

same. So, overall, TAA recipients ended up earning less annually.

At best, the impact of TAA is a multibillion-dollar question mark. At worst, research says it is ineffective and even counterproductive.

While trade adjustment assistance is of dubious value, we certainly know that renewing trade promotion authority is an incredible opportunity for the U.S. economy. It is my fervent hope that Congress will move forward in approving legislation reauthorizing TPA. It is also my hope that one day we can recognize the benefits of trade and the fact that it lifts our economy. I hope we can advance a sound trade policy without these costly adjustment assistance programs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor noting that my friend and colleague from Connecticut was just on the floor talking about the President's health care law. It is interesting that he would do so at a time when we are seeing headline after headline about ObamaCare plan premiums increasing again all over the country.

Remember what the President said. He said: If you like your plan, you can keep your plan. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor.

He said premiums would go down by \$2,500 for a family of four. What we have seen is premiums go up across the country. Now my colleague from Connecticut says—in spite of all the money being spent on the President's health care law, premiums are still going up. In his home State of Connecticut, they are going up, and they are going up across the country.

There is a headline in the Connecticut Mirror: "Insurers seek rate hikes for 2016 ObamaCare plans." That is in Connecticut.

You know, it is interesting. I heard my colleague talking about the upcoming Supreme Court case of *King v. Burwell*, the implications of that case. He said the Republicans did not have a plan. Where is the President's plan? He is the guy who made this mess. This is the President's law. This is the law the Democrats voted for.

You know, there is that old sign in the Pottery Barn: If you break it, you bought it. The President broke the health care system in this country. If the Supreme Court rules that he has acted illegally—he is the one who made the mess; he is the one who created the problem.

When my colleague from Connecticut says "Where is the Republicans' plan?" I say "Where is the President's plan?" It is interesting. The President does have a plan to protect the insurance companies, but he has no plans to protect the American public, the American taxpayers. He has a built-in plan for the insurance companies so that

when they wrote the policies this year, there was a decision made by the White House that those policies could be canceled by the insurance companies if the Supreme Court ruled that the President acted illegally. Yet, there is no path, no safe path for those American taxpayers who thought they were obeying the law if the court rules the way I believe they should based on the reading of the law.

So of course people around the country are very concerned when they see once again that the insurance they are mandated to buy by President Obama and the Democrats, the insurance they are mandated to buy by the health care law is going to be even more expensive next year than this year.

In Connecticut—the first paragraph of this article: "Insurance companies selling health plans through the state's health insurance exchange are seeking to raise rates next year. . . ."

It goes on to say: "Despite that, the carriers projected increased costs, citing rising claims expenses and a planned reduction in protection against high-cost claims. . . ." Reduction in protection against high-cost claims. Why? Well, it says "from a temporary federal program intended to provide stability for insurers during the initial years of the health law." This was the bailout of the insurance companies that President Obama and the Democrats built into the President's health care law to get them to go along.

It says, "The rate filings are proposals, not actual changes." Proposals, not changes. It says, "The insurance department will now analyze the proposals, accept public comments. . . ." This is the Connecticut Insurance Department. Well, you know, a lot of members of the public in Connecticut filed comments. I have them to share with the Presiding Officer and with our listeners today. These are the constituents of the Senator from Connecticut, who comes here to the floor and says things are working great in Connecticut. These are his constituents who say:

I am barely making ends meet as it is. I was under the understanding that this was to be AFFORDABLE—

With all the letters of "affordable" in capital letters—healthcare. So far it has been nothing but a burden.

This is a constituent in Connecticut—"nothing but a burden."

He said:

I was happy with my previous plan. . . .

Weren't so many Americans happy with their previous plan before the President, who told them if they liked it, they could keep it—well, that is why there is so much disappointment out there. And the President's statement was called "the lie of the year."

This person was happy with his previous plan, but it was eliminated as of January 1, 2015. "My health care," he says, "went up \$100 for less coverage."

People are paying more and getting less, and Democrats wonder why this health care law is not popular. All across the country, people are paying more, getting less, and the Democrats are clueless as to why this is so unpopular.

"Please do not allow this increase."

That is just one of the constituents who wrote to the Connecticut Insurance Department, a public comment. Here is another:

Please no rate increase. I cannot afford the insurance now. I pay \$594.00 a month for myself, a 60 year old female in relatively good health. I have a \$5,500 deductible. I cannot afford to have some testing done because I don't have the deductible amount.

But we heard the Senator come to the floor and say all of these people have insurance. This person figures—well, she has insurance, but it is of no value to her with her \$5,500 deductible. She can't afford to have testing because of the deductible. She says:

It is bad enough we have the big security breach and we have to worry about our personal info stolen in the years to come and you now want to increase our rates.

That is what we are seeing happening across the country, that is what we are seeing happening in Connecticut, and that is what the public is telling the Connecticut Insurance Department dealing with these proposed health rate increases.

This is another:

I am writing to you regarding the . . . rate increase filing in particular and the health insurance filings in general. I am an individual buyer who does not qualify for federal subsidies due to my income level. I have been buying my family plan since before the Affordable Care Act has been passed and implemented.

They had insurance and do not qualify for a subsidy. Continuing:

Since then—

Since the Affordable Care Act was passed—
buying a family health plan in CT has become almost financially impossible for me to buy as it has become a real financial burden for me. Currently, I am paying some 22% of my Federal AGI for a high deductible (family deductible of \$11,000) HSA plan.

Now, the Senator from Connecticut may say: Hey, great. This person has insurance, insurance they can't afford and they cannot use because of the deductible.

It says:

As you are certainly well aware before the passing of the Care Act my premium for health care was much more affordable.

Why is it? Well, it is because the President decided he wanted to transfer money from one group to another, and this individual who had insurance that he liked, the family liked, worked for them, they could afford, now cannot afford, cannot use because of the deductible. They are still insured, so I guess the Senator from Connecticut would call that a big win for one of his constituents who is clearly being hurt.

This is another one that has come in from Connecticut:

Are you nuts? This cannot go on. My “affordable” insurance has already increased \$200/mo and now you want more? My income doesn’t even increase this much.

Paying the penalty for no insurance is a better option than this.

DO NOT INCREASE! Learn how to live within your means like the rest of us do.

This is what we are seeing. Is this a surprise that this continues to be a very unpopular law. Should it surprise?

It surprises the Democrats, obviously, when they see that in poll after poll, month after month, the health care law is more unpopular than it is popular, and the reason is people don’t see it as good deal for them. They feel, in terms of their own health, their own families, their own communities, this health care law has been a burden on them, in their lives, and has impacted them as a family.

There is another one from Connecticut:

The ACA raised our health insurance expense (both premiums and deductibles) by 67% for similar coverage!

Sixty-seven percent for similar coverage. Remember, the President told a lot of people that what they had coverage on wasn’t any good. It wasn’t good enough for the President—might have been good enough for that family but not good enough for the President.

So they had to buy, for similar coverage, premiums and deductibles up 67%.

Continuing:

Please do not approve this additional increase.

This person says they would be fine with their own policy, but they weren’t allowed to keep it because of the health care law.

I could go on and on. It is astonishing what we are hearing from the Connecticut Insurance Department, with a response, when they were asked, and put out the filings of the requests for higher rates. It is just interesting.

Here is one more comment from Southbury, CT:

The alleged purpose of this pool, and the affordable care act—

Alleged purpose. Remember NANCY PELOSI: First, you have to pass it before you get to find out what is in it.

Continuing:

The alleged purpose of this pool, and the affordable care act, was to get and keep health care costs under control. My (subsidized) monthly premium is more than double what I paid before being forced into this pool. . . . If the ACA is a failure, then why am I being penalized?

People all across the country believe they are personally being penalized because of the failure of the Obama health care plan and this administration who chose to, with one party and one party alone, force a very expensive, unworkable, really unaffordable, unmanageable, unexplainable health care system down the throats of the American public.

So we will see what happens when the Supreme Court rules at the end of next month. Secretary of Health and

Human Services Burwell said that the administration has no plan. The President told me personally—and the White House earlier this year—he had no plan to deal with the Supreme Court ruling that says his actions were illegal, and he has no plan to deal with so many people who thought they were following the law, who have been hurt by the law.

But he has a plan to bail out the insurance companies and to protect them because we know where the President is in terms of looking at this. And his proposal, his quintessential piece of legislation—the one named after him—has clearly done a significant amount of damage to families all across the country.

I believe it has harmed the health care system, which has always been the best in the world.

We needed health care reform in the country. We did not need what President Obama forced down the throats of the American people with people across the country saying no.

People knew what they wanted in health care reform. What they knew they wanted was the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower cost, and they have not received that under the President’s health care law.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The clerk will call the roll.

The 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5 p.m. today, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 25, 26, 74, and 107; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that following disposition of the nominations, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action, and the Senate then resume legislative session; further, that all time in executive session count postclosure on the TPA bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will not object. I am pleased to see some judges finally moving forward.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, we expect some of these votes to be by voice vote.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes.

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

TRADE POLICY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I listened to some of the debate earlier this afternoon—in between the effort to make progress toward getting a fair array of amendments for both sides—about this whole question of secrecy surrounding trade policy. A number of Senators were discussing it, and so I just wanted to take a minute to be very clear that I think they have a very valid point with respect to the secrecy that has long accompanied these trade discussions. I would like to discuss how I made it my paramount reform to make sure we would have a new era of transparency, openness, and accountability in the discussion about making trade policy.

I have always felt that if you believe deeply in international trade—the way I do—and you want more of it, why in the world would you be for all this secrecy? That just makes Americans more cynical about the whole topic and makes them think that in Washington, DC, there is something to hide.

I note my friend and partner in all this, Chairman HATCH, is on the floor, and he will recall when we began our discussions—and they went on really for close to 7 months in our effort to forge a bipartisan package—that I wanted to take a very fresh approach with respect to transparency, and I wanted us to be able to say that for the first time in the history of debating these policies, we would no longer have the country and elected officials in the dark with respect to really what is at issue in these discussions.

So here is a short assessment of what really has changed. Of course, right now we are working on the rules for future trade agreements. We are working on the trade promotion act that sets out the rules for future agreements. Obviously, the first one will involve the Trans-Pacific Partnership—what is known as TPP—and there are a variety of others that are under discussion, particularly one with Europe.

If the Congress—the Senate and the other body—adopts this package that Chairman HATCH and I, in conjunction with Chairman RYAN, have put together over these many months, I think we will have achieved our goal of making sure everybody in the Congress and everybody in the United States who chooses to can have the information they need about trade agreements