

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MAX SIEBEN BAUCUS TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. REID. Madam President, after having consulted with the Republican leader, I now ask unanimous consent to move to executive session to consider Calendar No. 629, the nomination of our friend MAX BAUCUS to be Ambassador to China; further, I ask that all time be yielded back, with all of the provisions under the previous order remaining in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of MAX SIEBEN BAUCUS, of Montana, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of MAX SIEBEN BAUCUS, of Montana, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China?

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second. There is a sufficient second. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BAUCUS (when his name was called). "Present."

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 25 Ex.]

YEAS—96

Alexander	Corker	Inhofe
Ayotte	Cornyn	Isakson
Baldwin	Crapo	Johanns
Barrasso	Cruz	Johnson (SD)
Begich	Donnelly	Johnson (WI)
Bennet	Durbin	Kaine
Blumenthal	Enzi	King
Blunt	Feinstein	Kirk
Booker	Fischer	Klobuchar
Boozman	Flake	Landrieu
Boxer	Franken	Leahy
Brown	Gillibrand	Lee
Burr	Graham	Levin
Cantwell	Grassley	Manchin
Cardin	Hagan	Markley
Carper	Harkin	McCain
Casey	Hatch	McCaskill
Chambliss	Heinrich	McConnell
Coats	Heitkamp	Menendez
Cochran	Heller	Merkley
Collins	Hirono	Mikulski
Coons	Hoeben	Murkowski

Murphy	Rubio	Thune
Murray	Sanders	Toomey
Nelson	Schatz	Udall (CO)
Paul	Schumer	Udall (NM)
Portman	Scott	Vitter
Pryor	Sessions	Warner
Reed	Shaheen	Warren
Reid	Shelby	Whitehouse
Risch	Stabenow	Wicker
Rockefeller	Tester	Wyden

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Baucus

NOT VOTING—3

Coburn

Moran

Roberts

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION ACT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Utah.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR MAX BAUCUS

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I am pleased that my colleague and very dear friend MAX BAUCUS was confirmed by this body the way he was. He will make a fine ambassador to China. We all know what an honorable, decent man he is. We all know of his abilities. We all know he has run a very tough committee, a very important committee, and has done a terrific job in doing so.

All I can say is I rise to wish my good friend Senator MAX BAUCUS good luck as he departs to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to China.

We are going to miss MAX. I do not think it is fair to this body, but, nevertheless, I think it is fair to our country because MAX will make a great ambassador. Senator BAUCUS first came to the Senate in 1978 and has the distinction of being Montana's longest serving Senator. So, as you can see, I have served with Senator BAUCUS for a long time—longer than the two of us would like to admit sometimes. Over the years I have come to respect his commitment both to his constituents and to his principles. Having worked side by side with him on the Senate Finance Committee, I know a lot about his constituents and his principles. He raises his constituents constantly and his principles I do not think he ever wavered.

If you want to understand my friend MAX BAUCUS's priorities, take a look at the sign on his Senate office desk. Like MAX, it is to the point and unequivocal. The sign says: "Montana comes first." Plain and simple, not much nuance, the language is pretty declarative.

That is MAX BAUCUS. In his long and distinguished Senate career, he always put the people of Montana first.

Both Senator BAUCUS and I are westerners, and westerners expect a certain amount of independence in their Senators. They expect us to work across

the aisle and attempt to solve problems and work together.

Of course, we Republicans tend to view that problem-solving as less government and Democrats tend to view that problem-solving as more government. That is not universal, but that is where the two sides usually come down. That being the case, MAX and I have often found ourselves on different sides of some of these issues. However, we share the desire to solve problems and, as MAX's sign says it, to put our constituents' interests first. Senator BAUCUS has always understood that notion very well, and I am here to declare that to everybody who listens.

As a result, his disposition—particularly as chairman of the Finance Committee—has been to try to find a way to a bipartisan yes rather than a partisan no. I have always respected him for that.

Over the last few years, as I have served along side MAX as the ranking member of the Finance Committee, I have greatly appreciated his willingness to put partisan differences aside for the greater good of all.

One adjective you could use to describe Senator BAUCUS is one that was used by his predecessor as chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The term I am thinking of is "indefatigable."

Whether it was preparing for and running a marathon, walking across the wide expanse of his home State, or working at one of the many jobs he regularly undertook back home on recess visits, MAX has been indefatigable.

He has been a tireless legislator. Just ask his staff. They will affirm that fact. As a Senator, he was always working. I have no doubt he will do the same as our Nation's Ambassador to China, arguably the most important diplomatic post in the world today.

As we saw today, the vote on his confirmation was not even close. That is because all of his colleagues know that MAX BAUCUS is a committed public servant who will serve the American people with competence, dignity, and a tireless commitment to our Nation and its interests.

I have to say I feel personally about this nominee and about this nomination. I like MAX very much. Having served with him on the Senate Finance Committee, he has always tried to be fair. He has always tried to consider the other's point of view. He has always tried to consider different ways of solving problems, and he has worked to do so. That is about all we can ask from our colleagues on the other side—either Democrats or Republicans.

I just want to at this time wish Senator BAUCUS and his lovely wife Melodee and, of course, his family the best of luck in this and all future endeavors.

As MAX departs the Senate, Senator BAUCUS leaves behind a great legacy

and very big shoes to fill. So at this particular point, I hesitate to say farewell to my friend MAX BAUCUS, but I only say farewell knowing that he is going to go on to a very important job for our country, where I think he will do a very good job.

He will have my support as he serves over there, and let's just hope that we on the Finance Committee can do a better job or at least an equivalent job to what Max has done to keep these very important issues on the most important committee of the Congress moving along.

I have nothing but respect for Max. I appreciate him very much. I am his friend, and I intend to continue this friendship as long as we both live.

With that, I congratulate Senator BAUCUS. I am proud of the Senator, and I intend to support him while he is there as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, the Chinese New Year began, as you probably know, just a couple days ago. I do not know a lot of words in Chinese, but among the words I have learned is how to say "Happy New Year." It is a new year in China. It is a new year for Chinese Americans in this country as well. I think the way we say "Happy New Year" is "Gong Xi Fa Cai." So I say that to my friend.

When word came out that MAX had been nominated by the President for this role, I say to our friend from Utah, I ran into MAX. He was about to go into an elevator, I think in the Hart Building, and I said: I know the President has nominated you for this, but you can't leave. We need your leadership on tax reform. We need your leadership on an SGR fix and doctors and all these other issues—trade policy. You can't leave now.

He said: Well, the President has nominated me.

I said: Well, I am going to put a hold on your nomination.

He was about to get in the elevator and go away, and he put his head back out and said: Oh no, you are not.

I was tempted. I was tempted because there is a lot he leaves. Actually, I think he leaves at a time when this place is working better. I am encouraged by that. Frankly, I am encouraged by the relationship the Senator has kindled with Senator HATCH. I am encouraged by the relationship the Senator has kindled with our friend DAVE CAMP from Michigan over in the House as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. MAX has set an example for the rest of us.

It is ironic the chairman of the committee and the ranking member are sitting here across the aisle from each other, but the two of them, in terms of providing personal examples—the kind of leadership we need; do as I do, not as I say—both of them are terrific at reaching across the aisle, doing what the people sent us to do: find principled compromises, get things done.

I wish to mention—let me just ask, and he can maybe nod his head—my recollection is, when we took up the issue of whether there should be a Medicare prescription drug program that was supported initially by Senator Kennedy and by President George W. Bush, I think in the end the version that prevailed was the version preferred by President Bush.

My recollection is that Senator BAUCUS may have gone across the aisle and supported that version of the bill and took me and probably another 10 or so Democrats with him—not an easy thing to do.

I remember going back to Delaware—I have told him this story before—I went back to Delaware and held a number of townhall meetings, if you will, on that issue and got excoriated, eviscerated by mostly Democrats. They would come and say: How could you do this? How could you support that prescription drug program, the Medicare Part D Program.

I explained I thought it was a principled compromise. I thought it would work. A year later, it has an 85-percent approval rating by the people who use it. For 6 or 7 straight years—it still has an 85-percent approval rating, a little higher than ours. If you look at how we are doing in terms of anticipated costs, it is 7 years under budget—under budget.

When the time came to try to find a compromise on comprehensive health care reform, I remember the Senator did not just work with 3 or 4 Republican colleagues on the Finance Committee—Senator GRASSLEY, Senator Snowe, Senator ENZI. The Senator did not work with them for a couple of days to try to find a principled compromise, Senator BAUCUS worked with them for weeks—I think months—to try to do that. Ultimately, the Senator was unsuccessful. But the Senator led us through a difficult mark-up in committee and on the floor. I know there are reservations in that law that we should tweak and change and make it better. But I think in the end, the Senator's leadership will be vindicated by a lot of Americans, just like we did with the Medicare prescription drug program. Obviously, that was the right thing to do. Thank you for the leadership you provided.

On a personal level, I would say, as Senator HATCH has said, this is a personal loss to me, and I know to many Democrats and Republicans. But the Senator leaves behind a wonderful legacy. You leave behind a whole lot of people, and they all have their resumes—no, not really. One or two of them may have. But you have a reputation as surrounding yourself with really good people. I sought to do that. I kind of learned from you and Senator HATCH, but I have always sought to surround myself by people smarter than me. My wife always says that it is not hard to find them.

You have done a great job surrounding yourself with terrific people.

They are here today sitting behind you, over in the Republican side, up in the galleries—a lot of love here. I hope you feel it from all of us.

In the Navy when people pull up their anchor and prepare to sail off into the sunset or the sunrise, whatever the case may be, we always like to say: Fair winds and a following sea. Fair winds and a following sea. That is what I wish to you and to Mel. We are going to miss you here, but we are really going to miss her. We hope we will have an opportunity to see you again and to work with you again.

We hope the same, that we will have an opportunity to see Mel. We think the world of her. Good luck to both of you. May God bless you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I just want to make a brief statement before Senator BAUCUS speaks and thank him for his service in the Senate, thank him for representing Montana, and accepting some of the toughest assignments in the Senate. We have a similarity in our background. We were both inspired to this position by Senators who served before us; in his case, Senator Mansfield, who was an extraordinary leader in the Senate and an extraordinary man when you consider his contribution to our country. He served in two world wars, if I am not mistaken, perhaps in three different branches of the military. It was just an exceptional life of public service which ended with his ambassadorship to Japan.

Now, Senator BAUCUS, who was inspired to public life by Senator Mansfield and followed in his footsteps in representing the State of Montana, serving in one of the highest leadership spots in the Senate, is now off to an ambassadorship, which, when you consider the ebb and flow of history, is singularly the most important ambassadorial assignment which the United States of America can make.

Today, this overwhelming bipartisan vote in the Senate is a fitting tribute to Senator MAX BAUCUS for his service, his friendship, and his continued dedication to be a servant of our Nation. I wish you and Mel the very best in this new assignment. We hope to get a chance to come to see you, and also, more importantly, to work with you, to make sure that our relationship with China remains strong for decades to come.

Thank you, MAX, for being such a great colleague and a friend.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to my colleague, MAX BAUCUS. Senator BAUCUS has been a leader in the areas of tax, trade, health, agriculture and the environment. I have served with him on the Finance Committee and the Agriculture Committee and have enjoyed working with him and learning from him. On the Finance Committee, Senator BAUCUS worked to improve the

health care of all Americans, most notably with the passage of the Affordable Care Act. It should also be noted, one of his last acts as a Senator today was to introduce a bipartisan and bicameral agreement on Medicare physician payment reform. On the Agriculture Committee, he was a passionate advocate for farmers. MAX leaves a legacy he should be proud of. I wish him well in China and thank him for his continued service.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I rise today to congratulate Senator MAX BAUCUS for his confirmation as Ambassador to the People's Republic of China. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve with him for several years in the Senate and on the Finance Committee, which he chairs.

MAX's entire life has been dedicated to public service. He was a member of the Montana House early in his career, before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and then the Senate in 1978. Few people have served as long in the Senate as MAX and led such an illustrious career here. MAX has been behind many landmark pieces of legislation that will benefit people's lives and the country for years to come. As chairman of the Finance Committee, he has influenced so many issues that have an impact on American families every day, from tax policy to pensions, health care, and education.

What is more, I have seen firsthand MAX's unique desire to work with people across the political spectrum. MAX's commonsense approach and collegial nature, learned from growing up on a ranch in Montana, has played a significant role in his ability to get things done. I hope that all Senators will learn from his example. In fact, I believe it is what we must do to best serve the people who elected us.

On behalf of all Floridians, I want to thank MAX for serving his country in the Senate for more than 3 decades. And I wish him well as he follows in the footsteps of his mentor, Senator Mike Mansfield, in becoming Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, MAX BAUCUS has never been afraid of the long haul. As the son of Montana ranchers, he knows the meaning of a long day's work. Before his 1996 election, he walked the length of Montana, more than 800 miles. In 2003, well past his 60th birthday, he ran a 50-mile ultra-marathon.

For the last three decades, I have had the privilege of running a different sort of marathon with MAX. We entered the Senate together after the election of 1978, and have served together since then. Today we mark the end of that marathon, as Senator BAUCUS prepares to become Ambassador Baucus and assume one of our Nation's most important diplomatic posts as ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, MAX BAUCUS has played a central role in some of the most impor-

tant legislative accomplishments of recent decades. He has helped bring health care coverage to millions of Americans by working toward establishment of the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Affordable Care Act. At the same time, he was worked tirelessly on issues of major importance to Montana, fighting to support his State's agriculture, and to support important educational and economic development initiatives.

He moves from this important role to another. Our relationship with China is more important than ever. Decisions made today will affect that relationship for decades to come. We are seeking to cement a positive relationship, one in which China joins with our friends and allies in the Asia-Pacific Region to support collective security and economic growth, and fosters stability through adhering to international norms. As the representative of the American people in Beijing, MAX will be instrumental in getting and keeping the U.S.-China relationship on a positive footing. He will be in a crucial position to help open Chinese markets to American goods.

I will miss MAX as a friend and a colleague, but I am grateful for his willingness to take on this job, to continue serving his Nation in a new and challenging capacity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Let me begin by thanking so many of my friends here: Senators DURBIN, CARPER, HATCH, and so many others. I must say to you, you have expressed your remarks, and they mean a lot to me. But they probably mean more to me than I think you know. They mean so much to me. Thank you for what you have said.

I would also like to begin by thanking the people of Montana. The people of Montana have given me the honor of representing them in the Congress for nearly 40 years. It is 39 now, and actually at the end of this year it will be 40 years. I want to thank President Obama very much for the opportunity to serve the American people as Ambassador to China.

I also want to recognize one of the best teammates and friends anyone could ever ask for, Senator JON TESTER. Thank you, JON. There is nothing greater in life than the love of family. I have been an incredibly lucky man. I would like to thank my wife Mel, my son Zeno, his wife Stephanie. I would also like to thank our children, Katie and Joey.

Mel, Zeno, Stephanie, Katie, and Joey, you inspire me daily. I am so grateful for each of you. I am so blessed to have Mel in my life. Her energy, her zest for life, her positive outlook, and her love have transformed me. I am the luckiest guy in the world because of Mel. Katie and Joey are clearly inspired by their mother. They are great kids, great achievers. I think the last grades I saw—one is in law

school and the other is in college—they had all As. Why? Because they are inspired by their mother. That is why they do so well, in the best sense of the term.

My son Zeno is one of the best kids parents could ever wish for. I am so proud of him. He is so smart, intelligent, and decent. He is currently an assistant U.S. attorney, living in Helena with his wife Stephanie. I am proud of him. You may have read about that case where a lady pushed her husband off a cliff in Glacier Park, MT. He is the prosecutor in that case.

I am very proud of him. Again, an indication of how proud I am of him, I learned more about that case reading the papers than I did from him. He keeps his cards close to his vest and is such a decent, smart, effective guy.

Stephanie, his wife, has jumped right into life in Montana. She is so talented and special, and the Helena community is very lucky to have her.

Thanks so much to my parents Jean and John Baucus. I wish they were here today.

Growing up on a ranch in Montana, you learn the simple lessons, the measure of life. You learn to cherish the land. It gets in your blood. You work hard. It is humbling. There is so much you cannot control working on a ranch. You cannot control the weather, whether it rains or it does not rain. You cannot control the prices. It gives you a little perspective to feel philosophical about life.

On the ranch you are charged also with nurturing life, nurturing livestock, producing a small part of nature's bounty. You have an obligation to learn as a rancher.

It is also the Montana way to love the outdoors. We are outdoors people in Montana. We hunt, we fish, we backpack, we hike, we grow crops, we raise livestock, we mine coal, and we cut timber. I think Montanans are more outdoor people than any other people in the country. We love it. It becomes part of our soul. Montana writer Bud Guthrie said: "Somehow I am part of it, a mortal partner to eternity."

I grew up this way, and it shored up my belief that we all have a moral obligation to our kids and grandkids when we leave this place, to leave it in as good a shape or in better shape than we found it. That internal compass is also a lasting gift from my parents and their love of the land. My mom is one of the most special persons one could have the privilege to know. She had the class of Grace Kelly and the spunk and grit of Katherine Hepburn. She was a combination of them both—an intelligent, classy lady, always positive, always upbeat. She was so intelligent and so well read. She even read more books than I did. I would come home at night and say: Mom, what are you reading?

She would tell me all about the book. One she was reading was President Obama's second book, which he wrote when he was a Senator. What do you think about that, mom?

Oh, it is a pretty good book. It has something to say. It is a little long, though.

Anyway, she wrote a note to the President and told him that she liked it. He wrote back, and they became pen pals. It was very nice.

Someone asked me last week what my mother would have thought of all this. She would have been incredibly excited and fascinated with the adventure ahead. Although I miss her every day—in fact, I talked to her every day at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. That hour goes by daily, but I keep thinking of her. She is always on my mind, as is my father. He loaded bombs on airplanes in Europe during World War II. A product of the Great Depression, he instilled in me the values of hard work, humility, and good faith. He worked me hard on the ranch, stacked a lot of hay, a lot of fencing. I know why he did it—for the right reasons. I did not complain because I knew that he was trying to raise me in the way that he hoped would help me later in life.

He was also such a decent person. No one ever spoke an ill word of my father—ever—such a rock solid character. The Republican Party in Montana asked him to run for Governor. He would not have anything to do with it. He did not care about that politics stuff. He was a rancher and liked what he was doing—ranching. I was so blessed to have such great parents.

Now 52 years ago, I was full of youthful idealism and curiosity about life beyond the ranch. I am sure it was caused somewhat by my parents. As a college student at Stanford, I decided to take a year off from my studies between my junior and senior year. I grabbed a knapsack and I hitchhiked around the world for 1 year. It was June-August 1962 to about August-September 1963.

I set out to visit countries I had only imagined—India, Japan, and China, to name a few. Before I departed, I had never thought about a life in public service. But that trip opened my eyes. It charted my course. I realized how people across the globe were interconnected. We are all in this together.

I saw the indispensable role that America plays as a leader on the world stage. It was so obvious. I knew right where I was, in the middle of the then-Belgian Congo, and I had an epiphany. All this realization hit me that we are so connected, that our natural resources are diminishing. Somehow we have to work better together if we are going to have better lives, not only for ourselves but for everyone on the globe. We are so connected.

The world is getting smaller. Our natural resources, in fact, are diminishing. We have to find a way to work better together. I returned home with a commitment to a career where I could improve the lives of my fellow Montanans and of all Americans. I would not be standing here today had it not been for that trip where I hitchhiked around the world, probably the most defining era of my life.

It was by far the most influential, and that 1 year set into motion a series of opportunities to serve that I would never have dreamed would take me back to China to represent the United States 50 years later. When I first ran for statewide office in 1973, no one knew me from Adam. I had been away from the State for many years.

I needed some advice. I had met Mike Mansfield when I was in high school. Instantly there was a man I totally respected and honored. He planted the seed, I know, for later interest in public service. It was not a defining moment, but I could tell at the time. He told me I should run; I should go back home and serve. I was then working at the SEC, just a short distance from here.

If I wanted to run for Congress, he said, it would take a lot of hard work, a lot of shoe leather, and a little bit of luck. I took his advice literally. I wore out as much shoe leather as I knew how. I walked the entire length of the State of Montana from Gardiner in the south—Gardiner is next to Yellowstone Park—up to the Yaak, a remote part of Montana near the Canadian border.

I got to know so many great people who later put me to work for them in the House. It was right in the middle of the Watergate political scandal. I joined a congressional class determined to restore good faith and trust in government, a terrific bunch of folks. They were just great, the “Watergate class.”

I think of my friends Chris Dodd, TOM HARKIN, Paul Simon, HENRY WAXMAN, and GEORGE MILLER, to name a few. It was a great class. They were running for office and serving for the right reasons.

When I hitchhiked around the globe as a young man, I also realized that no country has a monopoly on religion, culture or virtue. We are all together. We are all in this together. All people basically have the same dreams for their families—to put food on the table, to make ends meet, to take care of the kids, health care they could afford, and a clean environment for their families to explore and enjoy.

The Senate can make people's dreams a reality. We are so lucky as Americans to have this institution under our Constitution written by our very perceptive forefathers. It offers what few institutions in the world can boast—the opportunity to make a difference when history calls.

One of the greatest privileges I have had in this job is having one of the best staffs on the Hill. They are sitting behind me—some of them. They are terrific. They have always been ready with big ideas and dedication to answer history's call. If there is a vanguard of vision, my staff has been in it.

I might say, parenthetically, I am very proud of my staff for another reason. My office has spawned about six marriages. A woman or a man working in my office who didn't know each other until they started working in my

office got together and got married—six times—and they have all worked but for one. I don't know, but maybe I worked them too hard or maybe not hard enough. Whatever the reason, over the years after they were married, to see their kids, it has been terrific. It meant so much to me.

How many people have served since the time I have been here? The answer is 1,423 folks have worked on behalf of Montanans and on behalf of Americans, each person making a positive difference to the lives of others.

I thank them all very much.

In the years I have been in the Senate, we voted to send our sons and daughters to fight wars overseas, to protect our national security. I think the strongest human instinct is self-preservation. When you come from a beautiful place such as Montana, and from the wonderful people of our State, you will stop at nothing to defend them.

Montana has a tradition of answering the call to serve. As a matter of fact, more Montanans have volunteered for service per capita than nearly any state in the Nation.

My own nephew Phillip left college to enlist in the Marines. Before long he was far away in Anbar province serving our country. I loved Phillip as a father. His fellow marines looked to him for support, counsel, advice, and leadership as they faced many firefights. He made lance corporal in record time. He gave his life to our Nation and then returned to the family ranch for the very last time.

Phillip, like each one of the fallen heroes who bore our battles, left behind big dreams undone and countless broken hearts. Dust to dust—we still shudder.

President Lincoln concluded his second inaugural address with a call for the Nation to “care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan.” Lincoln's commitment remains our sacred duty today.

In the Senate we have made progress. We enacted tax credits for businesses that hire veterans and enacted a new GI bill. In the past 10 years Congress has doubled support for the VA. That is an investment of which we should be proud. Someone once wrote: “In war, there are no un wounded soldiers.” It is important we remember that. We make the tough votes to authorize war, and we must also find the courage to band together so that our troops return to a nation that honors their service.

Of all the bills that I have worked on, there are two that stand out. In 2010 we took the Montana National Guard's model of improved PTSD screening and expanded it nationwide. That concept of very meaningful PTSD screening began in Montana with the Montana National Guard. It worked so well I got it in the defense bill, and it is now being enacted nationwide to make sure we do the very best to protect our kids who are coming home.

The new screenings have resulted in more than 800,000 servicemembers who

have received personal and private one-on-one attention from a trained health care provider—both before and after deployment. Make no mistake; these screenings are saving lives.

I am also proud of another life-saving bill, the Affordable Care Act. It has been almost 4 years since President Obama signed that act into law, and in that time the law has done more than any other in the past half century to expand access to health coverage. It has provided 71 million Americans free preventive service. More than 6 million seniors have received discounts on vital prescription drugs.

More than 3 million young people have peace of mind knowing they will be allowed to stay on their parents' health plans. I am especially proud that now no child will ever be denied health care coverage because they had been sick or had a preexisting condition.

It has been a tough road. It has been a challenge I am proud to have taken on. While the debate over the law continues, I am proud to stand for it because it is helping millions of Americans.

Take Julie from Helena. Julie wrote to me that she is self-employed and finally able to get access to affordable, quality health care coverage because of the ACA.

John, from Missoula, has a daughter who survived ovarian cancer. Thanks to the ACA, she was able to stay on her parents' insurance and win her battle against cancer.

I am very proud of the role I played in helping to make health care more accessible and more affordable to many Americans.

In this Chamber there are brilliant men and women. With great respect to my colleagues, I insist that, in the most important respect, Senators are just ordinary people—big, not-so-big, tall, short, men and women. We are just people.

It is only through the extraordinary institution of the Senate that the ordinary people have the power to make life better for all Americans. We belong to something bigger than ourselves. When I first came to the Senate, Senators from opposing parties actually had lunch together in the private Senate dining room on the floor below the Chamber. It was called the inner sanctum.

In those daily rituals we learned about each other's families, home States, and developed real friendships. Senators dined together—no spouses, no staff, only Senators from both sides of the aisle. We compared notes, talked about our kids, and talked about our family. We talked about legislation, and we got to know each other. It was wonderful getting to know each other, to build trust, confidence, and understanding. It was the backbone of respect that we all relied upon.

Those friendships provided a refuge from the political firestorms and common ground to turn to after the wran-

gling over the disagreements of the day.

Now schedules are packed with caucus meetings and political fundraisers. The Senate is losing the spirit of friendship and forgiveness that, in the words of Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, "is the final oil of harmony in all human relations and which rests upon the contrite recognition that our actions and attitudes are inevitably interpreted in a different light by our friends as well as foes than we interpret them."

Friendship and forgiveness, that is the oil of human relations that brings us together. That private Senate dining room now carries only the echoes of the friendships once forged at its tables, and we are poorer for it. Yet there is nothing inevitable about this trend. The hope of this body lies in individual Senators. The heart set upon solutions to problems will win over the heart devising traps for political gain.

It is my honor to have friendships that formed the basis for solving some of the Nation's most difficult problems. I will never forget working together with the late Senator John Chafee on the Environment and Public Works Committee.

I worked with John for years before finding out he was an amazing war hero, decorated for his service in Korea. He didn't tell us that. It took years before I learned what a hero he was, a self-effacing kind of guy. Few people knew about his war record because he didn't brag about it or use it for political gain. He served because he believed in it, not because he thought he could benefit from it. Without a doubt, we need more John Chafees in the world.

Between 1989 and 1990, we sat together in a small room off the Senate floor, facing wave after wave of unhappy Senators—sometimes until 1 or 2 in the morning. He was the ranking Republican member of the EPW Committee. I became chairman of the Environmental Protection Subcommittee.

Together we met with our colleagues ironing out the compromises on acid rain, ozone depletion, air quality permits, and scores of other issues. Senator Chafee later became chairman of the full committee. We had our disagreements, but by-and-large under Senator Chafee's chairmanship I recall an oasis of civility.

That friendship helped us to pass the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. I am very proud of that effort. I was chairman of the committee at that time, and we finally got it.

It is a small point, but I always respected that he never raised his voice. He was always civil, always decent, always positive, upbeat, and trying to find a solution. John never lost his temper. He listened carefully to the other person's point of view.

He was a paragon of the Senate—as is my good friend from Iowa CHUCK GRASSLEY.

CHUCK and I began our friendship by deciding to meet weekly face-to-face in

his office or my office. It turned out to be 5:30 p.m. every Tuesday. We would bring our staffs together. Pretty soon our staffs were talking to each other. The health care staff after a while started talking to each other and our trade staff started talking to each other.

Heck, we were basically one office. If you were a fly on the wall, you would think this was one office where people were trying to get together to solve problems.

CHUCK is a Republican; I am a Democrat. We have differences, but our goal is to solve the problems and find solutions while adhering to our principles.

Our friendship led to a culture of respect and honesty in the Senate Finance Committee that helped us pass important agreements of other bills to expand trading opportunities with the rest of the world. I am especially proud of our work together to successfully shepherd the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. Senator CARPER referred to it just a short while ago.

I thank my good friend DAVE CAMP. DAVE is chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. We have worked together a lot over the past couple of years on tax reform. We have bridged the partisan divide to help pass the most recent highway bill and the payroll tax cut. DAVE is a super American and a wonderful man. I am very lucky to have him as a friend.

It has also been a terrific honor working with my good friend Senator ORRIN HATCH.

ORRIN, DAVE, and I recently worked together to introduce Trade Promotion Authority legislation to make Congress a full partner in trade negotiations. In trade, as in so many important areas, working together is the only way to get the job done. The Senator is a real American—ORRIN HATCH. He is the salt of Utah and cares about his State and his country. The Senator is a wonderful person to work with. I can't thank him enough.

Thank you, Senator HATCH.

In 1961, President-elect John F. Kennedy said: "Our governments, in every branch, at every level, national, State, and local, must be as a city on a hill—constructed and inhabited by men aware of their great trust and their great responsibilities."

If we are indeed a city on the Hill, it rests firmly on the bridges that Senators built when they faced even the deepest of divides. I mention my closest friendships across the aisle because it is those bridges that we lack the most today.

The epiphany I had as a young man hitchhiking around the world 52 years ago I believe is even more relevant today. Advances in technologies and communications have made us more interconnected as people than ever before.

The challenges of globalization bind us even more. Climate change—we are all in this together—terrorism, economic development, and education can

all be addressed with good faith and a commitment to finding common ground.

I am committed in my next chapter to meet these challenges. The United States-China relationship I believe is one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world that will shape global affairs for generations. We must get it right.

Thirty-eight years ago, Mike Mansfield said farewell to this institution by simply declaring: "There is a time to stay and a time to go."

Now, as I face my own crossroads, I am humbled to have the opportunity to follow in his footsteps.

As America's ambassador to Japan, Mansfield worked hard to strengthen and improve America's relationship throughout history. I will try to do the same.

Many of you know I love to run. I actually have my eye on the Beijing Marathon—but, to be more honest, maybe I will scale it down to a half-marathon, something a little shorter. When I think about my next endeavor, I am reminded of something a professional runner, Paul Tergat, once said:

Ask yourself: "Can I give more?" The answer is usually: Yes.

I can give more; we all can. I thank President Obama for asking me. I am indeed energized to serve America in this new role and to look at this as my sprint to the finish.

I trust Montanans to choose wisely as they have so well with my friend, the great Senator from Montana JON TESTER.

My final message is not for my esteemed peers but for the young people chasing their dreams across the Montana Hi-Line, searching for meaning through the Yellowstone River Valley or climbing toward their future along the Rocky Mountain Front.

The headlines paint the picture that there is no honor in public service. I disagree. I think the greatest noble human endeavor is service—service to friends, service to family, to church, to synagogue. Public service. The most noble human endeavor is service. So I urge you young folks to take up that challenge that politics is not an honorable profession. It is more than honorable. It is an obligation to serve. And I urge you to follow and serve. Choose to serve others. For me, it has been the honor of a lifetime. I am so lucky. And be ready—because history is calling.

It is with deep gratitude and respect that I say for the last time, with full faith in the highest forms of the Senate, I yield the floor. But before doing so, I just have to say I am not going anywhere. I am just taking a trip, maybe for a year or two, across the Pacific—just a trip. I will be coming back because we all are together on different journeys that we take.

I thank all of you, my colleagues.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, before he leaves the floor, I would like to

make a few comments about Senator BAUCUS.

Our part of the world has sent to the Senate some of our most distinguished and thoughtful Members. The great Pacific Northwest sent Wayne Morse from my home State to the Senate and Warren Magnuson and Scoop Jackson of Washington State. I note that Senator CANTWELL is here. Frank Church of Idaho was sent to Washington, and, of course, Mike Mansfield, Senator BAUCUS's mentor and pioneer in terms of promoting closer relations between our country and Asia. It is very fitting that this afternoon MAX BAUCUS joins that very special group of Senators from our part of the United States.

Second, I wish to caution Senators on one point, and the distinguished Senator from Utah and I have had a little bit of a laugh about this. MAX is exceptionally friendly, and he always tells Senators: Our paths are going to cross again. I look forward to working with you in the days ahead. And Senator HATCH and I just want everyone here in the Senate: However close you are to Senator BAUCUS, that doesn't mean every Senator can insist that MAX come back from China to talk about the latest twist in the debate about currency manipulation or some other issue.

The last point I want to mention is a personal one. When you are here in the Senate for more than three decades, you deal with scores of bills and amendments, and you talk about coalitions that were built to pass measures that needed to be passed, and from time to time you have to build a coalition to stop something that shouldn't be passed. But what I want to do—out of those thousands of bills and thousands of amendments—is talk about a special Baucus commitment that was especially important to me; that is, the needs of senior citizens.

MAX BAUCUS had some particularly celebrated wins in the fight for seniors—something in which the Presiding Officer of the Senate is very involved. The reality is that the person who did more to stop the privatization of Social Security here on the floor of the Senate was MAX BAUCUS. He was the one who led the coalition. He reached out to Senators on both sides and said: Look, of course we need to save more for private retirement savings, but we are going to do that on top of Social Security, not as a replacement for Social Security. So Senator BAUCUS was there building that coalition, making the case for why this special program, this intergenerational program has been so important for our country.

What I remember best about Senator BAUCUS and seniors, though, is when the Finance Committee blew the whistle on some of these ripoffs in supplements sold to older people, and eventually these supplements really became the delivery system for Medicare as we know it in much of the country. Senator CANTWELL and I, of course, know of the Medicare Advantage Program.

We would have hearings in the Finance Committee where we would hear about efforts in the private sector to sell health insurance to seniors that was not worth the paper on which it was written. I remember—kind of bringing my Gray Panther roots into the cause—talking to MAX about this change and that change, and it would get pretty dense pretty quickly. MAX just said: This is wrong. This is wrong, to rip senior citizens off this way. And we were able to get those changes. The consumer protections MAX BAUCUS locked into the law for the Nation's vulnerable seniors essentially remain the protections of today that are used as the model for senior rights.

Senator CANTWELL and I, since we are both on the committee, also know that in the budget discussions, when it came time for hard choices, MAX always made it a priority to stand up for what are known as the dual eligibles—the seniors who are the most vulnerable, the seniors who don't have political action committees and don't have clout and can't participate in all of what we normally think of as today's politics, from fundraising to all of the grassroots work.

I will close by saying that when you see somebody week in and week out stand for the most vulnerable people in society, such as those dual eligibles, you learn a lot about what a person feels strongly about, what values are important to them. So I want to close by saying that when we talk about the Senators from our part of the world—and Senator CANTWELL remembers so well the legendary Warren Magnuson and Scoop Jackson and Frank Church, who, by the way, was chair of the Senate Select Committee on Aging. I met him for the first time when I was director of the Gray Panthers and had a full head of hair and good looks. MAX was always on those issues, year after year after year.

I hope today, as we reflect on his contributions and certainly all the bills and amendments he offered in the Senate Finance Committee, people will also remember that there is a reason MAX belongs with those distinguished Senators I mentioned from the Pacific Northwest. It is because he had a heart for people, he had a heart for seniors, and he had the values that represent the best in public service.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I too come to the floor to say goodbye to our colleague from Montana and wish him well in his new endeavor as Ambassador to China—something the Pacific Northwest cares dearly about. So I know we will be working with him in his new capacity, but it really is a very historic moment for all of us and certainly for those of us in the Pacific Northwest.

I will never forget MAX and I riding back to our offices on the subway once

and talking about the Inland Empire. I think people thought we were making something up, but that is how we refer to our part of the country and the interior, which is this huge economy that is built on agriculture, built on trade, built on natural resources that we hold so dear and for which we fight.

To come to the Senate and to sit in the seat Scoop Jackson once held and think about how you will have the wherewithal and ability to remember all of what Scoop and Maggie and everybody fought for and to know the incarnation of that is right there in MAX BAUCUS, the person who worked with them, who saw them, and who then carried that torch on these important policy issues, to me, is so important to recognize today because he really is a legislator in the mold of Magnuson and Jackson.

I thank MAX for one thing in particular; that is, doing deals. Around here people sometimes criticize doing deals. But you know what. The art of compromise and moving our country forward requires that, and MAX became a model dealmaker in the context of these important policies on which we have worked, whether the modernization of the trade legislation for dislocated workers and expanding that program and making it more robust because it needed to be modernized or whether some of the changes we have made to CHIP, because I can tell you he certainly helped us in Washington State in making sure we had our fair share as regards the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Just speaking about CHIP in general, I can't say enough about CHIP as a program. When you get discouraged around here about what we are actually getting done or what problems we are solving, if you think of nothing else but CHIP—just the Children's Health Insurance Program—and literally giving health insurance to millions of children across America who wouldn't automatically get health insurance, this job is worth it right here and now. So I thank MAX for that.

Certainly on the Affordable Care Act I have often said that MAX applied his marathon skills to the patience of Job in actually crafting that legislation. I think we probably worked every day for 2 years in committee to make that legislation a reality, and it took a lot of patience. Many times late at night I would have lost my patience with the process and our colleagues, but MAX didn't, and the end result is that this country is moving forward on a major health care policy that I know 30 or 40 years from now will be in the same category as our other key programs such as Social Security and Medicare, as a foundation and as a base of what we are doing to make sure people have affordable health care in this country.

MAX, I thank you for the staff you hired as well because in the Finance Committee, while we didn't always agree on every single policy, they also came to the table ready to make things

happen, and I certainly appreciate that.

To my colleagues, I feel as though we really are losing a piece of our institution today and somebody who really understood the issues that I care about in the Pacific Northwest and somebody who really knew how to make things happen. I know our path forward is a new course on the Finance Committee, but I hope we will continue in the way that MAX brought forth issues because in the end it is about improving the lives of the people we represent, and that means we are not always going to agree, but we are going to have to put ideas on the table and we are going to have to get them passed into law.

So, MAX, as you go across the big Pacific, I know you will remember us, but we will be looking to you too because there is a lot we have to get done. I know that as you are running around Beijing, you will have that little app they now have that shows the level of pollution in Beijing that comes right off the U.S. Embassy, and you will be talking to the Chinese about how we have to work together on a clean energy strategy, and we will applaud you for that. But don't forget all of us here because there is a lot of work to be done. We are very proud to call you a former colleague and a key leader in the history of the Inland Empire. Thank you very much, MAX.

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

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

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, this past Sunday before the Super Bowl, President Obama sat down for an interview.

The President was asked about the failure of his healthcare.gov Web site. He talked about how there are always glitches with technology. But then he said this about the Web site:

It got fixed within a month and a half, it was up and running and now it's working the way it's supposed to.

According to the President of the United States, healthcare.gov is now "working the way it's supposed to." The President of the United States is in denial.

This is an incredible statement that he has made. I find it especially hard to believe, when I looked at the Washington Post the next morning—on Monday, the day after the President's interview where he said "it's working the way it's supposed to."

Then look at the headline on the front page of the Washington Post on Monday, "Health site can't handle appeals." Thousands of requests for fixes were filed but unprocessed.

Is this what the President of the United States means when he says now "it's working the way it's supposed to?" Is the President oblivious to what is happening in this country with his signature piece of legislation? According to this article:

Tens of thousands of people who discovered that HealthCare.gov made mistakes as they were signing up for a health care plan are confronting a new roadblock: The government cannot yet fix the errors.

The President may think it is perfect, but there are a lot of errors with his Web site. To say it is working the way it is supposed to, to me, cites Presidential denial.

"About 22,000 Americans," the article says. Is this what President Obama means when he says the Web site is working "the way it's supposed to"? I am talking about the front page of the Washington Post, above the fold. One woman quoted in the article says that because of a mistake by the Web site, she is paying \$100 a month more than she should and her deductible is \$4,000 too high. She said she needed the insurance, and now she is stuck.

Is this what President Obama thought the Web site was supposed to do? Was it supposed to overcharge this woman \$100 a month and set her deductible too high by \$4,000? Was it supposed to prevent her from appealing that mistake?

You are stuck with it. The mistake was made by the Web site. You are stuck. This is what the President seems to think.

Here is another headline which ran on Monday, the day after the President's interview. This was in the Anchorage Daily News in Alaska. It says, "Enroll Alaska mistakenly releases hundreds of e-mail addresses."

Alaska is one of the States which doesn't use their own exchange. They are part of the Federal exchange which uses healthcare.gov.

The article says:

Enroll Alaska mistakenly released about 300 email addresses Monday afternoon when an employee sent out a mass message about a healthcare.gov glitch without masking its recipients.

So, No. 1, there was a glitch. Remember, the President says now "it's working the way it's supposed to." So there was a glitch; they sent out an email explaining the glitch, and they end up releasing all of the people's personal email addresses when they are trying to point out to the incompetence of the Web site in the first place. Is this the way President Obama thinks things are supposed to work with his Web site?

This is the kind of security issue many of us have been worried about from the beginning. People have to provide a lot of their personal information in this Web site—financial information, health information, Social Security number, demographic information. There is not enough assurance the information is being properly protected.

So this time they sent out people's email addresses. Maybe next time they

will send out people's Social Security numbers, their health information, their financial information or other personal information.

That is not even talking about the lack of security on the Web site and whether hackers can break in and steal information. This is just human error, carelessness, and what people connected to the site are sending out by mistake. It is a very real concern.

For the President to not take this seriously—and I believe he doesn't take it seriously. I believe he has his head in the sand on all of this, and he has dug in on this law. For the President to not take this seriously and say that everything is going "the way it's supposed to" is a very real problem with the man in the White House.

That is just the Web site. That is what the President was talking about in the interview. What else about the health care law is working the way it is supposed to, I ask the Presiding Officer.

Is it the millions of people who will be dropping out of the labor force because of the law? On Tuesday morning, the Congressional Budget Office said that is exactly what is going to happen.

Here is how the papers reported it: The New York Times, "Health Care Law Projected to Cut the Labor Force."

The Wall Street Journal, "Health Law to Cut Into Labor Force."

Here is how The Hill put it, "ObamaCare will cost 2.5M workers by 2024."

Is this the way the Obama administration thinks its health care law is supposed to work? They are actually saying, yes, it is. Jason Furman, the President's top economist, said the health care law "is helping labor markets, is helping businesses, and is helping jobs."

Helping labor markets?

Because of the failed policies of the Obama administration, we have the lowest labor force participation rate in 35 years. People have given up looking for work. The administration should be doing all it can to increase the labor force participation, not celebrating that its health care law is going to push that number even lower.

Middle-class Americans all across this country have seen their insurance premiums go up significantly because of the health care law's costly mandates. They have seen their deductibles go up. Millions of hard-working Americans have had their insurance policies canceled. Why? Because of the law.

Now we are seeing people's personal information put at risk and we are seeing the damage the law is doing to the labor force.

President Obama says, "It's working just the way it's supposed to." The President is wrong. The Web site is not working and his health care law isn't working. It is not working for the American people.

The Web site is just the tip of the iceberg. People are finding they can't

keep their insurance even if they like it. The front page story today of the Wall Street Journal: It is harder to keep your doctor, even if you want to keep your doctor, in spite of the President's promise.

We have millions who have had their policies canceled, others losing their doctors. We have seen premium costs go up, we have seen deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses go up and the issue of security fraud.

The Web site is a problem. The Web site failure is just a tip of the iceberg. It is time to get rid of this terrible health care law and replace it with real reform before it does additional damage to America's labor force and to the American people.

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

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

IRAN

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak about one of our greatest national security challenges, which is a nuclear-armed Iran. I have long thought of it as a bipartisan national security issue, not a partisan political issue. At the end of the day, it is a national security issue we must approach in the spirit of bipartisanship and unity, which has been the spirit for which we have worked together on this matter. I hope we will not find ourselves in a partisan process trying to force a vote on a national security matter before its appropriate time.

Let me say at the outset that I support the administration's diplomatic efforts. I have always supported a two-track policy of diplomacy and sanctions. At the same time, I am convinced that we should only relieve pressure on Iran in exchange for verifiable concessions that will dismantle Iran's nuclear program. Our success should be measured in years, not months, and that it be done in such a way that alarm bells will sound from Vienna to Washington should Iran restart its program anytime in the next 20 to 30 years.

I am here to unequivocally state my intention as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee to make absolutely certain that any deal we may reach with Iran is verifiable, effective, and prevents them from ever developing even one nuclear weapon.

Let's remember that while we in the Senate are not at the negotiating table, we have a tremendous stake in the outcome and an obligation, as a separate coequal branch of government representing the American people, to provide oversight and an expression of what we expect as to what the end result would be. But it is the administration that is at the negotiating table

with the Iranians, not us. The administration is ultimately responsible for negotiating a deal to conclusively end Iran's illicit nuclear program. It is the administration that will have to come back to Congress and tell us whether Iran will continue to be a nuclear threshold state.

My sincere desire is for the administration to succeed. No one has worked harder for a peaceful outcome or to get Iran to comply with sanctions than I have. But based on the parameters described in the Joint Plan of Action and Iranian comments in the days that have followed, I am very concerned. This is not a "nothing ventured, nothing gained" enterprise. We have placed our incredibly effective international sanctions regime on the line without clearly defining the parameters of what we expect in a final agreement.

Ali Akbar Salehi, head of Iran's nuclear agency, spoke last month about the agreement on Iranian state television and said:

The iceberg of sanctions is melting while our centrifuges are also still working. This is our greatest achievement.

Well, it is my greatest fear.

Any final deal must require Iran to dismantle large portions of its illicit nuclear program. Any final deal must require Iran to halt its advanced centrifuge and research and development activities, reduce the vast majority of its 20,000 centrifuges, close the Fordo facility, stop the heavy-water reactor at Arak from ever possibly coming online, and it should require Iran's full disclosure of its nuclear activities, including its weaponization activities. For the good of the region and the world, Iran cannot remain a nuclear weapon threshold state, period.

A final agreement should move back the timeline for a nuclear breakout capability to beyond a year and insist on a long-term, 20-year-plus monitoring and verification agreement. That is the only way to force Iran to abandon its nuclear weapons aspirations. Anything else will leave Iran on the cusp of becoming a nuclear state while it rebuilds its economy and improves its ability to break out at a future day.

David Albright, a respected former International Atomic Energy Agency inspector, said that for Iran to move from an interim to a final agreement, it would have to close the Fordo facility and remove between 15,000 and 16,000 of its 20,000 centrifuges. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he had a long list of elements that he thinks are critical toward a final agreement.

However, even after such dramatic steps, we are looking at a breakout time of between 6 and 8 months—depending on whether Iran has access to just 3.5 percent enriched uranium or access to 20 percent enriched uranium. DENNIS ROSS, one of America's preeminent diplomats and foreign policy analysts who has served Republican and Democratic Presidents alike, has said Iran should retain no more than 10

percent of its centrifuges, which is, in essence, no more than 2,000.

These estimates are crucial because at the end of the day we in this body will have to decide whether this is enough to merit terminating sanctions. Is a 6-month delay in Iran's breakout ability enough, even when combined with a robust 20-year inspection and verification regime—understanding that in allowing Iran to retain its enrichment capabilities, there will always be a risk of breakout. It may be that this is the only deal we can get. The real question is whether it is a good enough deal to merit terminating sanctions.

My concern is that the Joint Plan of Action does not speak to these recommended centrifuge limitations DENNIS ROSS or Dr. Albright suggests. In fact, Iran has already made its views about the limitations of the agreement quite clear. What the Joint Plan of Action does concede is that Iran will not only retain its ability to enrich but will be allowed a mutually agreed upon enrichment program.

Here is what Iran's Foreign Minister Zarif said about the interim agreement:

The White House tries to portray it as basically a dismantling of Iran's nuclear program . . . we are not dismantling any centrifuges, we are not dismantling any equipment, we're simply not producing, not enriching over 5 percent.

That is a quote from their Foreign Minister.

What does President Ruhani of Iran say? He was adamant in an interview on CNN in saying that Iran will not be dismantling its centrifuges. He said:

We are determined to provide for the nuclear fuel of such plants inside the country, at the hands of local Iranian scientists. We are going to follow on this path.

On that program, Fareed Zakaria asked him:

So there will be no destruction of centrifuges, of existing centrifuges.

President Ruhani said:

No. No, not at all.

In fact, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said that Iran would comply with the interim agreement by removing the connections between networks of centrifuges that have been used to enrich uranium to 20 percent so they can enrich only to 5 percent. Then he said:

These interconnections can be removed in a day and connected again in a day.

That is not the type of safeguard we need. Clearly, their intention—at least in these negotiations—is to retain their capability notwithstanding the agreement. That is pretty clear to me.

In January President Ruhani tweeted:

Our relationship with the world is based on Iranian nation's interest. In Geneva agreement world powers surrendered to Iranian nation's will.

When this tweet was broadly reported on, President Rouhani took it down. In a speech when Rouhani was leaving his post as Iran's chief negotiator in 2005, he said:

While we were talking with the Europeans in Tehran, we were installing equipment in parts of the facility in Isfahan— which is a uranium conversion facility—

which is a uranium conversion facility—

but we still had a long way to go to complete the project. In fact, by creating a calm environment, we were able to complete the work on Isfahan.

In essence, they were able to complete the work of the uranium conversion.

Now, sometimes I think it is worthy to listen to the words of these individuals now in leadership positions to understand the mindset of the negotiations that are taking place. Basically, what President Rouhani was saying is that he was able to get the West to not pursue sanctions and ultimately to not take any other action, as Iran continued to march forward with its nuclear program. I find comments such as that deeply troubling. I find troubling the fact that even after an agreement was reached in November, the Iranians reportedly fired a rocket into space to improve their ability to develop a long-range ballistic missile system.

In an interview with Reuters, U.S. missile defense expert Rikki Ellison said of the report:

If it's true, they continue to expand and grow their long range missile capabilities regardless of their overture to the West with self-reduction of their nuclear capabilities . . .

These realities—these statements, these actions—are just as much about the spirit of the interim deal as it is about the letter of the deal, and it places in question the political will of the Iranians and our ability to reach a verifiable agreement with those who have been willing to so deceive.

In terms of both Iran's political will and its ballistic missile capability, James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, said the following:

Tehran has made technical progress in a number of areas—including uranium enrichment, nuclear reactors, and ballistic missiles—from which it could draw if it decided to build missile-deliverable nuclear weapons. These technical advancements strengthen our assessment that Iran has the scientific, technical, and industrial capacity to eventually produce nuclear weapons. This makes the central issue its political will to do so.

So what the analysis reveals is that years of obfuscation, delay, and endless negotiation has brought the Iranians to the point of having, according to the Director of National Intelligence, the scientific, technical, and industrial capacity to eventually produce nuclear weapons. As to their will to do so, I would say that if they are—I would say that what they are hiding at the Parchin Military Industrial Complex, if revealed, would clearly show their will to build a nuclear bomb. The only thing that has thwarted that will is crippling sanctions. The Iranians have fought back every step of the way with the international community getting access to Parchin, and the world largely views Parchin as the place in which

their militarization of nuclear energy—therefore nuclear weapons—was taking place. In my view, the Iranians are negotiating in bad faith, as we have seen them do in the past. They say one thing behind closed doors in Geneva and say another thing publicly. I know the administration will say this is what President Rouhani needs to do for his domestic audience.

But his deeds need to go beyond his words, and they need to be verifiable. In fact, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, David Albright, of the Institute of Science and International Security and an expert on the proliferation of atomic weapons, said that under the interim agreement:

The breakout times, if Iran used its currently installed centrifuges, would lengthen from at least 1 to 1.6 months to at least 1.9 to 2.2 months.

That effectively means that without dismantling currently installed centrifuges, Iran has a breakout time of 6 to 8 weeks, unless we demand real consequences in a final agreement—6 to 8 weeks. That figure is going to be very important, as I will get to later, because 6 to 8 weeks is a lot shorter than the time frame to invoke and make sanctions effective.

Another major concern is the Arak heavy water reactor—a facility that DENNIS ROSS has described as “grossly inefficient for producing electricity, but not for generating plutonium for nuclear weapons.”

The Senate was told that this facility would be taken care of in the final agreement, which most of us understood to mean that it would be dismantled. Now, the Joint Plan of Action and the implementing agreement suggest something less than dismantlement. The implementing agreement says that Iran has to “take steps to agree with the IAEA on the conclusion of a safeguards approach to Arak.” Iran has not provided required design information for Arak, as we thought was going to happen, and in the final agreement it seems possible that either Iran will be allowed to complete the reactor and operate it under IAEA safeguards or the reactor will simply be mothballed—not dismantled but mothballed—or perhaps converted to a light-water facility that carries its own risks.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister has said that the Arak reactor is the fastest way to get the material for a nuclear weapon. So while I understand the agreement also does not permit Iran to construct a related reprocessing facility at this time, the implication of the agreement's language is that the final agreement will not actually require the dismantling of the Arak reactor, meaning that Arak could, at a future date, give Iran a relatively quick path to a weapon, and I find that simply unacceptable.

In my view, Iran's strategy, consistent with their past approaches that

have brought them to a nuclear threshold state, is to use these negotiations to mothball its nuclear infrastructure program just long enough to undo the international sanctions regime.

Iran is insisting on keeping core elements of its programs—enrichment, the Arak heavy-water reactor, the underground Fordow facility, and the Parchin military complex. While they may be subject to safeguards so they can satisfy the international community in the short run, if they are allowed to retain their core infrastructure, they could quickly revive their program sometime in the future. At the same time, Iran is seeking to reverse the harsh international sanctions regime against them.

The bottom line is this. If they get their way, if they dismantle nothing, we gut the sanctions, and troubling signs have already appeared.

Since the interim deal was signed, there was an immediate effort by many nations—including many European nations—to revive trade and resume business with Iran. There have been recent headlines that the Russians may be seeking a barter deal that could increase Iran's oil exports by 50 percent; that Iran and Russia are negotiating an oil-for-goods deal worth \$1.5 billion a month—\$18 billion a year—which would significantly boost Iran's oil exports by 500,000 barrels a day in exchange for Russian goods.

To the administration's credit, when we have raised this issue, they have said they are aware of those concerns and have told the Russians that, in fact, if they were to pursue that, it would be actionable, meaning it would be subject to sanctions. But I am not sure that Vladimir Putin really is going to be thwarted by such warnings.

A coalition of France's largest companies is already visiting Tehran. Iran welcomed more than 100 executives from France's biggest firms on Monday, the most senior French trade mission in years. Since November there have been 20-plus trade delegations from Turkey, Georgia, Ireland, Tunisia, Kazakhstan, China, Italy, India, Austria, and Sweden. What is the result? Iran's economy is recovering. The Iranian rial, which is in essence their dollar, had plummeted from an official rate of 10,440 rials to the dollar to a staggering 41,000 to a dollar in October of 2012. But it has begun to recover. As of January 29, that rate has gone from 41,000 to a single dollar to 25,000 rials to the dollar.

International Monetary Fund figures also show Iran's negative growth turning around, with Iran having a projected growth rate of 1.28 percent to almost 2 percent in 2014 and 2015.

As Mark Dubowitz, the executive director of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this week, the \$7 billion in actual relief Iran will definitively receive under the Joint Plan of Action is very significant—comprising approximately 35

percent of Iran's fully accessible cash reserves, which are estimated to be \$20 billion.

So while the Iranian economy is described as being much larger, the assessment that this is a drop in the bucket is simply not accurate. Moreover, that relief fails to consider the \$4 billion to \$5 billion in revenue that Iran would have lost if we had not suspended sanctions on Iran's crude oil exports as required under existing law. Sanctions relief, combined with the "open for business" sign that Iran is posting, is paying returns. It seems to me the sanctions regime we have worked so hard to build is starting to unravel before we ever get a chance to conclude a final agreement with Iran.

The fact is that any final deal as inadequate as the one I have outlined will end any pressure on Iran for the foreseeable future. Put simply, we need a policy that guarantees Iran does not acquire nuclear weapons capability, period.

To understand how to proceed, we must also understand the facts. We need to put the negotiating into context. First, Iran has a history of duplicity with respect to its nuclear program, using past negotiations to cover up advances in its nuclear program, and, most startling, at the undeclared Fordow enrichment site, buried very deep in a mountain to prevent its discovery and protect against destruction. That begs the question: Why would they bury a facility so deep so that it could not be discovered if it was solely for the peaceful purposes they claim? It seems unlikely, as Iran's leaders have made clear in recent days, that Iran will make any concessions that fundamentally dismantle its nuclear program.

The fact is Iran is simply agreeing to lock the door on its nuclear weapons program, as is, and walk away. Should they later walk away from the deal as they have in the past, they can simply unlock the door and continue their nuclear weapons program from where they are today. It sounds a lot like North Korea.

Let's not forget that President Rouhani, as the former negotiator for Iran, boasted:

The day that we invited the three European ministers to the talks, only 10 centrifuges were spinning at Natanz. We could not produce one gram of U4 or U6. We did not have the heavy water production. We could not produce yellow cake . . . Our total production of centrifuges inside the country was 150 . . . We wanted to complete all of these—we needed time. We did not stop. We completed the program.

So 150 then; 20,000 today. The simple truth is he admitted to deceiving the West.

Given President Rouhani's own words on his country's nuclear weapons ambition, it seems to me a good deal is not one that equates dismantling with mothballing. A good deal would prevent Iran from being able to get back to work on its nuclear weapons program from where it left off.

Second, despite diplomatic entreaties to the Iranians in recent years where hands were extended and secret talks were pursued, Iran has grown its support and advocacy for terror.

The history of Iranian terror against U.S. citizens and interests is lengthy and robust, grounded in the view that the United States is the great Satan, and with its funding and support of Hezbollah that has carried out attacks against American interests. Colleagues will recall that 241 American servicemen died in the 1983 Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon and 19 in the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia. In recent years, we have traced responsibility for lethal actions against American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan to Iran, as well as the fortunately thwarted attack on the Saudi ambassador at a Washington restaurant in 2011.

Today Iran is actively sponsoring a proxy war in Syria, sending money, weapons, and fighters on a weekly basis.

Simultaneously, it is sponsoring attacks against Sunnis in Iraq and promoting regional sectarian violence that could easily result in a broader regional conflict. So while smiling at our negotiators across the table, they are simultaneously plotting in the backroom.

With all this in mind, I believe in the wisdom of the prospective sanctions I proposed. I believe in the lessons of history that tell us Iran cannot be trusted to live up to its word without external pressure, and I believe an insurance policy that guards against Iranian obfuscation and deception is the best way forward.

I know there is a difference of view, but I truly believe that what got Iran to the negotiating table is the only element of peaceful diplomacy that can keep it there and ultimately drive a successful negotiation.

My legislation, cosponsored by 59 Senators, would simply require that Iran act in good faith, adhering to the implementing agreement, not engaging in new acts of terror against American citizens or U.S. property, and not conducting new ballistic missile tests with a range beyond 500 kilometers.

The legislation is not the problem and Congress is not the problem. Iran is the problem. We need to worry more about Iran than we need to worry about the Congress. We need to focus on Iran's long history of deceptions surrounding its nuclear program and how this should inform our approach to reaching a comprehensive deal.

To those who believe if negotiations do not result in a deal or if Iran breaks the deal we can always impose new sanctions, then let me be clear: If negotiations fail or if Iran breaks the deal, we will not have time to pass new sanctions that would have a real consequence.

New sanctions are not a spigot that can be turned off and on, as has been suggested. Even if Congress were to take up and pass new sanctions at the

moment of Iran's first breach of the Joint Plan of Action or if they do not reach an ultimate agreement that is acceptable, there is a lag time of at least 6 months to bring those sanctions online and at least 1 year for real impact to be felt.

That has been our history here. I authored most of these, and they need a lead time. You need to give countries and companies the time to be noticed as to what is going to be sanctioned so they can rearrange their engagements. Then you have to have the regulations to go through and then you have to have the enforcement take place.

This would bring us beyond the very short time Iran would need to build a nuclear bomb, especially since the interim agreement does not require them either to dismantle anything and basically freezes their capability as it stands today. So let everyone understand, if there is no deal, I do not think we are going to have the time to impose new sanctions before Iran can produce a nuclear weapon.

Everyone agrees the comprehensive sanctions policy against Iran—which was led by Congress and originally opposed by the administration—has been an unquestionable success. Iran's oil exports fell to 1.1 million barrels a day in the first 9 months of 2013, down from 1.5 million barrels in 2012. The fall in exports was costing Iran between \$4 billion and \$8 billion a month in 2013, and the loss of oil revenue had caused the rial to lose two-thirds of its value against the dollar and caused inflation to rise to more than 40 percent.

There is no dispute or disagreement that it was the economic impact of sanctions that has brought Iran to the negotiating table in the first place. But passing those sanctions and having them in place long enough to be effective took time—time that I am concerned we no longer have.

The question now is whether our goals align. Has the ideology of the regime altered so substantially in the last 6 months that they are ready to forswear a 20-year effort—a 20-year effort—to develop nuclear weapons or are they, as the Supreme Leader has stated, seeking to beat us at the game of diplomacy—“to negotiate with the Devil to eliminate its evil”—and retain their nuclear threshold and enriching abilities while degrading the sanctions regime?

Let's not forget it is the Ayatollah—I know we are placing a lot of faith in President Ruhani and the Iranian Foreign Minister—but it is the Ayatollah who holds the nuclear portfolio, and his main goal is what. Preservation of the regime. It is the Ayatollah who gave the green light to Ruhani to negotiate. Why? Because the sanctions were causing the Ayatollah to be concerned about regime change taking place within Iranian society due to the consequences of sanctions on the Iranian economy.

Interestingly enough, who benefits from the sanctions relief? The Aya-

tollah. In a Reuters story with the title “Khamenei's business empire gains from Iran sanctions relief,” it goes on to talk about that:

Khamenei controls a massive business empire known as Setad that has invested in Iran's petrochemical industry, which is now permitted to resume [its] exports.

It also states:

In an interview with Reuters this week, a Treasury Department official estimated that Iran would generate at most \$1 billion in revenue—

Mr. President, \$1 billion in revenue—from petrochemical exports over the next six months.

Who is the one who has a great deal of interest in the petrochemical section? The Ayatollah, by his control of Setad.

I have worked on Iran's nuclear issues for 20 years, starting when I was a Member of the House, pressing for sanctions to prevent Iran from building the Bushehr nuclear powerplant and to halt IAEA support for their uranium mining and enrichment programs.

For a decade I was told my concerns had no legitimate basis; that Iran would never be able to bring the Bushehr plant online; and that Iran's activities were not the most major concern.

History has shown us that those assessments about Iran's abilities and intentions were simply wrong. The fact is Iran's nuclear aspirations did not materialize overnight. Iran has been slowly, methodically working up to this moment for decades, and now—if its capability is mothballed rather than dismantled—they will remain at the cusp of being a declared nuclear state should they choose to start again because nothing will have changed if nothing is significantly dismantled.

Make no mistake. Iran views developing a nuclear capability as fundamental to its existence. It sees the development of nuclear weapons as part of a regional hegemonic strategy to make Tehran the center of power throughout the region.

That is why our allies and partners in the region—and not just Israelis, but Emiratis and Saudis, among others—are so skeptical and so concerned. Quite simply, our allies and partners do not trust Iranian leaders, nor do they believe Iran has any intention of verifiably ending its nuclear weapons program.

So while I welcome the diplomatic efforts, and I share the hope that the administration can achieve a final comprehensive agreement that eliminates this threat to global peace and security, I am deeply—deeply—skeptical based upon these 20 years—based upon these 20 years—of experience.

The simple and deeply troubling fact is Iran is literally weeks to months from a breakout, and the parameters of the final agreement laid out in the Joint Plan of Action do not appear to set Iran's development capacity back by more than a few weeks.

The Joint Plan of Action conceded, even before negotiations had begun,

Iran's right to some level of enrichment, despite a U.N. resolution calling for Iran to suspend enrichment.

It provides no guarantees that we will resolve our concerns about Iranian weaponization activities, that Iran will cease advanced centrifuge research. Why is that important? Because we heard testimony that the more advanced the centrifuge, the less centrifuges you need, the quicker you can produce enriched uranium to be able to acquire that bomb and the increasingly less verifiable it is. So Iran should have to cease its advanced centrifuge research. It also provides no guarantees that we will resolve our concerns that the IAEA will gain access to the Parchin military base, that Iran will dismantle thousands of centrifuges or that the Iranians will disclose the scope of their activities.

It suggests that the resolution for the Arak heavy-water reactors, which can provide a quicker plutonium pathway to nuclear weapons, may be to put it under IAEA safeguards rather than require its dismantlement. It seems to me we do not have time, under the testimony taken before the committee, for Iran to hedge and obfuscate. They have done a pretty good job of that, and that is what has brought them to the cusp of being a nuclear state. There should be no chance for Iran to buy more time, which, in effect, leaves us exactly where we are—just hitting a pause button—with the state of play unchanged and Iran weeks from breakout. To me that is a bad agreement, and in my view we should be negotiating from a position of strength.

Last Tuesday night in the State of the Union, the President said:

If John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan could negotiate with the Soviet Union, then surely a strong and confident America can negotiate with less powerful adversaries today.

I agree. But I would point out to my colleagues that they did so from a position of strength. President Kennedy sent U.S. warships to face down the Soviets in Cuba, and Ronald Reagan dramatically built up U.S. military might to an extent that what was the former Soviet Union could not keep up the pace. We need to negotiate with Iran from a position of strength, and then, yes—then we should have no fear about any such negotiation.

The concerns I have raised are legitimate. They are not, as the President's Press Secretary has said, “warmongering.” This is not saber rattling. It is not Congress wanting to “march to war,” as another White House spokesman said, but exactly the opposite.

I find it interesting—as someone who was then in the House of Representatives and was in a small minority voting against the war in Iraq, when an overwhelming number of my colleagues and many Members of this body were voting for the war—to somehow be portrayed as a warmonger. It is my mind that the use of sanctions—which is a limited part of an arsenal of peaceful

diplomacy tools—can get us to the successful negotiations we want.

At the end of the day, trying to keep the pressure on Iran to completely satisfy the United Nations' and the international community's demands for Iran to halt and reverse its illicit nuclear activities is the best way to avoid war in the first place—to avoid war in the first place.

Iran has proven in the past it will not negotiate in good faith except when it has no other choice—as the tough sanctions we passed have proven, by getting Iran to the table.

Iran says it will not negotiate with a gun to its head. I would suggest it is Iran that has put the potential of a nuclear gun to the world's head.

At the end of the day, name-calling is not an argument, nor is it a sound policy. It is a false choice to say a vote for sanctions is equivalent to war-mongering. More pressure on Iran does not in any way suggest that Congress wants war or that the Iranians feel backed into a corner and will themselves choose war over reason.

So let's stop talking about war-mongering. Let's instead fixate on the final deal which, in my view, cannot and should not rely simply on trust but on real, honest, verifiable dismantlement of Iran's capability to produce even one nuclear bomb.

The ball is in the administration's court, not in Congress's. In fact, the agreement specifically states—there has been a lot of talk about how we should not consider any new sanctions, even if they are prospective, which the legislation says nothing would happen until up to 1 year, unless Iran violates the interim agreement or fails to conclude an agreement in 1 year. But if we read the Joint Plan of Action, what does it say? It says:

The U.S. Administration, acting consistent with the respective roles of the President and the Congress, will refrain from imposing new nuclear-related sanctions.

It does not say the United States of America. It does not say the Congress. It says the "Administration, acting consistent with the respective roles of the President and the Congress, will refrain from imposing new nuclear-related sanctions."

That is because the agreement acknowledges that the administration, not Congress, will refrain from imposing new sanctions. The administration knew it could not bind Congress to refrain from imposing new sanctions because Congress is a separate coequal branch of government.

So let's focus on what was agreed to by those at the table rather than attributing blame to those who were not. We will not be the scapegoats for a bad deal if it does not take the nuclear weapons option off the table by insisting on dismantling existing capability, not simply mothballing it.

So let me say I want diplomacy to work. That is why we worked so hard to get to the opportunity. I wanted to produce the results we all hoped for and have worked for.

But at a minimum, we need to send a message to Iran that our patience is not unlimited and that we are skeptical of their intentions and a message to the international community that the sanctions regime has not weakened, that this is not an opportunity to reengage with Tehran. I would urge everyone to look at the legislation I have drafted with my colleague from Illinois and Members of both caucuses as a win for the administration. They succeeded in convincing us—the administration succeeded in convincing us to provide up to a 1-year window to negotiate.

That is not the way the legislation was originally intended. But they convinced us they needed an opportunity to negotiate and, hence, the legislation was worked in such a way to create that opportunity. I believe that is significant and generous, given Iran's history of treachery and deceit. If Iran steps away from the negotiations or does not live up to its agreement, it will be because they are not serious about reaching a comprehensive deal.

I have heard the concerns of the administration. I know we share the same goals. We have taken steps in the Foreign Relations Committee in pursuit of those goals. We have worked with the administration to pass legislation to help reform the Organization of American States. We have moved 129—more now with the last week of nominees—that the administration has put forward. We worked through Labor Day in a bipartisan effort to quickly pass a resolution authorizing the use of military force in Syria, which gave the President—there are those who are critical of that as well—but that authorization gave the President the ability to go to Russia and get a deal to end the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

We passed and the President signed PEPFAR into law, the President's emergency plan for AIDS relief. We have worked with the administration on embassy security after Benghazi. We have worked with countless administration officials and held two hearings on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In all of those actions and much more, I have worked closely with the administration. My intention now is to assist the administration again in its negotiations by keeping the pressure on Iran, which has always proven an unreliable negotiating partner at best.

In my view, it is time to put Iranian rhetoric to the test. If we are to take President Ruhani at his word, when he said in Davos last week that Iran does not seek nuclear weapons, if that is true, then the Iranian Government should not have any problems with the obvious followup to that claim, starting with the verifiable dismantling of its illicit nuclear infrastructure. That is all the sanctions legislation does. I do not think we should settle for anything less.

So let's be clear. I do not come to this floor in opposition, I come in com-

ity and in the spirit of unity that has always dictated our foreign policy. But the Senate has an obligation to challenge assumptions in a free and open debate. That is what is most extraordinary about our government, and it echoes in the many debates we have held in this Chamber on war and peace, on justice and freedom and civil rights.

At the end of the day, we have an obligation to speak our minds on what we believe is in the best interests of this Nation. It is in that spirit that I come to the floor today. As GEN George Marshall said, "Go right straight down the road, to do what is best, and do it frankly without evasion." Today I am advocating for what I believe is in our national interests and to do so as frankly and comprehensively as I can.

As John Kennedy said about having differences of opinion, "Let us not be blind to [them], but let us also direct our attention to our common interests and to the means by which those differences can be resolved." The administration and the Senate have a common interest to prevent a nuclear weapons-capable Iran. We have differences as to how to achieve it. We have an obligation to debate those differences and concerns.

But I will not yield on a principled difference. It is our obligation to debate the issues, express our differences and outcomes, and come to the floor to work together to resolve them. At the end of the day, my hope, as someone who has been working on this for 20 years, can see the fruition of a successful negotiation by the President and the administration so Iran will never have a nuclear weapons capability.

But by the same token, I think we need to be poised to ensure that we use the last elements of peaceful diplomacy, which is to ensure there are sanctions that create consequences to the regime so they can put that in their equation as to it is better to strike a deal and end our illicit nuclear program than it is to pursue a course that creates nuclear weapons. Because, if not, I fear, if we continue down this path and our sanctions erode and all we do is limit and have safeguard notices, warning signs, we will get the warning signs, but the sanctions will be gone and the only options left to a future American President will be do you accept a nuclear-armed Iran or do you have a military option. Those are not desirable options.

It is our effort to avoid that being the ultimate question. That is what we embody in the sanctions legislation that has passed this Chamber and has been signed by the President and that we believe, prospectively, can increase the pressure on Iran to come to that peaceful conclusion, so that option of either accepting a nuclear-armed Iran or having to have a military option to prevent it from doing so is not the option for our country and for any future American President.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

RUSSIAN RELATIONS

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, I come today because tomorrow is the formal start of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. We certainly wish all of our athletes well. We have a few from Florida. Believe it or not, the Sunshine State has contributed a number of athletes to the Winter Olympic efforts of our country. We wish them all the best.

We pray for their safety. We have all read media reports of the potential for attacks. We pray that does not happen. Of course, our government has tried to be as cooperative as possible with the Russian Government in providing some level of security assistance. They have been less than open about that. So we hope and pray things will go well there. Let me just say at the outset, Olympics should never be politicized. I hope these are not either. So my comments are not about the Olympics per se, but I do think it is an important time, given where they are occurring, to take a moment to reflect on the nature of and our Nation's relationship with the host country, with Russia, because they are going to be in the news a lot over the next few days.

We have all heard the debates about some of the more extreme examples of intolerance that exist within Russia, particularly as a result of President Vladimir Putin and his government.

I want to take a moment to describe where I think the relations between Russia and the United States stand and particularly how Russia views itself—the government, I should say—in the world.

At the outset let me begin by saying that when I talk about governments, when I talk about countries such as Russia or China, for instance, we are talking about the government leaders, not the people. In fact, we know that in both of those countries—especially in Russia, in China, as well as in many other countries—there are people who do not like the direction their political leadership is taking them.

In fact, I would say that in countries such as China and Russia it might be the majority of people who strongly disagree with the direction that its so-called leaders are taking. What we talk about is our relationship with their governments—and in this case our relationship with Vladimir Putin and the decisions that he has made.

The best way to understand the situation with Russia is that there is primarily a president who has national-

istic tendencies in Putin, and he wants Russia to somehow reclaim what he views as its glory days of world prominence. He believes and has concluded that the best way to do that is to be antagonistic and outright hostile to the United States. Part of that plan is an effort to create among his neighbors—particularly those republics that used to be part of the Soviet Union—to bring them under Russia's sphere of influence.

We have two stunning examples of that over the past few years. The first is the Republic of Georgia, which they invaded a few years ago, and even now they occupy territory within it.

In fact, as part of these Olympics, one of the things Russia has done is it has sealed off portions of Georgian territory they claim they need for a security buffer. That is completely outrageous, but that is happening with very little attention on the international stage.

The other is to see what is happening in Ukraine and to see how they used the threat of noncooperation economically, and even subterfuge economically, to try to force Ukraine to reject a deal to integrate with the European Union and instead seek to be part of this new thing that the Russian government is trying to create.

As part of that agenda as well, they have viewed themselves with the need to be antagonistic toward the United States. But in the process of doing that, not only have they been antagonistic toward the United States, they have been antagonistic toward the cause of human rights and of world peace.

There are some stunning examples.

Certainly within Russia we have seen the targeting and the oppression of everything from a rock band to journalists. We know the story of Sergei Magnitsky, who was doing nothing more than investigating rampant official corruption. We saw how what happened with him.

We have seen it line up on the international stage. For example, they are—perhaps other than Iran, and perhaps equal with Iran—the most important supporter of Assad and of what he is doing in Syria—the slaughter of innocent civilians. There are over 100,000 people dead and hundreds of thousands of others now living in refugee camps, displaced from their homes. This is who the Russian President and the Russian government have lined up with.

Beyond that, we should see the attitude they have taken toward Iran. They have not been, despite the administration's assertions, productive in dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions. On the contrary, they have been supportive or at a minimum have been a roadblock to progress being made with regard to preventing a nuclear Iran.

On issue after issue we see this Russian government lining itself up diametrically opposed not only to the interests of the United States but to the

interests of the cause of world peace. I understand that the situation in Syria is complicated, but how could one possibly find himself to be such a strong and blind ally of a killer, a murderer, a criminal like Assad?

There are problems in those rebel groups too. There are some terrorists involved in that. Unfortunately, it appears they have grown in prominence among the rebellion. It is not an easy issue to confront, but at a minimum one would expect that a country that believes in human rights and the dignity of all the people would at a minimum add their voice in condemnation of what is happening in Syria, and to the conduct of the Assad government.

Instead, they have been involved in trying to pursue ridiculous conspiracy theories, such as the notion that somehow the chemical attacks that occurred there were not conducted by Assad and his regime.

Beyond those things and what they have done at home and abroad, what have they done directly toward the United States? Let's talk about what they have done toward their neighbors and the constant threats to their neighbors—and in some instances a willingness to carry it out by invading the Republic of Georgia.

Then, of course, we turn to their relationship with us. What have they done? A couple of actions bear watching.

The first is what they have done with their weapons systems. They continue to invest an extraordinary amount of money—for a country that is going through the economic challenges that they are confronting—to build up their conventional weapons capabilities. They are again sending naval forces to different parts of the world, trying to flex some muscle.

It is not as powerful as the Soviet Union, but they are trying to project power in that way. Usually they find places to project power that they know would somehow challenge the strategic interests of the United States. Last week we read in the New York Times that there is evidence they may be in violation of an arms control agreement.

In the face of all of this, the initial attitude of this administration was that we need to reset policy toward Russia and understand what was behind that idea. What was behind that idea was the notion that the reason we didn't have a good relationship with Putin and with Russia and the Russian government was because the U.S.—the previous President, George W. Bush—was too abrasive. This is not only for Russia, but this is a theory they applied all over the world. If we could only reset that relationship, if we could just be more cooperative with them, and if we could show them that we were more willing to talk and be open-minded, somehow that would affect their behavior.

What did Putin and their government do? They did what any good former

KGB agent would do. They took what we offered them and kept doing what they wanted. They took whatever concessions we were putting on the table, and they kept doing whatever they wanted.

What is stunning to me is not only the administration's unwillingness to acknowledge that the reset policy has not worked, but in some instances their desire to double down on us. The President continues to talk about additional reductions in strategic weapons vis-a-vis the Russians.

Yet last week we heard, as I said a moment ago, that they are probably already in violation of an existing agreement. We have allowed them to convince us not to pursue anti-missile technologies or advanced and additional anti-missile technologies and defense systems in Eastern Europe.

Our allies, by the way, look at us and say: What is going on? It adds to this air of instability. It adds to the questions that now exist, and it adds to the notion that we have now become an unreliable ally in the world. Other countries are watching this as well, and they are taking note. This is the situation that we face. Because the Olympics are in Russia, the whole world is about to see it.

For example, we can't say for sure that this had anything to do with the government, but last night—I read a report today in the Wall Street Journal that said that for one of its reporters, in the middle of the night someone opened the door to their room and tried to walk in for a moment.

Again, do we know if that was the Russian government? No, we don't know that for sure, but that seems to be a recurring issue there—the sort of surveillance state where opposition is oppressed and the people are watched, where political opponents could be arrested, jailed or exiled.

The Russian government is starting to look more and more every day, in its attitude, like the former Soviet Union—and in its behavior. I think we have the right to be concerned about it.

When I come to the floor and talk about these issues, and other colleagues do, this is not because we want confrontation. On the contrary. We hope to avoid all of these things.

We have plenty of issues to focus on in this country, but we cannot be naive. We must never forget the lessons of history that teach us that when behavior such as this and attitudes like this go unaddressed, when your potential adversary shows weakness, insecurity, and indecisiveness, it invites them to be even more aggressive, and it invites them to miscalculate.

While I do believe that the Olympics are an issue that should not be politicized, our relationship with Russia is one that deserves serious attention in this body. This idea that somehow this is a relic of Cold War issues and that we shouldn't be focused on it in the same way is naive.

They still have an enormous nuclear arsenal. They still have a significant conventional military capability, and they have someone running their government who is not an ally or a friend of the United States.

On the contrary. He has come to believe that what is bad for the United States is good for Russia. We should not be naive about that in our dealings, and we should not, under any circumstances, betray, undermine or abandon our commitment to our allies in the region and to the countries that are Russia's neighbors for the sake of seeking to improve the relationship with the Russian government because they will continue to do what they have already done. They will take our concessions, and they will keep doing whatever they want.

I hope that as a part of this week and the next couple of weeks in these Olympics we—as policymakers, with all of the issues happening in our country, and all of the challenges we face around the world—will take more time to truly examine the nature of this government in Russia and what our relationship should be toward them.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

ENSURING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Mr. COONS. I come to the floor once again to talk about manufacturing jobs and their importance for rebuilding the American middle class, their importance for our economy, and their importance for our future.

Last week President Obama delivered his State of the Union Address before a joint session of this Congress, and he talked about what we can and should do together to invest in America's workers, to spur job creation, and to expand economic opportunity. He said:

What I believe unites the people of this nation . . . is the simple, profound belief in opportunity for all—the notion that if you work hard and take responsibility, you can and should get ahead. . . . Opportunity is who we are. And the defining project of our generation is to restore that trust.

I couldn't agree more. At a basic level, one thing we need to do is to put up a floor under the struggling workers in America who are continuing to seek work and to come together to extend emergency unemployment insurance for these long-term job seekers.

While jobs remain, sadly, more scarce than they should be in our economy and as we continue in recovery, we can't let Americans fall through the cracks as they continue to seek work.

But since the extended unemployment insurance benefits expired last December, 1.7 million Americans, including more than 4,000 Delawareans, have lost the unemployment insurance that is critical to their families, to keeping food on the table and a roof over their heads.

Emergency unemployment insurance, which this body once again today failed to extend, is a critical lifeline to Americans out of work through no fault of

their own and who are doing everything they can to get back to work. While they are searching for jobs, we should make sure they can put food on their tables and keep their families sound.

One Delawarean I have heard from who relies on this lifeline is Raymond from Newark. Raymond was laid off last April from his job at the EVRAZ steel mill in Claymont. He is not sitting at home based on these unemployment benefits. He is not showing dependency, as some have suggested here. He has averaged more than 30 job applications each and every week. He has four children depending on him—one in college with tuition payments.

He wrote to me saying: "My job search is more than finding a job; it is searching to make an honest living."

Raymond, to you, and to the more than the 1 million Americans who rely on decent work to give meaning to their lives, to give support to their families, and to give purpose and opportunity to their children and their future, we can and should do more—not only by extending the unemployment insurance, not only by increasing the minimum wage, but by building the middle class of this country to work together.

Folks such as Raymond have worked hard and paid their taxes. They have earned the opportunity when they really need it to get unemployment insurance. That is why they paid into it for so many years. But we need to do more beyond just extending unemployment insurance.

We need to invest in Raymond's future. We need to invest in the skills that will help Americans like him transition from his job in a steel mill to a plant that is open and has a job that needs to be filled.

Throughout our history broad-based job growth and job creation have ensured economic opportunity that was there for millions of millions of Americans across several generations. Anyone who was able and willing to work in this country for a long time was able to find a decent job and a ladder into the middle class. By investing in our Nation's workforce, our people, through public education, through the GI bill, and through access to higher education, we have been a country where anyone who was willing to work could make it if they combined their work ethic and talents with the skills they needed.

During World War II, in the postwar boom, manufacturing was an economic backbone. Our country was the pathway to the middle class that made all of this possible. American manufacturing was the sturdy manifestation of that central American idea that if you work hard and play by the rules, you can provide for your family today so your children can get access to higher education, a brighter future, and you can have a secure retirement tomorrow. That is the essence of the American middle class.

The basic opportunity that manufacturing provided—those strong and stable rungs by which Americans could pull themselves up the ladder of opportunity—was the heart of America's economic engine, it was the glue that held communities together, but over the past few decades it has changed dramatically. As the world has changed, as billions of competitors have entered global markets, from China to India to Russia, so has the nature of manufacturing, as technology has advanced and the playing field on which we compete globally has changed fundamentally. The critical impact of low wages abroad and of trade deals that were not effectively enforced has been well documented. But too often people draw the wrong conclusion about the future of manufacturing based on its recent past. I have heard many arguing that manufacturing is no longer an industry, a sector where America can compete because this global playing field is tilted and there will always be workers in some country who will work for less, and so we are relegated to inevitably lose what is left of our manufacturing in a race to the bottom. The suggestion has been made in some sectors that we should thrive with service and high-skilled research and development and financial services but not manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In my view, only if we continue to be a country where we invent things, grow things, and make things will we continue to be a leading economy where there is real opportunity for all Americans. Why? Because manufacturing jobs are high-quality jobs both for those who work in them, who get higher wages and higher benefits, but also for the local economy, where manufacturing jobs provide more of a compounding benefit than any other sector.

Some suggest we just can't compete because our labor standards, our environmental protections, and our wages are too high. But look to Germany and Europe, and you can see this isn't true. They have higher labor standards and higher environmental protections than we do, and yet more than double the percentage of their economy, the percentage of their GDP is manufacturing because their government, their education sector, and their private sector work in close harmony to do what we need to do.

Since manufacturers invest the most in private sector R&D, where there is manufacturing, there is also a wealth of high-skilled research work. That is one of the other benefits of manufacturing. Tech development works the best when research centers are close to where products are made. Over the long term it is hard to have one without the other. So as our manufacturing base has moved offshore, we have been at risk of losing our research base. But just in the last few years there has been a dynamic that is encouraging of jobs coming back to this country. As

our productivity continues to grow, as our energy costs go down, and as that wage gap closes, we have actually been regaining ground in manufacturing.

I am convinced that if we want to rebuild an economy that is dynamic and that grows, one that provides opportunities to the middle class, manufacturing must be at the center—in fact, must be the foundation.

What is true is that because the global economy has shifted so dramatically, we need to shift our strategy and our approach. The manufacturing that America excels at today is more advanced and requires higher skilled workers than ever before. Rather than repeating the same tasks over and over, workers today in manufacturing have to be able to carry out complex and varying tasks; to be able to see what is not going right and fix it as a collaborative team; to understand the manufacturing process and to innovate continuously. They have to have critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The sorts of things workers weren't expected to do 30 years ago are a minimum requirement today. They need to understand manufacturing, and they need to be able to program and to improve the caliber and productivity of the machines that do most of the repetitive simple labor of manufacturing today.

We can train Americans for these jobs, but our schools and our institutions of higher learning, our community colleges and universities have to be tightly integrated into a skill-training system that is demand-driven rather than giving people training and praying that somehow they will find their way to an appropriate employer.

That is why I was so encouraged when President Obama placed such an emphasis on workplace skills training and manufacturing in his State of the Union speech. By modernizing our education system and building real and enduring partnerships between schools and businesses, we can ensure our workers have the skills that employers actually need today and tomorrow; so when a guy like Raymond from a steel mill in Claymont is laid off, he can have the opportunity to improve his skills, to retool his abilities, and to move right into an open and available manufacturing job. A recent study showed there were more than 600,000 manufacturing jobs—high-skilled, high-wage, high-benefit jobs—in America today unfilled because of this skills gap.

While I understand and even appreciate President Obama's commitment to making some progress in the coming year through Executive orders, he should not give up on working with Congress. It is just February. It is too early in this year for us to give up on the possibility of passing bipartisan legislation together.

I think more than ever, because of the message it sends domestically and internationally, we have to find a way to work together to make progress on

the critical issue of manufacturing skills and to do what we can together to grow our economy and rebuild our middle class. That is why I have been working so hard with my colleagues on the Manufacturing Jobs for America campaign here in the Senate. Manufacturing Jobs for America is a campaign to build support for good manufacturing legislation on which Democrats and Republicans can agree. So far we have had 26 Democratic Senators introduce 32 bills. Almost half of them have Republican cosponsors already, and we are seeking more each and every week.

Our bills focus on four areas that, if we were to enact them, could have a real and substantial impact on manufacturing and opportunity in our country: strengthening America's modern workforce skills, as I have spoken to; fighting for a more level global playing field and opening export markets to America's manufacturers of all sizes. Medium and small businesses have been growing their exports, but we could grow so much more, and that would sustain the growth in manufacturing; third, making it easier for manufacturers to access capital and invest in the R&D I spoke to a moment ago; and fourth, ensuring a coordinated government-wide effort in support of a national manufacturing strategy. All of our competitors have them. We alone don't, and we need a national manufacturing strategy to make sure that skills, access to exports, and access to capital all happen.

Madam President, adapting our economy to the realities of a new era is a challenge we have struggled with for more than a generation. Yet figuring out how to realize an economy where growth is both strong and more equitable—one that is dynamic and creative and globally competitive and also has a broad middle class, provides security for working families, and leaves no one behind; an economy that invests in the dreams and aspirations of our children—building that economy is the central challenge we face. Manufacturing can and should be the foundation of that economy.

If we want America to be as strong in the 21st century as it was in the 20th, we need American manufacturing. Let's work together and get this done.

I thank my colleagues from both sides of the aisle for their partnership, their interest, and their work. I so much look forward to working together in the weeks ahead to prove to the American people that we can make bipartisan progress on manufacturing.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, it was fascinating to watch the headlines change over the course of the day after the CBO report on the status of the implementation of health care was released. At first, the headlines flashed that the CBO report said the health care reform law was going to cost 2½

million jobs, and Republicans ran to the cable networks to trumpet that number. In fact, many mainstream newspapers actually ran initial headlines suggesting the same. But then, as people actually started to read the CBO report, they discovered the truth. They discovered the fact that the CBO report actually says the economy is going to grow because of the health care law. And to the extent there are reductions in the hours people work, it is going to be because individuals are now no longer required to work simply because they need to get health care. They can now make decisions about what they want to do with their life, the kind of work they want to do and the amount of time they want to devote to it, not simply because they are job-locked due to health care insecurity.

So I wanted to come to the floor today, as some of my colleagues have, to set the record straight on what the implementation of the health care law really means for the economy and to specifically focus on this issue of what it means to individuals who for decades have been forced to make decisions about their labor connected only to the kind of job that would provide for health care for them and their families.

I think back to a day not long after we passed the bill, a day that I was taking my little then-2-year-old son to our community pool in Cheshire, CT. I was in the pool splashing around with my son, and a guy not more than a few years older than I came across the pool and tapped me on the shoulder.

He said: I am really sorry to interrupt, but I just wanted to say thank you.

I said: That is nice. "Thank you" for what?

He said: I wanted to say thank you for passing the health care reform law because I have a little son too, and he has a congenital heart defect. We spend a lot of money trying to take care of his illness. First, the health care bill is going to save us a lot of money, but that is not really why I am so thankful for what you did. What I am truly thankful for is the fact that I can rest easily at night now knowing that my son's life and that his career won't be dictated by his illness; that my son can now live out his dreams, do whatever he wants to do with his life rather than spending his life searching for a job that will cover his illness and worrying about whether a small gap in employment will forever take him off the rolls of the insured forever.

That has been the reality in our country for too long. If you had a chronic illness or a genetic illness or a condition that was on the list of pre-existing illnesses at America's insurance companies, A, you had a hard time finding a job because a lot of people didn't want to hire somebody who came with those high insurance costs, and then once you found the job, you could never leave because you couldn't risk losing the insurance that was paying your bills.

The health care reform law unlocks economic possibilities for millions of people all across this country who haven't gone out and started that business they knew could grow, they knew could result in dozens of employees being hired, because they couldn't leave their existing job and the insurance it provided for them and for their families.

That is what the CBO report says. The CBO report says that to the extent there are going to be less hours worked, it is because individuals will no longer be tied to their jobs because of their need to get health care benefits. That is the real story of the CBO report. In fact, the CBO report says this: Expanded Federal subsidies for health insurance will stimulate demand for goods and services, and that effect will mostly occur over the next few years. That increase in demand will induce some employers to hire more workers or to increase their employees' hours during that period.

That is economic growth. That is not economic contraction.

Now, this is a really simple chart. I am not going to claim that the numbers in it are a reflection simply of the legislation we passed. But for all my Republican colleagues who rushed down to either the floor or to the cable news networks to decry the CBO report and who in general have continued to make the case that the health care law is hurting the economy, this is about as simple a chart as you need.

In the decades before we passed the Affordable Care Act this economy lost 3.8 million jobs, and in the 45 months since we passed the Affordable Care Act this economy has created 8.1 million jobs.

Nobody is satisfied with the pace of job growth, but nobody can say the passage of the Affordable Care Act has hurt jobs. Anecdotally, anybody can bring one or two stories to the floor suggesting an individual businessperson decided to not hire someone because of the Affordable Care Act. But the CBO report also says this: In CBO's judgment, there is no compelling evidence that part-time employment has increased as a result of the ACA. That is a specific talking point that opponent of the ACA after opponent of the ACA brings out into the public debate, that what is going to happen is that because there is a requirement to provide insurance for full-time employees and not part-time employees, we are going to see millions of full-time jobs eliminated and put into part-time employment. CBO says, in CBO's judgment, there is no compelling evidence that part-time employment has increased as a result of the ACA. They say the effect of the Affordable Care Act will increase demand and induce some employers to hire more workers or to increase their employees' hours during that period.

But the news is even better because we are also getting definitive results on the amount of money we are spend-

ing as taxpayers when it comes to our health care budget.

Here is a simple chart that tells us what the current law projection was with respect to health care spending in this country. This builds out the trendline all the way to 2085. I will concede it is probably not worthwhile to necessarily predict what health care expenditures will be in 2085, but we don't even have to go there to see that pretty quickly the actual average of annual growth rate of health care is going to come in way lower than what the current law projection is. In fact, it is going to come in at such a lower rate because of the passage of the Affordable Care Act, we are going to be saving on average \$250 billion a year. Not wholly because of the health care law but in large part because of the implementation of the health care law, we are going to be saving \$250 billion a year just in Medicare spending because we are starting to build a health care system which focuses on prevention—every Medicare participant now gets free wellness visits—and a system which rewards outcomes rather than volume, which rewards quality health care rather than just lots of health care.

So it is time that we start talking about the true economic impact of the Affordable Care Act. For all of the political and rhetorical bluster, CBO tells us that the economy will grow because of the act and that full-time employment will not turn into part-time employment.

To the extent there are less hours worked in this country, as the CBO report clearly says, it is because individuals are finally going to be empowered to make decisions for themselves about what the proper work schedule for them and their family is, not based on whether they can get health care.

I will share one story that illustrates the decisions being made out there right now today when it comes to the economic benefit that can accrue from the Affordable Care Act.

A small business owner in Enfield, CT, just wrote this:

I am a small business owner in Enfield who struggled for the last 26 years with finding affordable, quality health insurance coverage. For the last three years, I've been paying our current carrier . . . \$1,552.00 a month to cover myself and my 17-year-old son. My son was injured in the fall while playing high school football and required surgery on his shoulder. My deductible for the surgery was \$3,000.

Paying for health insurance and medical bills has been a constant struggle. That's why I decided a week ago to check out Access Health CT to see if I could get help going forward. After I entered my information on the website, I discovered that my son and I could stay with [that same carrier] with a better package including eye exams and glasses coverage for only \$328 a month and a \$500 deductible. I signed up the same day. My new insurance starts March 1st.

This is far better than I ever thought it would be. I was worried that health insurance would put me out of business after all those years, but now I feel I can keep my business going. I may even hire a new employee. I want to say thank you to everyone

from the state to the federal level that has made Access Health CT a reality. Don't believe the rumors—check it out yourself. I am so glad I did.

Don't believe the quick snap headlines that get written when a complicated economic report comes out, as it did yesterday, because if we read beyond the headlines, we will find that the economic evidence—the budget evidence is saying over and over that the Affordable Care Act is going to create jobs; that the Affordable Care Act is creating jobs; that the Affordable Care Act will save taxpayers billions of dollars; that the Affordable Care Act is saving taxpayers billions of dollars.

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.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

LUGER NOMINATION

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise again today to urge a vote in the Senate to confirm Andrew Luger to be Minnesota's U.S. attorney.

For 2½ years—or 890 days—Minnesota has not had a full-time U.S. attorney. During those years, from August 2011 to August 2013, Todd Jones was responsible for doing two jobs—as the Minnesota U.S. attorney and then also as Acting Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Over the summer, the Senate confirmed Todd Jones as Director of the ATF, leaving the Minnesota U.S. attorney's position open.

Even before the confirmation of Todd Jones this summer, Senator FRANKEN and I—upon the recommendation of our bipartisan U.S. attorney advisory committee—had already recommended Andrew Luger, a respected litigator and former assistant U.S. attorney, to fill the position. This was 199 days ago. In November President Obama nominated Andrew Luger to become the new U.S. attorney, and the Judiciary Committee approved his nomination unanimously on January 9.

It is time we do what is right by quickly confirming Andrew Luger to make sure Minnesota has its highest law enforcement officer in place.

I also note that there is an opening in the Iowa U.S. Attorney's Office. The Judiciary Committee also unanimously approved the President's nomination for that position, and that person is also awaiting confirmation. In fact, I learned today he is in one city and his family is in another city in Iowa, and they would like to be united. That nomination is also pending.

I thank Senator GRASSLEY, who has supported our nominee, as I have supported his in Iowa. I think Senator GRASSLEY is also aware of some of the issues with the Minnesota U.S. Attorney's Office due to the fact that we

have not had a full-time attorney for 888 days. He has been supportive of our efforts to quickly move Mr. Luger's nomination.

The position of U.S. attorney is a law enforcement post that the Founders regarded as so vital that they created it during the very first Congress in the Judiciary Act of 1789. This is the same act which created the Attorney General and the structure of the Supreme Court and lower courts.

According to the act, each judicial district would be provided with "a person learned in the law to act as attorney for the United States . . . whose duty it shall be to prosecute in each district all delinquents for crimes and offenses cognizable under the authority of the United States, and all civil actions in which the United States shall be concerned."

The U.S. attorney is a position so necessary that President Zachary Taylor appointed Henry Moss—a name somewhat lost in history—to the post within 2 days of Minnesota becoming a State. Now Minnesota has been waiting for a full-time U.S. attorney for 2½ years.

I know my colleagues understand the importance of their own U.S. attorneys. Some of my esteemed colleagues have a very deep understanding of the position, having served as U.S. attorneys prior to joining the Senate. Senator SESSIONS was appointed by President Reagan and served as U.S. attorney in Alabama for 12 years. Senator WHITEHOUSE was U.S. attorney for Rhode Island, appointed by President Bill Clinton. And Senator BLUMENTHAL was appointed to be U.S. attorney for Connecticut by President Carter.

Other colleagues have been assistant U.S. attorneys, and my guess is that when they were assistant U.S. attorneys, they had a full-time U.S. attorney in their office. Assistant U.S. attorneys included in the Senate are Senator LEE of Utah and Senator TOM UDALL of New Mexico. They know firsthand how crucial it is for these offices to have a U.S. attorney and other top leadership in place. I think they would agree with me that 890 days without a full time U.S. attorney in Minnesota is far too long.

Since 1849 the District of Minnesota's 31 U.S. attorneys have upheld the rule of law, the Constitution, and the rights of our State's citizens, and tirelessly pursued justice on their behalf.

Over the past 48 years, for the past half century, more than half of the U.S. attorneys for Minnesota, appointed by Republican and Democrats alike, were confirmed within a day of when they passed out of the Judiciary Committee. One-fourth were confirmed the very same day. During this timeframe, they were confirmed within an average of 28 days of being passed out of committee.

It has now been 28 days since Mr. Luger was approved by the Judiciary Committee. Compare that to Thomas Heffelfinger, who was nominated by

President George W. Bush to be U.S. attorney for Minnesota on September 4, 2001; he was confirmed on September 13. His entire confirmation process took only 11 days. Mr. Luger was nominated 77 days ago; that is seven times longer. In 1998 the Senate confirmed Todd Jones within 2 weeks of his nomination by President Clinton.

The Senate has a history of filling this important position quickly. Nominees have not been used as pawns in some kind of a disagreement over issues. They have simply been confirmed. We have simply gotten it done.

The quick action by President Taylor and the speed with which the Senate has confirmed the past U.S. attorneys for Minnesota show how much our government has historically valued this position, how much we have wanted to keep politics out of the way of this position.

The over 100 employees who work for the U.S. attorney in Minnesota don't run as Democrats or Republicans. We don't even know what their political parties are. They deserve a boss in their office to take this position, which has been historically filled almost immediately after it gets through the Judiciary Committee. They deserve a boss in their office.

With each day that passes we are doing an injustice not only to the Founding Fathers who emphasized the position's importance and the Presidents who have acted quickly to fill it but also to the more than 100 people who work in that office.

The men and women in the Minnesota U.S. Attorneys Office exemplify the professionalism, high ethical standards, and unwavering commitment to the rule of law and public safety that we expect of prosecutors. They work to protect the public safety by focusing on offenders who harm our community—terrorists, the worst of the worst, violent criminals, drug traffickers, and major financial fraudsters.

They also work closely with local law enforcement to ensure that local and Federal resources are used efficiently and effectively to prevent crime and lock up criminals. For example, the office recently won a conviction in a \$3.65 billion Ponzi case—the second biggest Ponzi scheme in U.S. history. The biggest was the Madoff case. The second came out of the District of Minnesota, \$3.65 billion. Of course, that case was initiated when we had a full-time U.S. attorney. That case was prosecuted mainly when we had a full-time U.S. attorney.

What else does the office have? It has an ongoing terrorist investigation that has led to charges against 18 people for aiding the terrorist organization al-Shabaab. If you asked anyone over at the FBI—including the FBI Director who was recently quoted in a story in the Los Angeles Times about the importance of this investigation—they would tell you it would be pretty nice to have a full-time U.S. attorney in that office. Eight of the people who

have already been charged have been convicted. Some received sentences up to 20 years in prison.

Other major work from the office includes Operation Highlife, a major drug trafficking investigation involving more than 100 local, State, and Federal law enforcement officers, resulting in 26 indictments, 25 guilty pleas, and sentences up to 200 months in prison.

I would note that right now we are experiencing—as they are in many places around the country—a heroin epidemic in Minnesota. Over 50 people in Hennepin County died last year from heroin overdoses. That is what we are talking about.

We have a heroin epidemic, and then we have to go home and tell the people of our State that the Senate has not yet confirmed a U.S. attorney.

He went through the committee unanimously—not one objection. The committee he was voted out of includes a very diverse group of Senators, including Senator CRUZ, Senator GRASSLEY, Senator CORNYN, and Senator WHITEHOUSE.

I recommended Andrew Luger to the President, and he was nominated. He has the support of our Republican Congressmen near the Twin Cities. Andrew Luger went through that committee without objection and deserves to be voted on by this Senate.

Operation Brother's Keeper is another example of a successful investigation and prosecution of a RICO case involving a regional 200-member gang which took 22 dangerous criminals off the street.

Operation Malverde received national attention and had a prosecution of 27 defendants associated with the Mexican drug cartel—including the apprehension of the cartel's regional leader—with sentences as high as 20 years in prison.

The office also recently prosecuted a case involving a major synthetic drug seller in Duluth, MN. This head shop was a huge problem and a scourge in the community. They went after it, prosecuted the owner, and found \$700,000 in plastic bags hidden in his bathroom, and they won that case.

These are just a few of the major cases this office has worked on over the last few years. It has been 890 days since we had a full-time boss, which was due, in part, to the delay in filling the position of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It took nearly 1 year for this body to act on that nomination because this body had not confirmed anyone for that full-time job for 7 years.

After Operation Fast and Furious, and the disaster with that case, it was finally decided that we need a full-time, confirmed Director at the ATF. Our U.S. attorney agreed to work at both jobs for 2 years and was finally confirmed. We finally have a nominee, and that person is now waiting. That is how we get to 890 days without a full-time boss.

The Senate has always served the people of Minnesota well in making

sure that our State has a U.S. attorney. I think we need to continue that tradition and honor the value our Founding Fathers entrusted in this position.

It is time we vote on Mr. Luger's nomination. He is a dedicated public servant whose breadth of experience and strength of character and commitment to justice makes him a well-qualified candidate.

No one has questioned or shed any doubt on his qualifications; that is not the issue. Oftentimes that is an issue with nominees, but that is not the issue in this case. The issue is that we simply—as we have in the past—allowed a voice vote on these nominations. It has taken an average of 8 days after coming out of the committee for the District of Minnesota. The first U.S. attorney for Minnesota took 2 days. We have now waited 890 days.

It is time to get this done.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNER).

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REPEALING SECTION 403 OF THE BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now ask for regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed to S. 1963 is now pending.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 298, S. 1963, a bill to repeal section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013.

Harry Reid, Mark L. Pryor, Mark Begich, Kay R. Hagan, Jeanne Shaheen, Jack Reed, Brian Schatz, Christopher A. Coons, Angus S. King, Jr., Bill Nelson, Richard J. Durbin, Tim Kaine, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Jeff Merkley, Debbie Stabenow, Barbara Boxer, Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived and the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to this matter occur at 5:30 p.m., Monday, February 10.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO DR. FRANK CHEATHAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to an accomplished educator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Dr. Frank Cheatham is the senior vice president for academic affairs and professor of math and computer science at Campbellsville University. His impending retirement in December will conclude a career of over 40 years devoted to Christian higher education. Campbellsville University is an acclaimed university in central Kentucky with more than 3,600 students that prepares them as Christian servant leaders for lifelong learning, continued scholarship, and active participation in a diverse, global society.

No more than 20 miles of country road separates Frank's birthplace of Merrimac, KY, from the campus on which he has spent the majority of his life as both a student and a professor. Dr. Cheatham was born on February 3, 1943, to Gladys and the late Jeff Cheatham. Of his eight siblings, four went on to become teachers, including his brother, Don, who also teaches at Campbellsville.

Dr. Cheatham wields an impressive arsenal of post-secondary degrees. After completing his undergraduate studies at Campbellsville in 1965, he continued to earn a master of science from Tennessee Technological University, his Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Kentucky, and a second master of science in computer science education from the University of Evansville.

Dr. Cheatham began his career teaching math and biology at Taylor County High School in 1965. He then served as a teaching assistant at Tennessee Tech and the University of Kentucky and as an assistant professor at Campbell College in North Carolina before landing at Campbellsville University in August of 1973. Ever since then, save for a single year of leave during which he taught at Western Kentucky University, Dr. Cheatham has taught math and computer science at Campbellsville. In 1999, he was offered and accepted the position of senior vice president for academic affairs. The university's president, Dr. Michael V. Carter, recalls that it was "the very first decision I made after becoming president."

Dr. Cheatham's excellence as an educator needs no validation aside from the many successes and accomplishments of his students. Nevertheless, he has been honored for his service at Campbellsville University time and