go down by \$2,500 per family.

A critical component of the health care law is the exchanges, which are scheduled to open for enrollment a mere 7 days from today. Yet it appears the administration is unprepared, yet again.

In fact, recently the Congressional Research Service reviewed the administration's missed deadlines during the first 3 years of the health care law's implementation. As of May 31, the administration has failed to meet a total of 41 out of 82, 50 percent—41 out of 82, 50 percent—of the law's deadlines. So it should be no surprise these exchanges aren't ready, which I find particularly concerning given the amount of personal information Americans will be required to provide to the government in order to apply for ObamaCare coverage through the exchanges. Personal data such as Social Security numbers, household income, and other tax return information will be entered into a Federal data services hub.

CMS recently signed a \$1.2 billion contract with a British company to sort and evaluate exchange applications containing personal financial data. According to the New York Times, the company "has little experience with the Department of Health and Human Services or the insurance marketplaces." Last year, congressional hearings uncovered that the company exposed more than 120,000 Federal Thrift Savings Plan enrollees to identity theft when personal financial data, including Social Security numbers, was stolen from a compromised computer. This is not exactly a track record that inspires confidence.