

a 13-page Arctic strategy. That is it—13 pages. That is what the United States of America has—the greatest military force in the world right now—as this is happening. We have this.

I want to talk about credibility. This is not credible. This is not credible. Worse—much worse—the Department of Defense is thinking about removing one or maybe two brigade combat teams from America's Arctic.

Let me repeat that. As the Russians are building up everywhere, we are looking at possibly removing the BCTs right here—these two blue dots—one or two, gone. That is not credible. These are the only U.S. soldiers in the Arctic. They are Arctic-tough soldiers, cold-weather trained. This is the only Arctic airborne brigade in the United States. This is the only airborne brigade in the entire Asia-Pacific, right here, Fort Richardson, Alaska. These soldiers, thousands of them, are capable, well-trained, tough U.S. soldiers, and they are the only ones capable of protecting our country's interests in the Arctic, as that part of the world becomes more and more an area that Russia becomes interested in.

So we have this, 13 pages. We have announced we are seriously contemplating removing these forces from the Arctic. Let me just say, Vladimir Putin must surely be smiling somewhere in Moscow as he makes these moves and he hears that the Department of Defense is thinking about removing our only Arctic forces out of the Arctic. This is not credible.

We are not only showing a lack of credibility, removing Army troops from the Arctic, removing them from Alaska, will show the world weakness. As President Reagan noted, weakness is provocative. We can be assured of that.

This strategy defies logic. Importantly, it also defies the direction of the U.S. Senate and the NDAA, which we just passed by large bipartisan numbers. As I mentioned at the outset, the bill we just passed states that the Department of Defense should increase troops in the Asia-Pacific region—increase troops—under the command of the PACOM commander, which includes these troops right here.

Fortunately, as I said, there are also provisions in the NDAA to start making sure our country wakes up to the security interests we have in the Arctic. The bill we just passed on the floor provides an important first step toward ensuring that the Arctic remains a peaceful, stable, and prosperous place.

The NDAA requires our military to lay out a specific strategy—not just 13 pages—in the Arctic region that protects our interests there. It requires the Secretary of Defense to update the Congress on the U.S. military strategy in the Arctic region, and, importantly, requires a military operations plan for the protection of our security interests in this important region of the world.

The Department of Defense, the U.S. Army, should not even contemplate

moving one single soldier out of America's Arctic until all of this has been completed, and they should look hard at this bill—that we hope the President will not veto—with regard to the direction of the Congress on the importance of increasing U.S. military forces in the Asia-Pacific to add credibility to our rebalanced strategy. That means keeping appropriate troop levels in appropriate places—like the Asia-Pacific, like the Arctic, and like Alaska—as required by the bill that we just passed by an overwhelming majority.

Alaska is the northern anchor of the Pacific rebalance. It is the gateway to the Arctic. It is what makes America an Arctic nation. It is our only Arctic State, and it probably is the single greatest repository of untapped energy resources that will power our Nation's future. That is why, in the words of Gen. Billy Mitchell—the father of the U.S. Air Force—it is the most strategic place in the world.

We need a strong rebalanced strategy that is credible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

#### TRAGEDY IN CHARLESTON

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, let me say, before turning to the topic at hand, those of us from Connecticut—especially those of us in and around Sandy Hook, CT—our hearts go out to the community in Charleston. The grief and tragedy they are working and sifting through today is hard for anyone to imagine. All I can say is I hope they will find, as we did in Newtown, CT, that an internal strength over time comes from unlikely spots; that friends arrive from far-off places; that there is a community that is much bigger than one church or one city that is going to wrap its arms around families and friends of the victims during this terrible time.

#### KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I was so glad to see Senator STABENOW down on the floor a week ago talking about a pretty simple issue, which is the tax increase that is going to occur to 6.4 million Americans if the Supreme Court rules this week, next week, for the plaintiffs in the case of King v. Burwell. We wanted to come down to the floor and accentuate this message so people all around this country know what is at stake.

What is at stake is 6.5 million people losing their health insurance. That maybe gets the headlines. But the way in which people get affordable health insurance under the Affordable Care Act is by tax credits. So the immediate effect of a reversal of subsidies for Federal exchange States is that 6.5 million Americans are going to have their taxes dramatically increased by thousands of dollars if this body refuses to act in the face of a Supreme Court finding for the plaintiffs.

So we wanted to come down to the floor just to talk a little bit about what the stakes are for people's tax bills and how this is going to be a gut punch for millions of American families if the Supreme Court rules the way we hope they don't.

I think it is, first of all, important to say at the outset that most of us who have followed the Affordable Care Act and its legal interpretation think this is a sham of a case. This is a political attack on the Affordable Care Act masked as a legal case.

There is absolutely no question that the Affordable Care Act is built in a way to deliver subsidies to both State exchanges and Federal exchanges. I will not go into all the details as to why that is the clear case. But though we are talking about what might happen if King v. Burwell comes down for the plaintiffs, many of us think that would be an absolutely ludicrous legal result, one that would be a stunning act of judicial overreach, essentially a political substitution of the Court for the legislature. But I want to talk about a couple case studies and then turn the floor over to my colleagues.

I have come down and talked about people from Connecticut. I talked about Christina, a small business owner from Stratford; Susie, a two-time breast cancer survivor from North Canaan, CT; and Sean and Emilie, two freelancers from Weston. All of these people have gotten tax credits through the Affordable Care Act, and it has allowed them to have a lower tax bill but also get insurance. Many of them, it was the first time in their lives or in recent history that they have been able to afford insurance. But there are stories all over the country that are parallel to the stories from Connecticut I have been telling on the floor of the Senate over the course of the last year.

For instance, there are 832,000 Texans who are receiving an average tax credit of \$247 a month. If the Supreme Court strips away these tax credits, those 800,000 people in Texas are going to see a tax increase of around \$3,000. People like Aurora, a 26-year-old from Houston, got health insurance coverage through Texas's Federal marketplace. She works at a small nonprofit where she helps her LGBT peers get the coverage they need. She is saving \$1,500 a year getting insurance she would have never been able to afford. She says, quite simply:

I wouldn't be able to afford my policy otherwise. It has really helped me be able to get my well person exam and other preventions screenings that I'd not had in years.

She is one of 832,000 people in Texas who are going to have their taxes increased, their insurance stolen away.

I am a big New York Giants fan, so I get to watch a lot of games in which the Giants are playing in this stadium, which is, as Cowboy fans know it, AT&T Stadium. You could fill AT&T Stadium 10 different times. This is a huge stadium. People see the giant jumbotron on the roof of this stadium.

You could fill AT&T Stadium 10 times with the number of people in Texas alone who could lose their health care and lose their tax cut—\$3,000, on average, per person a year in Texas—if King v. Burwell is decided in favor of the plaintiffs.

But I will tell another story of a young woman named Celia. She is a self-employed Pilates instructor in Florida. Since 2005, she hasn't been able to find health care coverage. Since 2005, she has been uninsured. Now, she has been lucky because she didn't get really sick during that time, but she only had a \$900-a-month plan that she could find. That was the cheapest. With the Affordable Care Act, Celia finally has insurance. Celia is able to finally sign up for a health insurance plan that has meant something to her because last year she had a minor accident in her home. She had to go to the emergency room. With her insurance, she received a bill of \$57. She said, “I couldn't have even imagined what that would have cost me out-of-pocket—more than I could ever afford.” This year, Celia has reenrolled in another silver plan, and for around \$200 a month she knows that she is going to be covered if she gets sick or if she has another minor accident.

In Florida—we think this is a lot of people, 832,000. In Florida, there are 1.3 million people who are receiving health care tax credits right now. Now, I root for the University of Connecticut Huskies, and so we don't necessarily get to play in stadiums this big when you are playing out of the American Athletic Conference. But everybody in Florida knows The Swamp, and you could fill The Swamp 15 times over with the 1.3 million people who could lose their health care tax credit. Those are more people than attend Gator football games on an annual basis. Those are more people than attend Gator football games over a 2-year period of time. So 1.3 million people are going to lose their coverage in Florida alone.

So let's call a spade a spade. This is about health care. It is about our belief that for people who are working hard and playing by the rules, they should have a shot at being healthy, but it is also about keeping people's tax bills low. If we ever contemplated a bill on the floor of the U.S. Senate that raised 1.3 million people's taxes in Florida by an average of \$3,500, my friends from the Republican side of the aisle—our friends would be screaming bloody murder that this was an unjustifiable, unconscionable, unworkable tax increase on the American people. But there is largely silence or temporary fixes and patches that are proposed.

So I am glad to join my colleagues to talk about what this means.

Now, I am from Connecticut and we have a State exchange. We have a State exchange. Conventional wisdom is that those of us who have State exchanges are going to be protected because we will continue to get subsidies.

But this is going to be a death spiral nationally. We have no idea how this will actually play out. When you have all of these subsidies ripped away with the insurance reforms still baked in, even in States such as Connecticut, where you have a State exchange, we are not immune. Nobody is immune. The primary victims here are going to be the people in States such as Florida and Texas, as I mentioned. But this is going to be a national catastrophe.

We hope we don't even have to have a conversation on the floor of the Senate as to how to fix this. But we better be clear ahead of time as to what the implications are.

I yield the floor.

I know my colleague will seek recognition.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first I want to thank my friend from Connecticut, not only for those very powerful words but for his ongoing advocacy and leadership in the whole realm of health care and the importance of something as basic as being able to take the kids to the doctor, to make sure that you have the health care and the affordable health insurance that you need. I want to thank Senator MURPHY, and I also want to thank Senator BALDWIN as well, my partner and neighbor from Wisconsin. Senator BALDWIN is also a champion as it relates to quality, affordable health care for every American. Both of them are very important voices and leaders on what we call the HELP Committee. I am their partner on the other committee that does the financing of health care, which is, in fact, the Finance Committee.

As the ranking Democrat—the lead Democrat—on the Health Care Subcommittee and someone deeply involved through the Finance Committee as we were putting together the Affordable Care Act, I think it is appropriate for me to be able to talk about legislative intent. That is what I want to do for a moment. We knew that in putting together a way for everyone to be able to purchase affordable health insurance and indicating the expectation that we would, it had to be affordable.

I worked very hard to make sure that we had a tax credit system that would essentially lower people's taxes so they could take those funds and be able to use those to be able to afford health insurance. In fact, at the time, Senator Baucus, the chairman of the committee, would razz me and call me “Senator Affordability” in all the meetings.

We spent a lot of time focusing on how to make sure health insurance was affordable. What is happening, as Senator MURPHY said, is that if the Supreme Court sides with the Republican position, 6.4 million Americans are going to see tax credits go away and their taxes go up. The worst part is that their taxes are going to go up and their health care is going to go down. It is not a good deal for anybody.

Unfortunately, one of those States is my State of Michigan.

But let me talk a little bit more, first, about the broad picture, because we are looking at \$1.7 billion in tax increases to people all over America if the Supreme Court sides with the Republican position. Basically, somehow we would have to say it is rational that Members from all of these States actually voted for a system that didn't help their own people, which makes absolutely no sense.

I can't believe anybody would do that. People wouldn't do that. Basically, we are saying that Members of Congress said that people in Massachusetts, where there is a State exchange, can have a tax cut, but if you live in Oklahoma you can't. Or if you live in the District of Columbia, right here, you can have a tax cut, but if you live in Louisiana, you can't. Or if you live in New York, you can have a tax cut, but if you live in Texas, you can't.

We can go right around looking at some of the numbers. I will not go through all of the charts that I did last week. I am very grateful for Senator MURPHY for pointing out two very important States.

Let me talk about my State of Michigan. I happen to be a baseball fan. I am a big Detroit Tigers fan. When we look at Comerica Park in Detroit, it is a beautiful stadium. Mr. President, we welcome you to come and watch a game and get our folks engaged in what they do best at winning games. The fact of the matter is that you would have to fill up Comerica Park five times—that is what it would take—to get the number of people who are going to lose their health care tax credits if the Supreme Court sides with the Republican position—228,388 people.

A couple of other States: In Illinois, 232,371 people will see their taxes go up. In New Jersey, 172,000-plus will see their taxes go up. In Ohio, another State right down from the great State of Michigan, 161,011 people will see their taxes go up. Finally, in Pennsylvania, it is 348,823 people.

When we look at all of this, all of the States together, 6.4 million people are going to see tax increases. It makes no sense that people who represent these States would have voted for a system that raises taxes on their people and doesn't give them the health care they need while other people, in fact, see lower taxes—tax credits that allow them to pay for their health care and get affordable health care. It makes absolutely no sense.

Let me also say this. When we look at the Chairman of the Finance Committee in the Senate, the former distinguished chairman, Senator Max Baucus from Montana, all the time we were debating the Affordable Care Act, it was clear that Montana had absolutely no plan to set up their own exchange. They indicated that. In order for the Court to side with Republicans, we would have to somehow believe that Senator Baucus would write a health

care bill with tax cuts for other States and not his own State of Montana, which I can assure you he did not do. The same can be said for myself.

The legislative intent is absolutely clear on this. What the Court is deciding, in my opinion, is something that I can't believe they are even bringing in front of the U.S. Supreme Court because on the face of it, it makes no sense. Unfortunately, depending on how they rule, millions of Americans—millions of Americans—will see their taxes go up and their health care go away.

The intent is very real. It is very clear in the Affordable Care Act. Title I, page 1: Quality, affordable health care for all Americans. What was true 5 years ago when we wrote this bill is true today: The right to get the tax cuts has nothing to do with the State in which you live. If you are in America, then you deserve the opportunity to receive tax cuts that will make your health care affordable, whether you get your plan on an exchange run by the State or through healthcare.gov.

This is about moms and dads in Michigan and across the country being able to go to bed at night without having to say a prayer that says: Please, God, don't let the kids get sick because what am I going to do? The Affordable Care Act has provided an answer and the peace of mind for millions of Americans. We certainly hope that the Supreme Court will not take that away.

I would now like to yield the floor to the great Senator from Wisconsin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

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#### TRAGEDY AT EMANUEL AME CHURCH

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, before I begin my focus on the Affordable Care Act, I want to simply state that my heart goes out to the victims of last night's shooting in Charleston, SC, as they participated in a prayer service at Emanuel AME Church. The victims and their families and the entire community are in my thoughts and prayers in the wake of this unspeakable hate crime.

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#### AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Ms. BALDWIN. My colleagues and I gathered here on the floor today to share some good news—something we unfortunately don't get to hear quite enough on the Senate floor. I am here today with Senators MURPHY and STABENOW to talk about how the Affordable Care Act is working to strengthen and improve the economic security and the health security of our families all across the United States.

Before the Affordable Care Act, over 50 million Americans were uninsured, and seniors paid higher out-of-pocket costs for their prescription drugs. Insurance companies wrote their own rules and jacked up premiums. They denied coverage to people with pre-

existing health conditions. And in too many cases they dropped your coverage because you got sick, got older or had a baby.

Making the Affordable Care Act the law of the land marked a critical turning point that was essential to stopping these predatory practices and to giving our families the quality, affordable health care they deserve and they need. Now the story has changed.

As my colleagues have noted, we have seen a historic reduction in the number of uninsured since Congress passed the Affordable Care Act in 2010. Thanks to the law, over 16 million previously uninsured Americans have received health coverage. This year more than 10 million individuals have an affordable, quality health plan through the law's new health care marketplaces. Nearly 8.7 million people are benefiting from the health insurance cost assistance provided under the new law.

I want to make it clear that the law's important benefits are making a real difference in my home State of Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, over 180,000 people have a quality insurance plan through our Federally facilitated Affordable Care Act marketplace.

More than 90 percent of these Wisconsinites are receiving support to make their coverage more affordable. More importantly, the insurance companies don't get to make their own rules anymore.

Because of the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies can no longer deny coverage to the more than 2 million Wisconsinites who have some type of preexisting health condition. Insurance companies can no longer charge copays or deductibles for critical preventative services such as contraception or cancer screenings for over 1 million Wisconsin women. Thanks to the new law, 89,000 Wisconsin seniors on Medicare will see their prescription drug doughnut hole closed by 2022. In the meantime, these same seniors on average have saved \$913 each on prescription drugs.

I could continue on to share more numbers that prove that the ACA is working for our families in Wisconsin and in States across the country. But the real proof, the real story is about the faces and the people behind these numbers. It is about real people, real Wisconsinites, who are realizing the benefits of this law every day—real Wisconsinites such as Doug from Colgate, WI. At age 62, Doug was worried about becoming uninsured. He and his wife had been insured through her employer, but she was about to apply for Medicare. Fortunately, Doug was able to find an affordable health plan on the Affordable Care Act marketplace. He did not have to lie awake at night worrying about being denied coverage due to his recent heart surgery or another preexisting condition.

There are real Wisconsinites such as Kim of West Allis. Kim runs a small costume shop. She lost Medicaid cov-

erage when her son turned 18 years old. She went without medical care because she could not afford it, even though Kim's doctor had found an indication of cancer during a hysterectomy. But then she signed up for the affordable coverage on the Affordable Care Act's marketplace that costs only \$79 a month. And when she renewed her coverage this year, her premium dropped to \$20 a month. Without this coverage and the premium tax credits, she wouldn't have been able to afford the extra checkups she needed to keep track of the possibility of the cancer emerging.

Joelisa is a real Wisconsinite. She is a community health worker. Joelisa lost her health insurance when she switched jobs but was able to quickly find a new plan through the ACA marketplace. The plan cost only \$87 per month with premium tax credits—a tremendous tax savings from her \$500 monthly premiums through her previous job. Joelisa's health care coverage helps her manage several chronic conditions, including a metabolic syndrome that carries a high risk of progressing to diabetes, and it also makes sure that her daughter gets immunizations and stays as healthy as possible.

One part of this story has not changed, and that part is that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't want the Affordable Care Act to work. In fact, they continue to root for its failure. They don't want you to know about Joelisa's lower health insurance premiums or about Kim's affordable plan that is helping her prevent cancer.

Regrettably, what they do want is crystal clear. They want to repeal the law and turn back the clock to the days when only the healthy and wealthy could afford the luxury of quality health insurance. Since its passage, Republicans have spent countless days trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act by any and all means. They have tried to repeal the law in Congress by voting over 50 times—that is 5–0—to repeal all or parts of the Affordable Care Act. They have also tried to repeal the law by advancing politically motivated lawsuits, including the most recent one that would rob millions of Americans of the health insurance they have today. In Wisconsin alone, this would mean that over 160,000 hard-working Americans would see their taxes increase if they were stripped of their health insurance subsidies. That is enough to fill historic Lambeau Field twice. It is one thing to say the numbers, it is another thing to imagine the number of Wisconsinites that affects.

It is not only Wisconsin families who would be impacted by this devastation but also families in our neighboring States—neighboring States with Federal exchanges—such as Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa.

Republicans have tried to say they have an answer, but their answer is really nothing more than another tired