

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.

Only last week the Wall Street Journal reported a pricing glitch is affecting rollout of the exchange. This pricing glitch is producing wrong pricing information. To me, this is further evidence ObamaCare is not ready for prime time. Unfortunately for the American people, when it comes to ObamaCare, the worst is yet to come.

I would argue that it is time to give the economy—the American economy, middle-class families, middle-class workers—a break by permanently delaying the law for all Americans, not just a select few such as some of the waivers the President gives to his favorite constituencies but for all Americans so they are not subject to the harmful impact and harmful effects of this law.

ObamaCare is not the only one of President Obama's policies that is hurting the middle class. President Obama's war on affordable energy is also driving up energy costs and destroying jobs. During his first Presidential campaign, the President promised that under his energy policies, "electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket." Maybe people remember that statement, but he said "electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket" if he were elected President. Unlike his campaign promises to lower health care premiums and allow families to keep their health care plans, this is one promise the President has kept.

Last week the administration rolled out a new energy tax that will slash jobs, restrict access to abundant domestic energy, and make electricity rates skyrocket. When combined with other EPA regulations, the President's policies will destroy more than 500,000 jobs, cause a family to lose more than \$1,000 in annual income, and increase electricity prices by 20 percent.

These burdens hit lower and middle-income families the hardest. These families pay a much higher percentage of their income on energy costs. Forcing these families to pay an additional \$1,000 in energy costs each year reduces what they have available to buy a home, pay for their children's education, or simply make ends meet each month.

Even union laborers have expressed concern that the new energy tax is going to have a harmful impact on them and on their families. The head of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers said the tax will "threaten economic growth and America's energy future."

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the IBEW article.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Sept. 23, 2013]

EPA COAL RULE THREATENS ENERGY INDEPENDENCE, SAYS IBEW

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers President Edwin D. Hill issued the following statement today:

"The draft regulations issued by the Environmental Protection Agency regarding emissions from newly-constructed power plants threaten economic growth and America's energy future.

"The new rules would in effect stop the construction of new coal-fired power plants in the United States by enforcing emission-reduction goals that just aren't realistic using today's technology for carbon capture and sequestration.

"The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers remains strong supporters of clean coal technology and federal and industry investment to make it a realistic option for the energy industry. But in mandating new coal plants use technology that is not even commercially available or affordable, the EPA is unfairly singling out the coal industry and setting back efforts to grow the economy and promote energy independence.

"This means higher electricity bills for consumers and layoffs and economic slowdown for tens of thousands of working families that rely on the coal industry for employment.

"The EPA itself has estimated that mandating carbon capture and storage technology that still has not been deemed commercially viable would raise the cost of electricity by 80 percent.

"President Obama has always said he supports an 'all-of-the-above' energy policy that values a diverse energy portfolio, including coal. But by effectively banning the construction of new coal-fired plants, the EPA is forcing America into heavy reliance on the volatile natural gas market, abandoning our nation's largest fossil fuel base and large parts of coal-producing America along with it.

"Strong job growth and energy independence cannot be achieved without coal, a key part of our energy mix."

Mr. THUNE. The middle class has been hit hard by the Obama economy. Unemployment remains above 7 percent. Middle-class incomes have fallen, as I said, by over \$3,000 since the President took office. Unfortunately, the President's health care and energy policies not only destroy jobs but hit the middle class with higher health care and higher energy costs. It is time for Congress to act as a check to the President's agenda and to stop these policies before more hard-working families are further harmed.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, until ObamaCare was passed in 2010, virtually every major piece of legislation involving domestic reforms in this country has passed with solid bipartisan support, from Social Security to welfare reform. From Medicare to tax reform, from civil rights to No Child Left Behind, Presidents as different across the ideological spectrum as Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson, George W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton all understood there is more to making sure that legislation succeeds than just jamming it through on a partisan-line vote. Indeed, after the bill passes and it needs to be implemented, aren't you going to need that same kind of bipartisan support to see that the legislation is actually implemented and actually works for the benefit of the American people?

By contrast, during the health care debate in 2009 and 2010, President Obama did not seek any kind of genuine compromise with Republicans. Instead, he chose to ram it through on a controversial party-line vote which has generated nothing but division and bitterness since this legislation was first passed.

Four and a half years later, ObamaCare is more unpopular than ever. One recent poll showed that 68 percent of American voters, including a majority of Democrats, are concerned about how the law will affect their health care coverage. Medicare recipients are worried about losing access to their current doctors. Middle-class families are worried about losing their existing insurance coverage. Young people are worried about seeing their premiums skyrocket. People on Medicaid are worried that America's health care safety net is going to become even less effective at protecting the neediest and most vulnerable members of our society.

Day after day, not a day passes that we don't read stories about doctors who are dropping patients because of ObamaCare or employers who are ending the existing health care coverage their employees have because of ObamaCare or businesses that are slashing full-time work into part-time work because of ObamaCare. States are projecting a spike in the insurance premiums their people will pay, because of ObamaCare, in the individual market.

Even the New York Times is now acknowledging that because of ObamaCare "many insurers are significantly limiting the choice of doctors and hospitals available to consumers." Rather than expanded access to coverage, consumers are finding their choices are even more limited under ObamaCare.

The President's own Department of Health and Human Services has estimated that America already has a massive shortage of primary care doctors. Indeed, just to meet current needs, we will have to add more than 15,000. As a senior official at the American Academy of Family Physicians recently told Bloomberg News, "The shortfall of primary-care access is not an insignificant problem, and it is going to get worse."

That is bad news for all Americans, and it is especially bad news for Medicaid beneficiaries who already have a hard time finding providers who will accept their insurance. In my home State, 62 percent of primary care physicians aren't in a position to take any new Medicaid patients. This is because Medicaid pays them at a fraction of what private health insurance or even Medicare pays. So many doctors simply can't afford to see new Medicaid patients. Here you have the irony, the terrible irony, of a promise of coverage but no real access to a doctor.

Most physicians in Texas believe Medicaid is broken and should not be

used as a mechanism to expand coverage but, rather, as a last-resort safety net program. Unfortunately, by dumping millions of additional Americans into Medicaid without fixing it, ObamaCare will make our health care safety net even more fragile and even weaker.

Meanwhile, the President's health care law continues to discourage job creation and hamper our economic recovery. If there is one thing we need more than anything else in this country, it is a stronger economy, because greater economic growth means more jobs and more opportunity. Then the people who have simply given up looking for work because the economy is growing too slowly will begin to find work again.

As of last week more than 300 different employers had, according to Investor's Business Daily, "cut work hours or jobs, or otherwise shifted away from full-time to part-time staff because of ObamaCare."

The administration seems to realize this.

Particularly, the employer mandate is discouraging job creation and prompting many businesses to turn full-time jobs into part-time jobs. It is just common sense. ObamaCare gives businesses a powerful financial incentive to not hire more than 49 workers. What else did we think would happen? If you hire more than 49 workers, you have to pay a penalty, but if you are underneath that cap you don't.

In early July the administration unilaterally delayed enforcement of the employer mandate, recognizing this phenomenon of full-time work shifting to part-time work.

On the very same day it also announced it would not be verifying taxpayer eligibility for ObamaCare premium subsidies until 2015, even though the subsidies will begin flowing in 2014. What this means is people will qualify for taxpayer subsidies for their health care even though the Federal Government will not be verifying that information for a year. What do we expect to happen? I think one reasonable prediction is there will be massive fraud in the program.

Of course, we know the President again tried to go it alone and do this unilaterally without congressional action and, of course, without constitutional authority. If there is one question my constituents ask me back in Texas, it is how can the President keep ignoring the law? How can he keep issuing waivers or delaying the implementation of laws Congress has passed? My only answer to them is Congress could pass the laws, but the Constitution gives the President the authority—the sole authority in the executive branch—the sole authority to enforce them.

When the Attorney General and the executive branch refuse to enforce the laws, their only remedy is at the ballot box and possibly lawsuits filed by outside groups that may take many years

to be resolved. It is enormously frustrating to them, and they worry that our whole constitutional framework is being undermined by the administration and this White House selectively deciding which laws it is going to enforce and which it is not.

The President is basically saying ObamaCare means whatever I want it to be. He is showing contempt for the rule of law, contempt for the separation of powers, and our constitutional framework.

Look at the IRS. America's tax collection agency is in shambles due to the scandals that we all know way too much about. Unfortunately, this same organization is going to be the one that actually helps to implement ObamaCare. It will issue tax subsidies through the Federal exchanges, even though the law makes clear that only State exchanges qualify for these subsidies.

Americans are concerned also about how ObamaCare will affect their privacy rights. After all, the health care exchanges are scheduled to open exactly 1 week from today, but there hasn't been adequate time to even test the data security system.

Meanwhile, according to the Wall Street Journal, the government's software can't reliably determine how much people need to pay for coverage—not quite ready for prime time.

Finally, there is the issue of fraud. I mentioned that a moment ago. The ObamaCare subsidies start next year, but the government won't actually be verifying it until 2015. In other words, the President is effectively inviting people to game the system without fear of consequences.

Mr. President, the only way to effectively stop ObamaCare is to dismantle it entirely. That is why I strongly support the House bill that would defund ObamaCare and save the American people from this public policy train wreck. My colleagues stand ready to work with the President on smart patient-centered health care reforms that will actually reduce costs and improve access, but we refuse to help him salvage a law that has proven to be so unaffordable, unworkable, and so completely at odds with what the American people were told the law would do when this bill was passed.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, this morning, upon coming in, I found this morning's copy of *Politico* with the front-page headline: "ObamaCare: One Blow After Another," with a picture of a pill bottle that says: "Promises vs. Reality."

I am going to read a little bit of the way this article begins.

The ObamaCare that consumers will finally be able to sign up for next week is a long way from the health plan President Obama first pitched to the Nation. Millions of low-income Americans won't receive coverage. Many workers at small businesses

won't get a choice of insurance plans right away. Large employers won't need to provide insurance for another year. Far more States than expected won't run their own insurance marketplaces. And a growing number of workers won't get to keep their employer-provided coverage.

What is the President going to do about it? He made all the pitches, he made all the promises, and the American people have found out it is not true. So today President Obama is going to turn one more time to his so-called "secretary of explaining stuff" to sell his health care law. The President and former President Bill Clinton will be holding a pep rally attempting to convince people to sign up for health insurance in the new exchanges that open 1 week from today.

This health care law was supposed to be the signature achievement of the Obama Presidency. Why does the President need to call for backup to explain it? It was supposed to be overwhelmingly popular by now. Why does the Obama administration need reinforcements to sell it? Maybe because there are new polls out every day showing the new law is more unpopular than ever. In an NBC poll, only 31 percent of people said the President's health care law was a good idea. CNN found 57 percent opposed most or all of the proposals in the law.

Washington Democrats have been spinning their hardest but the American people know the health care law is unaffordable, it is unworkable, and it is very unpopular.

The last time Bill Clinton took to the stage to sell the health care law was about 3 weeks ago. This was the Washington Post headline on that speech. It said: "Clinton on Stump for Health Care Law: Obama has dispatched ex-president to drum up support as crucial stage nears."

Bill Clinton spoke for 50 minutes. He repeated a lot of the same old broken promises about what the law will do. He also gave the same old tired excuses for why it will fall short. He said there might be some glitches, there might be some unanticipated issues, but he said there were simple fixes to all of these. In 50 minutes—nearly an hour of talking—what Bill Clinton didn't do was honestly and seriously talk about the real problems with the Obama health care law. He never spoke directly to the American people who will be hurt by the law.

So when Bill Clinton takes to the stage again today I hope he will finally talk to some of those folks. For starters, he should speak to the workers who have had their work hours cut because of the law. It is a direct hit to their paychecks. It is happening all across the country. Many towns, counties, and school districts have had to cut back the hours of their workers. They need to keep more employees at a part-time status to reduce the burdens and the expenses of the health care law. They are limiting the hours they can pay bus drivers, librarians, coaches, substitute teachers, and other middle-class workers.

More than 250 different employers across the country have had to take steps to reduce the burden of the President's health care law. President Obama owes part-time workers an explanation and he owes them an apology. And if he won't do it, Bill Clinton should.

The last time he spoke, President Clinton failed to mention the serious economic consequences of the law. The Obama administration did the same thing. They said there was only anecdotal evidence. Well, the heads of three major labor unions happen to disagree with the President. They sent out a letter recently to Democrats in Congress warning about the damage the health care law is doing to their care and to their paychecks. They wrote this, saying the health care law—

... will shatter not only our hard-earned health benefits, but destroy the foundation of the 40-hour workweek that is the backbone of the American middle class.

Even the President's strongest supporters are being hurt by his health care law. They are getting hit in their paychecks and they are getting hit hard. I believe President Obama owes union members an explanation. And if he won't do it, Bill Clinton should.

Those union leaders are also upset that a lot of the generous health care plans they have had will have to be cut because of the law. They said the unintended consequences of the health care law are severe, and "perverse incentives are already creating nightmare scenarios." That is from the unions.

But it is not just the unions. Walgreen's, Home Depot, IBM, Sears, Darden Restaurants—one company after another has had to make changes to their insurance plans under the Obama health care law. President Obama owes those middle-class workers an explanation and he owes them an apology. And if he won't do it, today Bill Clinton should.

The next group President Clinton should talk to are the spouses who are losing their insurance coverage. The University of Virginia recently announced plans to drop spousal coverage for some of its employees. The school said it was the President's health care law, and that it would add \$7.3 million to the cost of its health plan in 2014.

In a recent memo to employees, the shipping company UPS said it also plans to exclude 15,000 spouses from its insurance plan. The company, of course, cited the health care law as the top reason for this switch. It said the increased expenses and the government mandates have made it too difficult to keep offering the benefit. So just as the University of Virginia, if a worker's husband or wife can get insurance from their other employer, then UPS won't be covering them.

President Obama owes those spouses an explanation. And if he won't do it, Bill Clinton should.

Finally, I hope President Clinton will be honest and speak directly to the young people who are going to see their

insurance premiums skyrocket. The health care law needs healthy young people to sign up for these exchanges in record numbers or the whole thing will collapse. That is what is at stake for the Obama administration. So they are spending millions of dollars in advertising to convince young healthy people to buy expensive Washington-approved insurance.

The Los Angeles Times ran a headline over the weekend: "Hollywood plays key role for health law: White House counts on the entertainment industry to promote its plan, especially to young people."

Hollywood celebrities and Bill Clinton are trying to convince young people to sign up. Many of those young people will be paying more, they will be buying coverage they may not need, and that might not be right for them. But they have to do it. They have to do it to help subsidize insurance for older individuals.

This is happening at the same time these young people can't find a job—can't get full-time work. Why? Well, a lot of that is due to the perverse incentives of the health care law. President Obama owes those young people an explanation and an apology. And if he won't do it, Bill Clinton should.

The American people deserve more than sound bites and talking points and excuses. They deserve better than what they have gotten under this terrible health care law. A few months ago the White House saw its employer mandate was a bad idea, so they delayed the mandate for 1 year. Republicans think all Americans deserve a delay.

There are real problems with this health care law and there are a lot of unanswered questions, a lot of unintended consequences, and a lot of ways the new health care law can do more harm than good for middle-class Americans. We should delay the law permanently and work out a better replacement that actually reforms health care the right way. The American people wanted health care reform. They wanted the care they need from a doctor they choose at a lower cost. But as the polls are showing, the American people know the Obama health care law didn't give them what they asked for.

President Obama failed to keep his promises and he has failed at changing the public's opinion. So now he is going to be Bill Clinton's warmup act in a last-ditch sales job. Well, what former President Clinton should do is talk to the American people, whom President Obama has ignored.

You only have to look at yesterday's New York Times front page: "Lower Premiums To Come At Cost Of Fewer Choices. Impact Of Health Care Law. In New Plans, Insurers Often Leave Out Many Providers."

The President said: If you like what you have, you can keep it. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor.

Even the California plan the President touts, when we look at what is of-

fered there in the insurance exchanges, the new network for thousands and thousands of people, tens of thousands of doctors across the State, it does not include the five medical centers of the University of California or the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center near Beverly Hills.

There is a furor in New Hampshire regarding the exclusion of 10 of the State's 26 hospitals from health plans that it will sell through the insurance exchange.

I think it is time for the President to admit the health care law is terribly flawed. Promise after promise has been broken, and it is time for Democrats and Republicans to work together to give the American public the care they need and deserve.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

HURTING MIDDLE CLASS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I want to make a few points this morning and say what I think is on the minds of many Americans.

There is a reason why the favorability rating of Congress is at 10 percent or less, and that is because the middle class of this country—the vast majority of our people—is hurting. They are worried about what kind of future their kids are going to have, and they look at Washington and they ask: What is going on?

Our Republican friends in the House on 42 separate occasions attempted to defund ObamaCare. And on 42 separate occasions, they failed. There was a Presidential election in which this issue of whether we expand health care to another 20 million Americans—whether we end the obscenity of pre-existing conditions, where people who have had serious health problems are denied health care; whether we make sure kids 26 years of age or younger are on their parents' health insurance plan, whether we do more for disease prevention, et cetera—was debated very heavily. Guess what. The Republican candidate who wanted to defund ObamaCare lost that election. Now, quite incredibly, what the Republicans are saying is: Yes, we failed 42 times, we lost the Presidential election, but now we are prepared to shut down the entire government unless we end this legislation.

Well, that is not going to happen. They are not going to end ObamaCare. Surely we need to improve it. I myself believe we need a Medicare-for-all single-payer program. And let us discuss how we can improve the program, how we can join the rest of the industrialized world in guaranteeing health care to all people as a right of citizenship, and how we end the absurdity in this country of spending twice as much per person on health care as do the people of any other country.