

who wrote to let me know that his monthly premium increased by more than 30 percent.

So it is hard to disagree with the top Vermont health official who said: “Good God, this just wasn’t set up for success.” That is from the top health official in Vermont. Given the spectacular flop in his State, he would certainly know, and he certainly seems to have a point. Of the 17 original ObamaCare exchanges, some have failed outright, and half of those that remain are struggling financially.

So the truth is this: ObamaCare never had a Web site problem; it had an ObamaCare problem.

No amount of wishful thinking or fast talk is going to change that reality. It is not going to change the failures I just mentioned, and it is not going to change the failures I haven’t, such as the failed CLASS Act, the troubled co-ops, the debacle of giving people the wrong amount of subsidy or what we just learned yesterday—that the IRS may not even be able to verify that many of the people who received the tax credit for health insurance actually bought the health insurance.

I am asking ObamaCare’s defenders in the White House and in Congress to redirect their efforts away from the spin and toward the reality instead. We all know that ObamaCare is a law filled with broken promises, higher costs, and failure. So let’s work together to start over with real health care reform instead.

That is the kind of health care outcome that actually would be “fabulous” for our constituents. It is something that really would be “wonderful for America.” And it is what we can work together to achieve once Washington politicians move past the failure of ObamaCare.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the massive cyber attack Americans just read about reminds us all of the need for action on this issue. Building America’s public and private cyber defenses won’t be easy. But the bipartisan cyber security measure that passed out of the Intelligence Committee with the support of every single Republican and every single Democrat but one, 14 to 1, will increase the ability of the public and private sector to share information and to make us safer. That is why we are going to take it up as part of the Defense authorization bill now before us.

I hope Senators of both parties will come together to support that bipartisan amendment when it comes to a vote, just as we saw the Senate come together to keep the Defense authorization bill intact and consistent with the budget resolution by standing against the Reed amendment yesterday. It keeps us on track to pass bipartisan legislation that will support the men and women who keep us safe every day.

There is something else worth noting about the vote, too. It means we have now taken twice as many amendment rollcall votes on this year’s Defense authorization bill as we were allowed on the last two bills combined. Again, it means we have now taken twice as many amendment rollcall votes on this year’s Defense authorization bill as were allowed in the last two bills combined. It is just the latest reminder of a new majority that is getting the Senate back on track and back to work.

Unfortunately, some leaders of the previous majority seem bound and determined to get us back into their gridlock comfort season. At a time of grave threats to our Nation, these Democratic leaders think it is a good idea to hold brave servicemen and brave servicewomen hostage to partisan demands for more waste at the IRS and bigger congressional office budgets for themselves. Let me repeat. At a moment of dangerous and gathering threats, here is the position of these Democratic leaders: They want to hold hostage the funding needed to make our troops combat ready so they can spend more on bureaucracies such as the IRS.

These Democratic leaders just can’t seem to kick the gridlock habit, even on legislation with the exact same level of funding President Obama asked for in his own budget. They just can’t shake their passion for partisanship, even on a bill that sailed out of committee on a hugely bipartisan vote of 22 to 4. That is how the Defense authorization bill came out of the committee: 22 to 4.

That doesn’t mean the rest of their party has to go along with it. I am appealing to every commonsense Democrat—every Democrat uncomfortable with the thought of holding our troops and our families to ransom for unrelated partisan demands—to keep working across the aisle in good faith, instead, because many of our colleagues understand the true sacrifice and unparalleled value of the nearly 1.5 million Active-Duty men and women who proudly wear our country’s uniform, the 1.1 million members of the Reserve and National Guard, and the more than 700,000 civilian officials who stand in support, not to mention the many veterans and families who enrich our country and our communities.

We certainly understand their value in Kentucky. We are proud to host several important military bases across the Commonwealth. I wish to tell my colleagues about just one of them today.

Fort Campbell is home to approximately 30,000 Army personnel, including vital Special Operations units and the famed 101st Airborne Division. Units from Fort Campbell have bravely served as the tip of the spear in executing the U.S. global war on terror, with the 101st Airborne deploying as the first conventional unit in its support.

It was soldiers from Fort Campbell who proudly answered the call to assist

with the delicate Ebola mission in West Africa, and it is Fort Campbell’s unrivaled aviation infrastructure that provides the Army with the critical ability to rapidly deploy servicemembers to volatile regions.

It is obvious that Fort Campbell means a lot to our country, and I can’t tell my colleagues how much it means to Kentucky. It means a lot to its local community, too, especially considering the fact that it has an annual economic impact of \$5 billion to the surrounding area.

This, of course, is hardly a unique story in America. From coast to coast, there is no end of examples of how our troops and our military enrich the fabric of our communities while at the same time keeping us safe. They are our neighbors. They are our friends. They are our daughters. They are our sons. They are not chess pieces for Democratic leaders to wield in some partisan game.

If Democratic leaders are really that worried about fattening up the IRS or adding a new coat of paint to their congressional offices, we can have that discussion, but let’s leave our troops out of it and leave their families out of it.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is very difficult to respond to fiction, and that is what we just heard. We heard a speech based on fiction, a speech based on no facts, a speech based on made-up facts.

It is so hard to comprehend the different areas the majority leader spoke of with no basis in reality. On the subject of health care, it is as if he doesn’t realize that 16.5 million people have health insurance.

He denigrates people who aren’t insured. Because of Obamacare, they now have the ability to go to a doctor or a hospital when they are sick because of Medicaid. Is there anything wrong with that? In America everyone is not rich. In America not everyone is middle class. Some people are falling through the cracks, and the fact that in the State of Kentucky a lot of people there now have the ability to go to doctors when they are sick or hurt shouldn’t be anything that people make fun of.

Health care has changed dramatically. I walked into a drugstore near my home here in Washington—CVS. As a result of ObamaCare and other reasons, you can go into that drugstore now and have a test for strep. If you need medicine, they can give it to you. That is progress in medicine in America.

My friend the Republican leader talks as if he would like to return to the time prior to ObamaCare, when insurance companies defined the people

who have preexisting disabilities. Let's go back to that system. Let's go back to the system where if you have a child who has diabetes, you can't get that kid insured. If you have been in an automobile accident and you broke your neck—even if you are doing fine now, but from the doctor's reports it shows that you broke your neck—you can't get insurance. People with debilitating diseases now can get help.

The overwhelming majority of Americans, statistically, who enrolled in health care plans under the new law are satisfied with the coverage. The majority leader continues to missstate the facts on the Affordable Care Act. The latest poll shows that the majority of Americans support the law, as they should. So I don't know why my friend has to come here and make up things.

ObamaCare has been an important program for American families in Nevada and all over America. So I am very disappointed with the state of nonreality of my friend from Kentucky, who has come here each day this week to talk about ObamaCare and what is wrong with it. Before this law came into being, patients and the American people were subject to premium increases without any notice, cancellations without notice, denials for preexisting conditions, which I have already mentioned, and arbitrary limits on how much care insurance companies would cover.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. REID. The majority leader also came here and talked about how Democrats don't care about people in the armed services in America—that we don't care. In Nevada, I would compare our military installations and their contributions to a stellar military. Nobody surpasses what we do in Nevada. We have the finest Air Force training center in the world for people who fly fighter aircraft. They are all there. We have 10,000 civilian employees, and about 10,000 troops are stationed there. It has been in existence since it was called the Gunnery School in World War II. We are very proud of that. It is an important part of our community, and we protect it.

If you go north 350 miles, there is the Fallon Naval Air Training Center, which is a great installation, where if you want to fly on an aircraft carrier in America, that is where you train, at Fallon. TOPGUN is there. It is a wonderful facility, and we are proud of that facility. It doesn't have as many civilian personnel as Nellis. It is not as big and does not have as many active military, but it is an outstanding operation. People come from all over the world to train at Nellis—from all over the world. We have such a vastness in Nevada, and people train there. They can't do it anywhere else in the world.

So I would put my support of the military—I would certainly compare it to my friend the Republican leader. I

am sure he cares. I care also, and all 45 Members of the Democratic caucus care about the military. We care about it in a way that is not denigrating to the Internal Revenue Service that he keeps bashing.

One reason that the Internal Revenue Service has a tough time doing its job is because the Republicans keep cutting their budget. The head of the IRS came to see me a couple months ago, and said: We made it through the tax season. There were very few problems, but he said that if anyone wanted to call the IRS 2 months prior to the tax season ending, they couldn't answer the phones. They didn't have enough staff to do it.

The bill came out of the Armed Services Committee, and at that time, our leading member of that committee, JACK REED, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy said that the bill was flawed. It was flawed because he hoped we could fix the funding mechanism that the Republicans put in this—another unbelievably fictitious way of taking care of our government.

The chairman of that committee is somebody with whom I came from the House of Representatives 33 years ago. He came to the Senate together. He has been someone who has stood on this floor and berated phony spending. Where is he now? How could this man be in favor of deficit spending? How can he be in favor of OCO? He has spoken out openly against it in the past, but suddenly he is in favor of it.

The President said the minute that bill was taken up in the committee: If you don't change that, I am going to veto the bill—as he should. What we have said is we are going to support that. We believe what is in this bill is as fictitious as his account of what ObamaCare is all about. But my friend the Republican leader keeps talking about the leftwing: The leftwing is trying to kill this bill. We are not trying to kill the bill. We are trying to make sure we have programs in America that support the middle class, that support medical research, that support funding the FBI, and our court system. My friend the Republican leader seems only to care about the military. We care about the military, but we care about other things that lead to the security of this Nation.

We are not a secure Nation when we don't fund the National Institutes of Health. We are not a secure Nation when we don't fund the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Department of Homeland Security. We are not a secure Nation when we don't fund the Immigration and Naturalization Service. But my friend the Republican leader is saying: Don't worry about them. Just take care of the military. All this other stuff will work out.

The military is not secure, our government is not secure, and our homeland is not secure, when we have all these other agencies that are being, in effect, cut back in funding.

Now, on cyber security, we know the Presiding Officer of this body led the

Senate through some very important debates in recent days, and one of the things that was underlying everything done by the Presiding Officer was cyber security—maybe sometimes not directly, but that is in the background, always.

What does the Republican leader now come and say?

Look how much I am on cyber security. Look at me. I lifted weights this morning.

But what he has done is that now he is going to put cyber security on the bill the President said he is going to veto. We are stuck. We have 400 amendments filed, and we are not going through these amendments. He wants to be able to check off the box, saying: Well, we did cyber security.

He hasn't done cyber security. I have a quote here from him on cyber security, just a short time ago: "Any issue of this importance deserves serious consideration and open debate." This is what the Republican leader said. He says: Oh, we have done double the amendments that were done in the last couple of bills.

It takes two sides of the Senate to have amendments heard. The Republicans would not let us have open debate on the armed services bill the last two Congresses. We never even had a debate here. What happened is the two chairs of the committee met in secret and came up with a bill that came up to the Senate floor, and we were able to get that done. But for people to come here and say this is the 53rd year we have done the bill is a little fictitious itself.

I hope that my friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, will get in touch with reality on ObamaCare, on the Defense authorization bill before this body, and on cyber security and stop making things up, because that is it. It is fiction, and it is not appropriate.

I was so disappointed yesterday to see my Republican colleagues vote against the amendment proposed by the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, the senior Senator from Rhode Island. His amendment would have done what no Republicans have even tried to do, which is to adequately address sequestration.

Sequestration was supposed to be so absurd and so foolish that it would force Congress to reduce the deficit in a sensible, balanced manner. On the floor now—I have said this before and I will say it again—I asked the senior Senator from Illinois who came to this House with me and with JOHN McCAIN 33 years ago: Would you do me a favor? We have this committee that the President has set up, and I need somebody that represents maybe a little bit left of center on this committee. Would you do it? He had many other obligations, but he agreed to be on the Bowles-Simpson Commission, and he did a stunningly important good job. He supported the financing of that. Quite frankly, that surprised me because of all the people yelling for all these