

their leadership in marking up this bill.

I hope the new chairmen of the Banking, Commerce, and Finance Committees will demonstrate the same sense of urgency and schedule markups for their portion of the surface transportation legislation. Despite the common knowledge about the expiration of surface transportation funding, Republicans have delayed the important work of writing a bipartisan bill for far too long.

Our good citizens don't deserve another exercise in crisis management like we are seeing this week in the Export-Import Bank. Democrats have laid out a clear timetable and process for bipartisan negotiations. A long-term, robust bill can pass before the August recess.

To recap, we requested a number of things, but let me mention a few of them: hearings in each of the authorizing committees by June 23—we know how that has already passed—bipartisan markups in all authorizing committees by July 10 that include robust increases for highways, transit, passenger rail, and of course all kinds of new safety programs and maintain those we have; and basically a long-term bill on the Senate floor by July 20.

If the Republican leader continues to avoid conducting business on Fridays, we have only 15 session days in the month of July; that is, 15 days to address our country's major surface transportation needs and help our struggling economy by providing lots and lots of jobs. The clock is ticking.

At a hearing on the funding gap last week, Senator HATCH said: "As chairman of the [Finance] committee, I intend to solve this problem."

Well, I appreciate that very much. I am taking him at his word. Senate Democrats are ready to work with Republicans to grow, not cut, our transportation funding. But I say to my friend the senior Senator from Utah, please, please do something that is more than another short-term extension. We need a 6-year bill. Every State in the Union needs that. We have had them in the past, but now the Republicans, learning how to filibuster—they have stopped, basically, everything we have tried to do in this regard.

We cannot—I say to my friend from Utah—we cannot have another extension. I repeat, this would be the 34th short-term extension. Enough is enough. We need to move forward with a plan that funds our Nation's infrastructure, supports jobs, and grows our economy, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs. Americans rely on a strong transportation system to travel. They do this to commute and also, of course, to move goods across the country.

This program was the brainchild of Dwight D. Eisenhower, the President of the United States, when he called upon his experience as a young military officer in trying to bring military equip-

ment and men across the country. It was very difficult. As a young military officer he said: Someday, if I have any ability to change this, I will—and he did. The National Highway System is Eisenhower's highway system. This is not a program that was developed by anyone other than Dwight Eisenhower.

So temporary funding for the highway trust fund leads only to uncertainty, slowing construction, and of course hurting economic development in every State of our Nation. The Republican leadership should act now to avoid this looming deadline and support long-term investment into our Nation's crumbling infrastructure.

Mr. President, I see no one on the floor so I would ask what the business of the day is.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

DEFENDING PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ACT

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 2146, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 2146, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal law enforcement officers, firefighters, and air traffic controllers to make penalty-free withdrawals from governmental plans after age 50, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with amendment No. 2060 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2061 (to amendment No. 2060), of a perfecting nature.

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

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

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

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, we had a wonderful event last night here in Washington that I was able to attend. It was a night honoring champions for anti-gun violence measures across the

country. It was put on by Sandy Hook Promise, which is an organization that has grown up out of the tragedy in Sandy Hook. A number of parents have become the organizers of an effort to try and learn from what happened at Sandy Hook and make sure we don't repeat the mistakes of the past.

We actually got to honor two of our colleagues there. We honored Senator PAT TOOMEY for his work 2 years ago on the background checks bill, as well as Senator STABENOW, who, of course, has been a great advocate for increasing resources in our mental health system. And as wonderful a night as it was to honor these champions of change, it also was a night in which we were reminded about that terrible morning in December of 2012.

We watched a short video of the news coverage, and we listened to the parents of Daniel Barden and Dylan Hockley. The husband of Mary Sherlach talked to us about what their lives have been like in the years since that shooting at Sandy Hook.

I remember the hours and days after the shooting. I remember feeling like I needed to be really restrained about talking about the obvious policy issues that, to me, were due for airing and that sort of tumbled out of the facts surrounding that tragedy. I mean, this kid—this really troubled young man—walked into a school with a semiautomatic weapon designed for the military and shot 20 kids in less than 5 minutes. This gun was designed for the military, designed to kill as many people as quickly as possible, and it killed every single kid it hit. There were 20 kids shot. Twenty kids were dead in a matter of minutes.

So it seemed to me we should have an immediate discussion about why this kind of gun is still legal. But I held back because it felt like the mourning and the grieving should take precedence over action. It took me only up to the first wake that I attended to realize I was wrong. Senator BLUMENTHAL and I went to every single wake and every funeral we could over the course of that first week—and there were dozens.

At first, I remember waiting in a really long line, standing next to Senator BLUMENTHAL. I remember as if it were yesterday, talking to a sobbing mother, who was standing in front of us waiting in that line and telling us about how her child survived the shooting only because she had been sick that day and she stayed home from school. But all her daughters' friends were dead. As we approached that family, I remember struggling with what to say. I am lucky that the senior Senator from Connecticut, who sits behind me in the Chamber, had the right words ready. He said to the parents something like this: If you are ever ready or willing to talk about how we make sure this doesn't happen again, we will be waiting. The dad didn't pause more than a few seconds before he said, clear as day: We are ready now.

In the years since, these mass shootings have become as commonplace as rain storms. Since 2011, the number of mass shootings in the United States has tripled—triple. After each one, the forces of the status quo—the defenders of the gun industry—tell us we can't talk about policy reform in the days after a shooting. One prominent commentator called those of us who dared talk about change in the wake of Charleston “sick.” How convenient that is. How convenient that, at the moment when the world is watching, when the country is asking itself what we can do to make sure another mass slaughter doesn't happen again, the rules say we can't say a word.

But think about how these rules would work, because Charleston happens 10 times over, every single day, across this country. Eighty-six people die, on average, every day because of guns.

Last Thursday the families of Clementa Pinckney, Cynthia Hurd, Tywanza Sanders, Sharonda Coleman Singleton, Myra Thompson, Ethel Lee Lance, Susie Jackson, Daniel Lee Simmons, Sr., and DePayne Middleton-Doctor mourned the loss of their loved ones in Charleston.

But the day before, on Wednesday, the families of Angel Feliciano, Malik Mercer, Eric Ferguson, Michael Kidd, Jr., Thomas Whitaker, Roy Brown, Martarese Gentry, Keith Battle, and Ronald Collins mourned their loss. And those were just nine. There were dozens more on Wednesday, the day before the Charleston shooting, who were killed by guns.

If we can't talk about anti-gun violence policy the day after a large number of Americans are shot, then we will never talk about anti-gun violence policy, because on average 86 people die from gun violence every single day. But even if we accept that there is never a bad time to talk about how we can end this carnage, then we also have to have the courage to take on all the other ridiculous arguments about why we can't act.

Now, the first one is familiar because it comes right after the mass shooting happens. A former NRA board member trotted this one out within hours of Charleston: He said that the solution was to just arm more pastors and parishioners in churches so they can defend themselves. The more there are people who have guns, the less people will die from guns—so goes this logic. So don't act.

The simple argument is that more good guys with guns equals less gun deaths. The problem with that argument is it is a boldfaced lie. Study after study shows that the more guns there are in a community, the more crime there is. The more guns there are, the more gun homicides there are. New evidence makes the case even clearer. As States more clearly separate between those with lax gun laws and those with stricter gun laws, we can look to see what happens.

The second argument is one that I have heard from my Republican colleagues in the Senate just in the last few days—that these laws can't stop a madman such as Dylann Roof or Adam Lanza from perpetrating violence. Some of my colleagues say the only recourse is to close our eyes and pray this doesn't happen again. But again, these stubborn facts betray that argument. As I said, now that we have States that have loose gun laws and States that have tougher gun laws, we can see what happens. Over and over research shows us that jurisdictions that make it a little bit harder for bad guys to get guns have less gun deaths.

In my State of Connecticut, Johns Hopkins researchers concluded that our permit-to-carry laws have reduced gun crimes by 40 percent. Similarly, they concluded that in Missouri, the repeal of a similar law increased gun homicides by 25 percent. Now, both studies controlled for all other possible factors influencing gun crimes, and they still found these shocking results.

While the facts are still fresh out of Charleston, there is evidence that a different set of laws could have—not would have—stopped Dylann Roof without having any effect on law-abiding gun owners in South Carolina.

Root had charges pending for trespassing and drug crimes. Alone, neither would have disqualified him from owning a gun. But what if our laws were different so that multiple misdemeanors—a pattern of criminal behavior—disqualified you from buying a firearm? Or what about a permit-to-carry law?

Maybe local law enforcement knew enough about Root—his criminal past or his association with extremist right-wing organizations—to know he shouldn't carry a weapon. Now, maybe not, but if South Carolina had a permit-to-carry law, at least there would have been a chance law enforcement would have withheld a permit from a young man as plainly unstable as Root.

But even if you don't believe that any specific law could have prevented the tragedy in Charleston or in Newtown, I am not sure that it matters, because separate and aside from the specific case-by-case impact of any law is the collective moral and psychological effect of nonaction. No matter how maligned Congress becomes, we still set the moral tone for the Nation. When we declare something to be morally out of bounds, especially when we do it in a bipartisan or nonpartisan manner, Americans listen. They take cues from our endorsements and from our approbations.

That is why, in my heart of hearts, I believe that our silence has made us complicit in these murders. I don't care that an assault weapons ban or universal background check maybe wouldn't have stopped the slaughter in Charleston. When we do nothing year after year, our silence sends a silent message of endorsement to the killers. I am not saying we are in conscious

alignment with these assassins, but when all we do in the wake of Newtown, Tucson, Aurora, and Charleston is rhetorical, then those on the fringe, those hanging on the edge of reason, those contemplating the unthinkable take a cue that we don't really mean it when we condemn mass violence, because if we did, we would, at the very least, try to do something—anything—to stop it, and we don't.

Quite frankly, removing one flag from one building in South Carolina doesn't cut it, and neither does a handful of retailers ceasing to sell Confederate flag paraphernalia. Don't get me wrong. I actually think the tidal wave of sentiment to remove the last vestiges of this symbol of slavery and racism is significant. That flag has quietly endorsed conscious and subconscious racism, particularly in the South—but really all across the country—for as long as it has continued to be perceived as a mainstream American symbol.

The events of the last few days are also important because they show that people of all political stripes—conservatives and liberals, Democrats and Republicans—have been so emotionally moved by the shooting in Charleston that they were inspired to some sort of action. That matters.

But removing the Confederate flag is a necessary but totally, completely insufficient response to Charleston. Taking down a flag from a building is a pretty easy giveback. Deciding to spend billions of dollars to make sure that troubled young men get the help they need for their sickness is harder, and so is taking on the gun industry and listening to the 90 percent of Americans who want to make sure criminals aren't a continued profit center for the gun makers and sellers.

Now, Walmart should be congratulated for ceasing sales of the Confederate flag, but they still advertise an assault weapon online that even their description concedes is designed for use by law enforcement and the military. Did you know that last year there were at least 92 shootings in Walmart? Some 16 people died, and 42 people were injured by guns in Walmart. Getting rid of the Confederate flag from their shelves isn't going to help that unbelievably disturbing trend.

So we need real action, a real debate. We need a real, honest policy to happen here. And, no, it is not all about guns. It is about mental health, it is about law enforcement, and it is about a culture of violence and hate that we have just become immune to.

In South Carolina, Reverend Pinckney knew something about real action. He supported things like expanded background checks and body cameras for police, maybe because he came from a family of action. His father and grandfather were both pastors who fought to end White-only political primaries and segregated school busing. He wasn't just about condemnation. He lived his life to effectuate political

change. Last night, at the Sandy Hook Promise dinner, I chatted with my friend Mark Barden. His son, Daniel, massacred at Sandy Hook Elementary School by a young man wielding a military-style assault weapon with cartridges of 30 bullets apiece, would have just finished third grade last week. Mark recalled how special Danny was and how Daniel, just 6 years old, lived a life of action, too. Daniel was that kid who sensed when other children were hurting. His dad told me last night how Daniel would see little kids sitting alone at lunch with no one to talk to, and Daniel would go over, sit down next to them, and make a new friend, just because it was the right thing to do.

Reverend Pinckney and little Daniel Barden knew the difference between words and actions. They understood that actions are what really count.

The U.S. gun homicide rate is 20 times higher than that of our 22 peer nations. And 86 people die every day from guns—that is 4 Sandy Hooks, 10 Charlestons every day. Since Sandy Hook, there has been a school shooting, on average, every week.

How on Earth can we live with ourselves if we do nothing or, worse, if we don't even try.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I wish to spend the next few minutes speaking about the Supreme Court and particularly the fact that the Supreme Court has some big cases they are going to hand down probably tomorrow, Friday, and Monday, before they adjourn for the summer.

I particularly wish to speak about King v. Burwell, which, as the Presiding Officer knows, could be the beginning of the end of ObamaCare. In the process, it also will potentially disrupt the health care coverage for more than 6 million Americans. The Court could issue its decision, as I said, as early as tomorrow. What they will decide is whether the IRS is bound by the law which Congress writes and which is signed by the President or whether they can make it up on their own.

Specifically, the case challenges the legality of subsidies provided to 6 million people in up to 37 States that they have depended on to buy their ObamaCare-approved policies, including about 1 million in my State of Texas.

If the Court rules against the IRS, it will literally be the third strike against ObamaCare from the Supreme Court of the United States. It would

serve as yet another reminder of the administration's overreach of its authority under the Constitution—a practice that has become disturbingly routine.

This administration and our friends across the aisle have failed to own up to the repeated demonstrations of the flaws of ObamaCare since it passed in March of 2010. The biggest problem is that this is partisan legislation jammed through Congress that no Republican in the Senate voted for, so the responsibility lies clearly at their feet.

Through this law, the administration has wasted billions of dollars on exchanges that have failed to function properly. My colleagues may recall that the President even called the healthcare.gov exchange—which was so broken and just didn't work—a disaster. The President himself said that.

It is also based on a system that grows the bureaucracy at the expense of legitimate, needed health care delivery. I would have thought that if Congress was going to reform health care, it would certainly include reducing the cost and making it more affordable. However, time after time, we have seen that ObamaCare has actually driven up costs. Just last month, one study noted that nearly \$274 billion of projected ObamaCare spending will end up going to its implementation—bureaucratic and administrative costs—and not actually for health care. That is \$274 billion. Do we think that money could have been better spent providing people with health care policies they can afford and access to the doctors and the hospitals they need?

Today, ObamaCare has utterly failed to live up to the many promises the President and congressional Democrats made to the American people. Seeing the Presiding Officer in the chair reminds me that both he and I served as attorneys general in our States. One of my responsibilities in Texas—and no doubt the Presiding Officer's as well—was to enforce our consumer protection laws. Can my colleagues imagine, if anybody other than the Federal Government had made the series of promises the President and congressional Democrats made under ObamaCare that proved over time to be demonstrably false, whether a company in the private sector could withstand the flood of lawsuits by the Attorney General and other consumer protection officials against that company?

I guess the fact is that there is very little recourse to the American people—certainly the courts—to enforce our consumer protection laws against the outright deceit and misleading promises that were made in order to sell ObamaCare, which are clearly, as time has demonstrated, not true.

The President's trail of broken promises has instead led us to a damaged health care system and a limping economy. There is a reason why the economy shrunk last quarter by 0.7 percent. What that means is that fewer people can find work and their wages are de-

pressed. We need our economy to grow. But as long as additional and heavy burdens, such as ObamaCare and unnecessary regulations, are imposed on the private sector, those jobs and those rising wages are simply not going to exist.

This week, many are rightly concerned that, depending on what the Supreme Court decides, millions of people will lose their access to health care should the Court rule against the President. I must point out that is a feature of ObamaCare. That is not the fault of the Supreme Court, and it is not the fault of the opponents of ObamaCare; it is the fault of the President and of the people who passed ObamaCare because this will be a feature of ObamaCare, this failed law.

Having said where the responsibility lies, while we didn't contribute to getting the country in this mess, we are ready, willing, and able to provide an off-ramp for the millions of people who may have their health care interrupted. My State, as I indicated earlier, is not immune. Close to 1 million Texans could suddenly see their costs shoot up. So I am here to emphatically say to the Texans whose health care coverage may be disrupted: We will not leave you out in the cold as a casualty of this flawed law, and we will no longer allow this flawed piece of legislation to cause additional hardship for hard-working Texas families.

In order to protect Americans and Texans who may lose their health care coverage if the Court decides against the President and against the IRS, we are prepared, having worked for months now, to protect those who need it as they transition out of ObamaCare.

Make no mistake about it—this will be the beginning of the end of ObamaCare if the Court rules for the plaintiff in King v. Burwell.

At the same time, we plan to provide an end to the individual and employer mandates, the opportunity for States to opt out of ObamaCare, and finally, an end to government-backed health care that the American people don't want, don't need, and cannot afford.

There is a better alternative. If the Supreme Court rules for King, we will offer the American people what ObamaCare never could—options, choices, and the freedom to choose the health care coverage they want at a price they can afford. Most importantly, we want to allow individuals as well as the States to opt out of this disastrous law all across the country. In doing so, Americans can get what they actually need and not what government tells them they must buy. By empowering States to opt out, we put the States back in the driver's seat. I must say, every public opinion poll I have seen indicates that the people have a lot more confidence in the ability of the States to deal with their health care needs than they do the Federal Government, particularly in light of the failed experiment over the last 5 years. We put the States back in

the driver's seat and allow them the flexibility they need to more effectively lower costs and increase choices.

So while we didn't create this mess, we are ready to do our best to work together to protect the American people from any more harm caused by this legislation. The American people deserve real, patient-centered reforms which, again, lower costs, making it more affordable, and increase access to care—not the opposite.

If the Court delivers what could be a third strike against ObamaCare, my colleagues and I are eager to provide the American people with the freedom and the options they need in order to get the best health care available at a price they can afford.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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. GARDNER. 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. GARDNER. Mr. President, as we are moving toward concluding debate on trade promotion authority, I rise to speak about what the Trans-Pacific Partnership will mean for our Nation's global standing. As we have heard throughout this debate, the potential economic benefits from TPP for our Nation are simply enormous. According to the Congressional Research Service, total trade in goods between TPP member countries reached \$1.6 trillion in 2014; that is, the nations represented in TPP, \$1.6 trillion in trade between those countries, representing nearly 40 percent of all global trade.

In my own State of Colorado, trade with countries involved in TPP currently supports over 265,000 jobs. The nations represented by the TPP agreement—the negotiations that are taking place right now—265,000 jobs in Colorado result from those nations. But we know the TPP is more than just an economic agreement. It is a critical test of U.S. strategic leadership in the Asia-Pacific region, a region that will be integral to our economic and national security for generations to come.

As stated in the 2015 National Security Strategy:

Sustaining our leadership depends on shaping an emerging global economic order that continues to reflect our interests and our values. Despite its success, our rules-based system is now competing against alternative, less-open models. . . . To meet this challenge, we must be strategic in the use of our economic strength to set new rules of the road, strengthen our partnerships, and promote inclusive development.

Those are important words from the National Security Strategy issued just this year. Defense Secretary Ash Carter echoed that sentiment when he said on April 6, 2015, the "TPP is as important to me as another aircraft carrier." If we fail to pass the TPP, we know

others will rush to fill the vacuum left behind with such "alternative, less-open models," as the National Security Strategy laid out.

So we should not be surprised when a rising China tries to fill the vacuum and that they would, indeed, exert efforts to fill that vacuum with policies and programs crafted from their own vision of what is beneficial for themselves and their region.

Let's take China's recent establishment of the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank, the AIIB, as an example. On the face of it, the AIIB is a positive response to address the infrastructure challenges in the region. It is also the clearest evidence yet that the United States faces a very serious credibility gap in the Asia-Pacific region. The AIIB is envisioned as a \$100 billion enterprise, with China as the largest shareholder that will hold veto power over major investment decisions. Its rules of governance and standards remain unclear.

Yet 56 nations, including some of the strongest U.S. allies, including the United Kingdom, Australia, South Korea, have indicated they will join the Chinese-led AIIB. We need to understand why. Do they believe the AIIB is primarily an economic opportunity for their companies? They might. But I would contend that the reason is a lack of leadership from the United States, again going back to that credibility gap.

China is also part of ongoing negotiations for another regional trade pact, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which would join China, Australia, India, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea with nations comprising the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN. In addition to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, Beijing is also entering negotiations to consider 6 agreements comprised of an additional 11 countries.

That brings China's total trade agreement portfolio to 33 countries. While the United States should continue bilateral and multilateral economic engagement with China that brings high levels of transparency and accountability, the fundamental question before us today is this: Do we want the United States or do we want China writing the rules?

It is clear that while our partners and allies in the region may welcome additional Chinese investment, they want more American leadership, not less. They want more American standards, not fewer.

We know the standards TPP and U.S. engagement brings include not only important economic benefits, such as removal of tariff or nontariff barriers, but fundamental American values such as transparency, good governance, respect for the rule of law, and basic human rights.

U.S. economic statecraft in the Asia-Pacific reflects our values and cements our leadership in the critically impor-

tant region. We must look at TPP as just one step forward in this enduring commitment. Despite the crises of the day that are occurring in the Middle East, where the United States does and should play an important role, our Nation's future lies in Asia.

Just consider the following estimates from the Asian Development Bank. By 2050, Asia will account for over half of the global population and over half of the world's gross domestic product. The Asian middle class will rise to a staggering 3 billion people. Per capita GDP income in the region will rise to around \$40,000, making it similar to the Europe of today.

We cannot miss the opportunity to be a part of this historic transformation. Working with Japan and regional partners, we must ensure that our policies strengthen existing friendships and build new partnerships that will be critical to U.S. national security and economic well-being for generations to come. Unfortunately, the administration's efforts to date with regard to the Asia-Pacific region have fallen short.

While I commend the President's leadership on TPP and our Asia rebalance, which many of us agreed to, the Asia rebalance policy has yielded few tangible results, and it is in need of a serious overhaul. The administration has consistently stated that the rebalance represented a "whole-of-government" effort to redirect U.S. military, diplomatic, and commercial service resources toward the Asia-Pacific region.

But in April of 2014, just a year ago, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee released a report stating that "while the United States has successfully moved forward with the initial phases of implementing the military aspects of the rebalance," the State Department and the Department of Commerce have not substantially prioritized their resources to increase engagement with the Asia-Pacific region.

The report concluded that "the administration can improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the rebalance policy by increasing civilian engagement, strengthening diplomatic partnerships, and empowering US businesses."

It is clear we need an integrated, multiyear planning and budget strategy for a rebalancing of the U.S. policy in Asia. That is why I was proud to offer an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that passed unanimously that would require the President to submit a strategy within 120 days to promote U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific region. Our partners in the region must know every day that the United States is here to stay. The TPP is the first step in the process.

This is an important debate that we have this week. Later on today, we will have the opportunity to vote for trade promotion authority. I hope this Chamber will see the wisdom of passing that legislation—265,000 jobs in Colorado from a region responsible for TPP,

responsible for increasing economic opportunity, increasing wage growth, and the number of jobs that we have not only in Colorado but around this country.

I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to fast-track trade promotion authority.

I am a blue-collar Senator. My heart and soul lies with blue-collar America. I spent most of my life in a blue-collar neighborhood. My mother and father owned a neighborhood grocery store and when Bethlehem Steel went on strike, my dad gave those workers credit.

Blue-collar workers in the labor movement stood with me during my first campaign for the House in 1976. I wish there were more of them left to stand with me now, but the great manufacturing unions have been whittled away. On this fast-track trade vote, and in my last years in the Senate, I will continue to stand with the unions.

Let me be very clear that I support and encourage trade. Trade is very important to my State. It is vital to The Port of Baltimore and Maryland's agricultural industries such as poultry on the Eastern Shore.

In the past I have supported bilateral trade agreements. We have leverage in those situations to get strong enforceable labor and environmental provisions into those agreements. We can improve living standards and stop child labor in sweatshops. And Maryland workers can compete successfully in a global marketplace if they are given a level playing field.

But I have always been suspicious of multilateral agreements such as NAFTA. I have seen too many of these big deals fail to deliver the promises of new jobs and businesses. Every time somebody talks about a big multilateral trade agreement that will provide a cornucopia of opportunity, we lose jobs in Baltimore. And my constituents in Dundalk don't have a steel industry anymore. They wonder why Congress didn't do more to protect them from the effects of trade.

I believe that a renewal of fast-track trade authority for the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership means more Americans will lose their jobs.

We should use the leverage of our trade agreements to ensure fair competition. That means workers in other countries should have the right to organize into unions. Without the strength of collective bargaining, their wages will always be below ours. They should also have worker safety protection and retirement and health care benefits.

We should use the leverage of our trade agreements to encourage countries to respect the basic human rights of their citizens. Everyone deserves the right to live in a healthy, clean, unpolluted environment. And every worker should be guaranteed fundamental rights at work.

Why is the role of Congress so important in trade agreements? To make sure that the American people get a good deal. I am ready to support trade agreements that are good for America, good for workers, and good for the environment. Congress should consider trade legislation and amendments using the same procedures we use to consider other legislation.

I have to base my decision on the facts and what I know to be true in my State. I know that proponents of fast-track say it is inevitable that there will be winners and losers. The problem with these big trade deals is that America's workers and their families always seem to be the losers. They lose their jobs. If they keep their jobs, or find new jobs, they lose the wage rates they have earned. Working people have faced the loss of jobs, lower wages, and a reduced standard of living, and a shrinking manufacturing base.

I have to stand with my constituents who have felt repeatedly betrayed by the trade deals. I have to vote against fast-track trade authority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, across the street from the Senate Chamber is the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court this week has several important cases pending. We are waiting anxiously for decisions, but probably the one that affects as many Americans as any other is a case called King v. Burwell. King is a case that was brought by someone who was objecting to the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare.

They are arguing that the bill we passed in the Senate and the House did not include a subsidy, a tax credit, for those who are under Federal marketplace plans. My State of Illinois is one of those States. In Illinois, there are about 232,000 individuals who receive a tax credit that allows them to pay for their health insurance. Their income levels are such that they need a helping hand, otherwise the health insurance premium would be too expensive.

In my State, the average tax credit that goes to these 232,000 is \$1,800 a year—not insubstantial—\$150 a month. Now, those who brought the lawsuit say that the law does not provide this tax credit. I believe it clearly does. No one during the course of debating this bill ever suggested otherwise. In fact, there were many times when we calculated the impact of this law. We always assumed the tax credit would be there for families, whether their State had its own State insurance exchange or used the Federal exchange, as we do in the State of Illinois.

But the big problem we have is that if the Court rules the other way, if those who are critical of the Affordable Care Act—and some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been on the floor this morning talking about getting rid of the Affordable Care Act—if the Court rules in that direction, we are going to have a problem on our

hands because at least in my State, 232,000 people will see their health insurance premiums go up 35 percent, on average, based on that Court ruling.

There are not many working families who can face that kind of increase and say, well, it really does not make any difference. It makes a big difference—on average \$150 a month. For families living paycheck to paycheck and struggling who qualify for this tax credit, it is a big problem. Many of them will not be able to afford health insurance.

So what happens next? We go back to where we were before: More uninsured Americans. I don't know how many people in the Senate Chamber who serve here have ever been in a position in their lives where they did not have health insurance and needed it. I have. Newly married, my wife and I had a baby with a serious health issue. We had no health insurance. It is a humbling experience, as a father, as a husband, to be in that position. It means hoping you get the best medical care and hoping you can pay for it.

For many families across America, that was the standard before the Affordable Care Act. But because of the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, we now have fewer people uninsured in America. That is a good thing, not just because it gives you peace of mind and access to quality health care but because uninsured people still get sick. When they get sick and go to the hospital, their expenses that they can't cover because they don't have health insurance are passed along to everyone else. How can that possibly be a good outcome?

So the Affordable Care Act has increased the number of people across America who have health insurance by about 11 million people—not insubstantial. It has reduced the uninsured rate, as I mentioned, 3½ percent in just a 1- or 2-year period of time. Six million receive these tax credits. So there are 6 million families who may not know it, but what happens across the street at the Supreme Court this week or next week could have a big impact on the family budget.

I struggle to try to understand those who hate the Affordable Care Act like the devil hates Holy water. They cannot stand this notion that 11 million people have health insurance. They want to get rid of it. There are proposals from the other side of the aisle to get rid of the Affordable Care Act. They want to eliminate the individual mandate. What does that mean? That is the part of the law that says: You have a personal responsibility to have health insurance.

Now, do we run into any other aspect of life where we are required to have insurance? Drive a car in my State, you better have automobile insurance. Buy a home in my State, virtually every bank requires fire insurance. It is a matter of responsibility. So the individual mandate not only says to everyone: You need to buy health insurance, it helps those who are in low-income

categories, and it is a critical part of the big picture.

Here is the big picture: If we are going to say, as we do in this law, that no health insurance company can discriminate against you because of a pre-existing condition that you have or that someone in your family has—if we are going to say that, the only way it works in the insurance business is if you have a lot of people who are in that insurance pool. That includes people with preexisting conditions.

So when the Republicans argue: We are going to get rid of the individual mandate, you can sign up if you want to, the people who run insurance companies say: It doesn't work. You have to have a pool with a lot of people in it: healthy and those not so healthy. Otherwise, you cannot write insurance that is going to work. What else has happened because of the Affordable Care Act? The rate of growth in health care costs has started—just started—to come down. It does not have to come down much to have a dramatic impact on our economy.

This Affordable Care Act, incidentally, which many on the other side are cheering to have it abolished—this Affordable Care Act, according to the Congressional Budget Office, is going to cut \$353 billion in deficit. How could that be?

Because one of the largest drivers of cost to the Federal Government is the cost of health care. If the rate of growth in the cost of health care just takes a little dip down and you project it out, it is big dollars.

We even used what many Republicans believe is holy writ called dynamic scoring. We even said: Take a look. Use dynamic scoring, and tell us what impact it has on the deficit.

It turns out that even with dynamic scoring, our Affordable Care Act reduces the deficit by \$137 billion. It works. More people are being insured. Folks cannot be denied insurance because of a preexisting condition. The overall cost of health care is starting to dip down. It brings down the deficit. What part of that isn't good news? I think it is all good news.

For a lot of individuals who live in my home State of Illinois, it is pretty personal. I have met with them. Last week, in my newsletter I asked people to share with me their experiences with the Affordable Care Act. The response was overwhelming, and the majority was positive.

Danny Blight lives in Germantown Hills, IL. He was diagnosed with bladder cancer in 2005. At the time, he was lucky enough to have a job with health insurance, but then he was fired and let go. He lost his health insurance, and he couldn't afford coverage because of his preexisting condition, his history of cancer, and he required surgery to treat his cancer. According to Danny, he relied on the local sisters of St. Francis to provide basic care for him and his family when he couldn't afford health insurance until the Affordable

Care Act became the law. Now Danny Blight and his family have health insurance. Is this an important law for them? It may be the most important thing we have done in Congress when it comes to this family.

I got in a debate back in my own hometown once with a group who opposes this law. They were of the opposite political faith, and I knew it. They had some pretty strong feelings about the role and the size of government, and they said as much. I would answer them by saying: Well, let me tell you about a family I met. Let me tell you about this family.

Finally, one man stood, raised his hand, and said: Stop telling stories. We don't want to hear these stories.

I know why they didn't want to hear it—because these stories are reality. These stories don't reflect political philosophy so much as the reality of life for a lot of people across America.

We know that discriminating against families because of preexisting conditions is a real problem. We know there are many families, for example, with a history of some illness, even mental illness, who in days gone by had no chance to have health insurance.

There were two other things we did in this law, and I don't understand why the other party wants to get rid of these provisions. The Affordable Care Act says that if you have a child graduating from college, your family health insurance plan can cover them until they reach the age of 26. Why is that important? Because many times young people coming fresh out of college have a lot of student debt and no job—no full-time job—and very few of them have health insurance immediately, and they think they are invincible.

I remember reaching out to my daughter when she graduated from college.

I said: Jen, what about health insurance?

Dad, don't worry about it. I feel fine.

Well, I did worry about it, and a lot of parents do. So our law says you can keep your recent college graduate under your family plan until they reach the age of 26. Why would you want to get rid of that? Why would someone want to eliminate that provision in the law?

The other thing it says is that if you are a senior and you are on Medicare—the Part D, which provides your prescription drugs, used to have what is called a doughnut hole in it. What that meant was Medicare would cover your prescription drugs to a certain point and then stop, and you had to go to your savings account, pull out about \$1,200, pay for your prescription drugs, and then coverage would start again. The doughnut hole is what we called it. We filled it. We filled it so seniors don't have to worry about going to their savings to make sure they can keep taking prescriptions that keep them independent, strong, and healthy. What is wrong with that idea? Why do

they want to get rid of that? That is part of the Affordable Care Act as well.

I just wonder sometimes if those who get all tied up over the philosophy of this legislation deal with the reality of family life in America.

Jean Terrien and her husband Michael live in Evanston, IL. They are both cancer survivors. Jean had breast cancer at age 45, and Michael had prostate cancer at the same age. Neither could purchase insurance before the Affordable Care Act because of preexisting medical conditions in their family. Because of this law, they have an affordable policy, and Jean is able to do freelance work without having to worry about health insurance. She told me she worries about losing her coverage if the Supreme Court goes the wrong way or if the majority party here gets their wish and abolishes the Affordable Care Act. I think we owe it to them to strengthen the law and not to repeal it.

The Affordable Care Act, incidentally, has been very good when it comes to Medicare. Because of the Affordable Care Act and the slowdown in the rate of growth in health care costs, Medicare will have an additional 13 years of solvency. How about that. I worried about it for many years. I still do. But it is good news to us, to know that we have, in the Medicare Part A trust fund, 13 years more solvency since the passage of the Affordable Care Act. The trustees of the Medicare Program in 2010 said that the Affordable Care Act "substantially improved" the financial status of Medicare. Is that a good thing for America? Forty million Americans think it is. Those are the people who depend on Medicare.

The law is helping seniors with their prescription drugs, as I mentioned earlier, and it is a savings of about \$925 a year for each senior in America.

So for those who are cheering and hoping the Supreme Court will somehow derail the Affordable Care Act, my questions are very direct: What do you have to replace it? What will you do to deal with preexisting conditions and denying health insurance? What will you do to make sure parents can keep their kids under their health insurance plans until the kids reach age 26? What will you do to fill the doughnut hole? What will you do to replace the deficit reduction the Affordable Care Act has achieved? What will you do in terms of the long-term solvency of Medicare to make up for the 13 years the Affordable Care Act has purchased?

And the answer is, they don't have an idea. They just don't like it. They don't like ObamaCare, and they don't want to hear these stories, just like the folks whom I debated with in my hometown, because these stories reflect the reality of life.

NORTH CENTRAL ILLINOIS TORNADOES

Mr. President, it was 2 months ago when I came to the floor and talked about tornadoes in my State of Illinois, the north central part of the State. We

had it again on Monday night. Nine twisters tore through the small towns in five Illinois counties Monday evening, accompanied by baseball-sized hail, flooding rains, and wind damage. Grundy, Lee, Kankakee, Will, and Whiteside Counties all experienced severe damage.

One of the towns that was hardest hit was Coal City in Grundy County, IL. Here is a photo of Grundy County and some of the damage. You can see the destruction. The National Weather Service said the tornado that struck this town was an EF-3, winds of 160 miles an hour. Some of the homes had the roofs ripped off and others were just flattened. Debris was scattered across the town. Many roads were impossible. There were downed power lines and trees, and there was flooding. This is the second tornado to hit Coal City in 2 years.

As soon as the twister passed Monday night, the first responders—God bless them—went door to door to try to make sure the 5,000 people there were accounted for. Thank goodness there were no fatalities or life-threatening injuries.

This tight-knit community is pulling together to help the victims. One man who lives in Coal City, Rick Druse, said he was lucky that one of his neighbors came to find him and his family—they were trapped in a crawl space. The homeowner across from Rick also was trapped in his home, which had been flattened by the storm. Power was knocked out for roughly 61,000 customers, and some are still waiting for it to be restored.

Yesterday, we reached out to Terri Halliday, the mayor of Coal City. We have spoken with Grundy County Board chair David Welter and Lee County Board chair Rick Ketchum.

My staff connected with Sterling mayor Skip Lee and Whiteside County Board chair Jim Duffy about the tornado that struck Sterling. That is another town which is also dealing with flooding. I reached out to each of them last night and, not surprisingly, had to leave voice mails. I know they were out and about. But we are there to help them if we can.

As is so often the case with disasters such as this, first responders, friends, and family waste no time helping their neighbors. It isn't just a Midwestern thing, but we are pretty proud of it in the Midwest. I have no doubt that the people in Coal City, Sublette, Sterling, and all of the others are going to stand up and help one another clean up, rebuild, and get on with their lives.

My thoughts are with the many people today who have lost their homes and other property.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I wish to speak a little bit about an agreement that very well could be reached between now and the time that the Senate returns right after the Fourth of July. The agreement has been negotiated for 2 years now with Iran, although it seems to me that using the term “negotiation” is a stretch. As to most of what we said we wanted to achieve in this so-called negotiation, the Iranians have said they didn't want to achieve it. We seem then to move forward to the next point once we concede that point.

Yesterday, I read in press reports that the State Department has now decided it will not demand a full accountability for the past nuclear research on the part of Iran before they conclude a deal. One of the early statements was: We want to know what Iran did, how long they had been doing it, what scientists were involved, what material, and what information they had achieved in their efforts to actually have a nuclear weapon.

It appears now that we are happy if Iran is just nuclear-weapons capable, with a clock that would start at some time, and we seem to feel we suddenly have a new ability to monitor everything Iran does even though we don't appear to have the ability to get them to tell us what they have done.

As I have said before, this is one of the areas where there is no question that no deal is better than a bad deal.

According to the State Department, which recently reported again that Iran should still be considered a country that encourages terrorism; that, in fact, you can make the case that there is no greater encourager of terrorist activities in the world today than Iran—but all of those things seem to be off the table as we talk to Iran.

The true nature of the regime, and why we want to have an agreement on just a nuclear program and not all of the other things Iran has going on, continues to be of great concern to me.

The news reports today were that the Iranian Parliament, the Iranian legislature will now finalize legislation demanding that we not be able to look at military sites as part of our inspection. If the goal here is to stop Iran from having a nuclear capability, having a nuclear weapon, having a military capacity to use a nuclear weapon, why would we take military sites off the list of things we are supposed to pay attention to? Where would we expect them to be finally developing a weapon if not at a military site?

The Iranian Parliament appears to have a whole lot more to say about this negotiation than the Senate. In fact, I am afraid we are going to find with the legislation that we did vote on that it is going to be a lot easier to prevent disapproval than it would have ever been to get approval of this agreement that looks like it is headed toward a very bad agreement.

The Supreme Leader of Iran has ruled out any long-term freezes of nuclear activities and demands that sanctions be lifted immediately. A few weeks ago, when the United States said what our understanding of the framework moving forward would be—it seems to be about 180 degrees different from what Iran is announcing every day. They want immediate sanctions relief. We say they are only going to get sanctions relief when they begin to comply. They don't want to have inspections at military sites. We say one of the reasons we want to have this agreement is so we can ensure that nothing happens at military sites.

Meanwhile, Iran advances violence and instability around the world. Supported by Iran, Assad in Syria is massacring his own people. So far, at least 190,000 Syrians have been killed in what is going on in Syria today. Iran is supporting that regime. Shiite militias support Assad. They promote division and wage violence outside of Syria, now into Iraq, encouraged by Iran. Supported by Iran, Houthi rebels have seized key territory in Yemen and seek to overthrow the government.

By the way, I remind the President that this was something which less than a year ago President Obama said was a great example of how our foreign policy under his leadership was working, that Yemen was an example. Only a few months later, we are fleeing the country and closing our Embassy. Actually, the President may have been right. Maybe Yemen is a great example of how our foreign policy is working.

Hezbollah and Lebanon wage terrorism against Israel, encouraged by Iran.

Palestinian terrorists in Gaza, encouraged by Iran, continue to lob mortars and rockets into Israel.

Last April, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard stopped a Marshall Islands-flagged ship in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran continues to hold hostages without any reasonable charge. Three American citizens—Pastor Saeed Abedini, former U.S. marine Amir Hekmati, and Washington Post journalist Jason Rezaian—are being held by Iran. A fourth American, former FBI official Robert Levinson, is missing and is in Iran, with no assistance from Iran to find him. In fact, they don't know exactly where he is. I have repeatedly called, as others in the Congress have, on the administration to just stop negotiations until there is a show of good faith to let these Americans go.

I saw a few days ago that Pastor Abedini was beaten again in the prison he has been put in, the most dangerous prison in Iran.

How could we not get three people whom they are holding under charges that will not stand up to any public view? How could we allow them to continue to hold these people while we continue to have talks about something like letting this country become nuclear capable?

Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian was arrested after security forces raided his home. His case was referred to a Revolutionary Court on January 14 of this year, but details of his charges and details of his court date have not been released. His mother is concerned—as we all should be—about his health, which is deteriorating as he is being imprisoned. Recent reports would suggest that this Washington Post reporter is being charged with espionage.

Pastor Saeed Abedini was imprisoned in September of 2012. In January of 2013, he was sentenced to 8 years in prison for “practicing his religion.” That is his crime—practicing his religion. The Iranian Government charged that Pastor Abedini was undermining the Iranian Government by creating a network of Christian house churches and attempting to sway Iranian youth away from Islam. In August of 2013, his appeal was denied. He was then put in the worst prison in the country. He has been beaten up in prison. I think he was beaten in the hospital when he had to be taken there, as his life had almost ended with prison beatings. Why do they still have him?

Why do they have Amir Hekmati, a former U.S. marine who was arrested while visiting his family in Iran in August of 2011? The Iranian Government sentenced him to death for espionage. Fortunately, his death sentence was overturned by an appeals court in March of 2012. However, he was still convicted of aiding a hostile nation—that would be us, by the way—and was found guilty of espionage.

Bob Levinson, who is a retired DEA and FBI agent, disappeared in March of 2007 while visiting Iran’s Kish Island. It is very likely, many people believe, that Mr. Levinson is currently a prisoner in Iran. Just 3 weeks after he disappeared, Iranian state television reported that he was in the hands of Iranian security forces.

Why are we assuming that the Iranians will agree to something much more complicated when they will not let these four people go? Why wouldn’t we insist on that?

Finally, Iran is responsible for killing and maiming thousands of American service men and women in Iraq and Iran from deadly, armor-piercing improvised explosive devices that originated in Iran. They don’t deny it. I think they take pride in it.

The destabilizing impact of a nuclear weapons-capable Iran is hard to overstate. If you want to do one thing to cast a huge shadow over the next decade and perhaps decades of this century—unless that shadow somehow is removed before the end of the decade, it is hard to imagine.

Sanctions, with the credible threat of military force, were doing good until we decided we would ease those sanctions if Iran would come to the negotiating table. That began 2 years ago. Two years ago we said things we would insist on. Two years later, none of

those things appear to be things that are still being discussed in these Iranian so-called negotiations.

Sanctions should stay in place until Iran fundamentally changes its course and its behavior.

I am greatly concerned that the agreement on Iran’s nuclear program will not be presented to the Congress in a way that allows the Congress to really weigh in, and I am concerned that this program as it will be presented to the Congress will establish Iran as a nuclear-capable, nuclear-threshold state. When that happens, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Jordan have all stated they will claim the exact same rights to do whatever it is we allow Iran to do. If we come up with an agreement that says Iran will be within 6 months of having a nuclear weapon and that they have to tell us when they start that 6-month clock, other countries will also want to be within 6 months of a nuclear weapon.

If we believe we can monitor Iran within 6 months or 12 months or whatever the number is, I think we are kidding ourselves, and most of the world doesn’t believe we can do this either.

Turkey and other countries outside of the immediate neighborhood will also want to view nuclear weapons capability as a new status quo in a dangerous world.

An agreement that doesn’t change the terror threat from Iran, an agreement that doesn’t allow inspection of military facilities, an agreement that doesn’t disclose past secret research for nuclear weapons, an agreement that doesn’t ensure long-term inspections, an agreement that doesn’t maintain sanctions in place until important compliance benchmarks are made is not an agreement that would be good enough.

We are facing a dangerous time. Iran is one of the chief perpetrators of terrorism in the world today. How we let that country that has one example of bad behavior after another, one example of hatred for Israel after another, one example of contempt for the United States after another, how we let that country become nuclear capable is amazing to me, as it is to the world. That is why our friends question whether they can depend on the United States of America any longer and why our enemies aren’t afraid of us, as you would want your enemies to be.

I hope we don’t settle for a bad deal. I will say again that a bad deal is worse than no deal at all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, last night a number of us from this Chamber and many of us from across the country gathered for a remarkable evening to support and honor an organization called Sandy Hook Promise. It is an organization that was created in the wake of the horrific, unspeakable tragedy in Newtown that involved the

mass murder of 20 beautiful, innocent children and 6 great educators. Sandy Hook Promise was created to make some good come of this horrific evil, to protect children against violence and prevent more gun violence around the country, to advance the cause of mental health and wellness, and to make sure that no one is alone, no one eats alone, no one suffers alone, and no one endures mental illness alone.

Sandy Hook Promise is a wonderful, inspiring organization, and I was proud to serve as the cochairman of this event, along with my great colleague, CHRIS MURPHY, who has been a partner in efforts to stop gun violence in this Chamber and in Connecticut and around the country. I was also proud that the dinner and evening honored two of our colleagues, Senator DEBBIE STABENOW, a wonderful friend and distinguished Member of this body from Michigan, and PAT TOOMEY, our friend from Pennsylvania, who added his name and the weight of his support to a measure in the last session that seeks to protect children against gun violence by imposing a universal background check.

The evening was designed to honor our two colleagues, but it was also so inspiring for me to hear from Nicole Hockley, Mark Barden, and Bill Sherlach, whose lives were transformed and changed forever on that horrific day.

I will never forget that day when I arrived at the firehouse in Sandy Hook and seeing the grief and pain experienced by those families who learned for the first time that their beautiful children would not be coming home that night. The searing memory of their faces and voices will be with me forever. Their courage and strength in the wake of that tragedy will inspire me forever.

I inspired many of our colleagues to vote for the commonsense, sensible measures that Senator TOOMEY and Senator MANCHIN of West Virginia helped to spearhead. It was a bipartisan package of measures that was advanced and advocated so ably by them and many of us tirelessly in those days before the vote. A majority of Senators voted in favor of that package of measures. Unfortunately, that majority did not reach 60 votes. But last night was a time to renew and redouble our efforts to prevent gun violence and to take positive, constructive, commonsense, sensible steps to help prevent it around the country.

At the very outset of the evening, both Senator MURPHY and I requested a moment of silence to honor the loved ones and families in Charleston, SC. Our hearts and prayers go out to them, as they have since that unimaginable tragedy. It was a violation of not only human life but the sanctity of a place of worship, just as Newtown involved the violation of a place we regard as among the safest, our schoolhouse—killing our schoolchildren.

When we finished that moment of silence, I am sure all of us retained the

grief and pain. We in Connecticut know and understand that grief and pain and outrage because we remember that day when we felt it in the same way the people of Charleston felt it when nine people were killed. Their families were left with holes in their hearts just as we were on that day in Newtown.

But the message of last night was not one of despair or desperation, it was one of hope and energy. That message came from Nicole Hockley, Mark Barden, and Bill Sherlach, the families of the Sandy Hook tragedy who came here to Washington. They have continued their work through Sandy Hook Promise and other organizations to make some good come from that evil.

We can do it. We can make sure this country does more than grieve and remember. We need to redouble our commitment as a nation to make our Nation safer and better, not just for those 9 innocent people in the church in Charleston or the 26 innocent people in a schoolhouse in Sandy Hook but for the 11,000 people who are killed every year on the streets of Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, in our rural and suburban communities, and on our military bases. Every year, 11,000 people throughout our country die from gun violence.

We will never eliminate all gun violence. We will never stop all of the deaths and killings, but we can save lives. That is what the families of Newtown said to me in the wake of their tragedy, and that is what I hope our Nation will say to itself in the wake of the Charleston tragedy. We will never stop all evil, but we can take a stand and stop some of it.

Last night, I recalled the conversation I had with one of the moms when I was at the funeral of her child. When I approached her, I said, somewhat apprehensively: When you are ready, I would like to talk to you about what we can do together to stop gun violence in this country. And she said, with tears in her eyes: I am ready now. That was the spirit the families from Newtown brought to our Capitol. That is the spirit I hope we can honor with action and not just with words on the floor of the Senate or in the eulogies that will be given tomorrow.

We need to have an answer for those victims of Charleston and Newtown and the 11,000 people who die needlessly and senselessly every year from gun violence. We need to answer the question that all of us have: What can we do to stop gun violence? And there are some answers, such as background checks, a ban on illegal trafficking, an end to straw purchases, mental health initiatives, and school safety. Those are some answers, and we should think of other solutions. We need to work together, just as Sandy Hook Promise has done, regardless of party, race or religion, where we live or what our interest is because we have a common, shared interest in making our Nation safer and better.

That is why honoring both PAT TOOMEY and DEBBIE STABENOW was so

meaningful, because they have given so much with their courage and leadership and have helped to make our Nation safer and better.

The killer in Charleston was not just a murderer, he was a domestic terrorist. He meant to terrify, not just kill. He meant to start a race war. He was a racist and White supremacist, and, rightly, has been regarded as someone who came to that church not just to target innocent worshippers but an entire community. He targeted the town of Charleston, the State of South Carolina, and our Nation. His message was not about hate for specific individuals, it was hate for an entire race.

We should recognize domestic terrorism and racism for what it is. We are not the only country with racists, but we are a country with a uniquely high number of gun violence incidents.

The shooting in Charleston was a physical manifestation of ideas that go beyond this murderer. To prevent future shootings, we must understand and undercut the ideas for which he killed so he could advance. We need to call this problem for what it is and understand it and fight it. Hate-inspired domestic terrorism is an evil all its own.

We can make progress against gun violence. We know we can, just as surely as 10 days ago no one thought the Confederate flag on State grounds in South Carolina would ever be removed. No one ever thought, plausibly, that the Governor of South Carolina would ever advocate it, and now that has happened, just as commonsense, sensible measures against gun violence can happen. We can prevail. Nobody thought before Ronald Reagan was almost assassinated and Jim Brady was paralyzed that the Brady bill would ever be passed. In fact, it took 10 years.

So we are here in a marathon, not a sprint. We are here for the long haul. We are not going away, not giving up, not abandoning this fight, and not surrendering to the forces of domestic terrorism or racial hatred or gun violence. We are better than that as a nation.

As we leave and go back home for this recess, I hope we will not only share the grief and pain of those brave and courageous families in South Carolina who were so heroic in the face of evil but resolve that we will redouble our efforts to raise awareness and organize people who are of good will and want to stop gun violence and who need to be heard because the vast majority of the American people want us to take commonsense, sensible measures to make America safer and better.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Indiana.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, today, I am back on the floor of the Senate for the 15th installment of the waste of the week. We all know the debt clock is ticking and that the Federal Government is racking up trillions of dollars

of debt, which will have to be paid off at some point in the future by our generation and more likely our children and our grandchildren.

It is unsustainable. It is going to cause immense harm. It is something that has been ignored as of late, but we are unable to move forward with any kind of constructive solution to this problem or putting us on a path to deal with this because the President of the United States simply refuses to come to an agreement in terms of how to deal with this and, in fact, doesn't even bother to mention it.

We also have an issue that is part of the problem; that is, an inefficient, ineffective use of taxpayer money here in Washington. The money that was hard-earned by the people back home and then deducted from their payroll income and sent to the Federal Government. It is not always used in an effective, efficient way to address the necessary and essential issues the Federal Government deals with and that we talk about here every day. Instead, it goes into programs that can only be deemed as waste, fraud, and abuse, and that is what I have been trying to highlight for the past 15 weeks as we deal with the waste of the week.

Today, what I would like to talk about is a sweet deal. Everyone likes a sweet deal, right? Well, no, not quite everyone and not always. But, unfortunately, in this case what is a sweet deal for some is actually a raw deal for the American taxpayer. I am talking about the sugar subsidy.

Currently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the USDA, issues loans to sugar producers and allows them to repay those loans with raw sugar if sugar prices fall below a certain price. After obtaining the sugar through this so-called loan, the USDA ends up with a bunch of sugar that it needs to resell, and it resells that sugar at a discounted price. As a result, these loans function as a price support for sugar, ensuring that sugar producers never sell their product below the price determined by the government—not the fair market but by the government. This cost taxpayers nearly \$300 million in 2013 alone. I don't have the figures yet for 2014. I assume that they are the same or that they may have fluctuated a little bit up or down, depending on the world sugar price.

If this sweet loan deal for sugar producers isn't enough—\$300 million a year in cost—there is more. In addition to providing a subsidy to sugar producers through the program I just described, the Federal Government also enforces a system of quotas and tariffs on imported sugar, thereby blocking Americans' fair-market access to cheaper sugar and resulting in a large difference between the international or global price of sugar and domestic sugar prices. In fact, the USDA's sugar program has caused the price of American sugar to be about 40 percent higher than the global price, resulting in an

estimated cost to consumers of \$3.5 billion annually between the years 2009 and 2012.

So when we take these two programs and put them together, they effectively function as a mass Federal subsidy of sugar, which drives up prices for consumers and provides a double benefit to the sugar industry.

As a result of these two sweet policies, thousands of jobs in sugar-using industries, particularly candy manufacturers, have been lost, and the American taxpayer pays for it all.

Now, why were these policies put in place in the first place? Well, the global price of sugar was much higher in the early 1980s. So the idea was that higher sugar prices would result in more sugar growers, and the more sugar growers we had, the more sugar would be produced, thus lowering the price. That is how fair and free markets work. It is a supply-and-demand issue. But government interference through subsidies distorts the free-market price of goods, and in the case of sugar, it results in a direct hit to the taxpayer and much higher costs for the consumer of sugar-based products.

To this day, the sugar subsidy remains a giveaway to sugar producers and a raw deal for sugar consumers. Ice cream, doughnuts, cakes, pies—we know they are not the healthiest foods to eat, but they are some of the more desirable foods that we like to eat, particularly after we have been forced to eat broccoli and greens. Our mothers raised us saying that you can't have ice cream or cake or pie after dinner unless you eat what is on your plate. And so we should suffer through eating some of that green stuff—I don't mean to belittle that, it is healthy and we should do that, but I'm not going to tell the public what to eat. Nevertheless, it is these products and many others that incorporate the cost of sugar in making the product that drive up the price of the product simply because of the subsidies that are provided by this government through its policies to sugar producers.

The end result is companies not being able to provide the jobs they would like to provide or to be the dynamic industry they would like to be, and that puts them in a less than competitive position against our overseas producers. Many companies in my home State of Indiana have been affected by this subsidy. Let me give a couple of examples.

The Albanese Confectionery Group, Inc., is a renowned Indiana-based manufacturer of confections, including the World's Best Gummi Bears—in Germany they call them Gooies; here we call them Gummis—Gold Label Chocolates, and other products. They are a very successful manufacturer. They estimate they could save \$3 million annually by having access to sugar from the world market price. But, no, they are not allowed to do that. They are forced to buy it at the U.S.-subsidized producer price, which is, as I indicated

earlier, roughly 40 percent more than what they could otherwise pay.

Lewis Bakeries is headquartered in Evansville, IN, and is one of the few remaining independent bakeries in the Midwest and the largest wholesale bakery in Indiana, and they have the same issue.

Artificially high sugar prices contribute directly to increased costs that hamstring budgets of businesses such as Lewis Bakeries and other bakeries throughout Indiana.

Artificially high sugar prices affect the large companies also, such as Kraft Foods. It has a marshmallow and caramel plant in Kendallville, IN. They say that dismantling the sugar program would enhance the competitiveness of U.S. food manufacturers.

If Congress were to terminate the sugar subsidy program, which we have tried to do year after year after year and have not succeeded in passing it, we could save billions of dollars for U.S. taxpayers, not just from the U.S. Treasury but also in the grocery bills of American families. These savings could have extremely positive consequences for our economy if they were allowed to be used to support the economy.

According to an Iowa State University study, if the sugar program were abolished, domestic sugar prices would fall by roughly a third—earlier we were talking about 40 percent—saving consumers, said this study, at least \$2.9 billion to \$3.5 billion a year. And according to a recent report by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, eliminating this subsidy could save the Federal Government at least \$116 million over 10 years.

So here we have a subsidized program by the Federal Government that is costing consumers billions per year. And here we have a second subsidized program by the Federal Government that through its policies of pricing and unfair practices, in my opinion, is costing nearly \$116 million a year to American taxpayers. This is a perfect example of an outdated government program that is hurting consumers and wasting taxpayer dollars. The net effect of the program is that Americans are paying higher prices for sugar and more taxes to pay for the sugar subsidy.

So what is a sweet deal for the sugar producers is a raw deal for the American consumer. It is a subsidy—a package of subsidies that only go to the producers and deny the consumers the right to have reasonable prices for sugar in accordance with international pricing.

I have joined with a bipartisan group of my colleagues in supporting legislation, the Sugar Reform Act, introduced by Senator SHAHEEN from New Hampshire, that would end the sugar subsidy. If we could pass this legislation, it would result in a savings of at least \$116 million, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

So today I add to our chart \$116 million of savings that the government

can claim, moving our chart ever closer to our goal of \$100 billion of savings.

How do we pay for some essential programs here, and where are we going to get the money? Why don't we start here? Why don't we start by eliminating some of these programs? Better yet, why don't we let the taxpayers keep their hard-earned money rather than send it to Washington to pay for waste and abuse that occurs almost on a daily basis.

We are gradually creeping up to our \$100 billion goal. I think we are going to have to go way beyond that, because these examples just keep rolling in. They are documented through nonpartisan agencies related to Congress and related to the Federal Government, including inspectors general and various programs. Why are we spending this money in the first place? The program is wasted, it is abused, and it is misused. It doesn't need to be in place.

So we are going to keep coming to the floor week after week talking about the waste of the week. No. 16 is on the way. Stay tuned.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MERKLEY. 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. MERKLEY. Mr. President, in just a short period of time here in the Senate Chamber we will be voting on fast-track legislation designed to create a very quick path through the Senate for the Trans-Pacific Partnership and for trade agreements to come thereafter.

So I rise now to share with my colleagues and to share with the American people my concerns about this course of action. It is President Kennedy who once said: "The trade of a nation expresses, in a very concrete way, its aims and aspirations." What are our aims and aspirations in the context of this trade agreement and fast-track?

From my perspective, the thing that really matters is whether this trade agreement will create good-paying jobs or will destroy good-paying jobs. Will this trade agreement make the American economy work better for working Americans? I feel it fails the test. I am going to explain why.

Now, it is true that the trade agreement is complex. It is multidimensional. It has a dimension that deals with intellectual property, with the extension of copyrights and patents and protections for trade secrets. That is certainly a win for protecting an innovation economy and innovation by Americans and American companies.

It has an agricultural section. We have sought out an analysis of the agricultural section, but don't have one yet. But those in the know say there is a good chance that the tariffs that are

struck down and the nontariff barriers that are struck down as barriers to U.S. products may on balance benefit the U.S. agricultural economy. I look forward to an analysis to really examine that in detail.

But the heart of the trade agreement is about manufacturing. We have multinational companies that are seeking to be able to make things at the lowest possible cost. That is the heart of this trade agreement, as with other trade agreements. That means being able to incorporate into an economic circle countries where the costs are very low to make things. That is certainly the case with this trade agreement.

This trade agreement includes a couple of countries that have no minimum wage and others that have a very low minimum wage. We are really talking about Vietnam, Malaysia, and Mexico. In Vietnam they have a regional minimum wage. So it varies from place to place. You hear different amounts, but roughly it is 60 to 75 cents per hour. In Malaysia it is \$1.54. In Mexico it is 66 cents. Well, those are all incredibly low compared to the American minimum wage of \$7.25.

Of course, many of our States have State minimum wages that are higher. But the minimum wage is only a part of the puzzle. When you include the cost of labor in the United States, you have to include such things as workers' compensation and set aside expenses for Social Security and disability insurance and the cost of maintaining safe working standards, which are rigorously enforced.

So when you compare all of that, you probably have a labor ratio that is on the order of about 20 to 1. That is a playing field tilted against the American worker at a 20-to-1 ratio for manufacturing. That is certainly not a level playing field. Our companies will say time and again: Here in America, we will thrive with anyone in the world on a level playing field. But when the costs are 20 to 1—that is, when the costs overseas in countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia, and Mexico are lower than in the United States on a 20-to-1 ratio—that is a playing field steeply tilted against the United States.

So it is no wonder that in previous agreements we have seen an increase in trade deficits and a big loss of jobs here in the United States of America. Let's take a look at three of those cases.

In 1993, we signed the North America Free Trade Agreement. That incorporated Mexico into our economic circle. So let's compare the trade deficit in 1992, a year before, with 2014. In the course of those years, the trade deficit increased from \$5.3 billion to \$53.8 billion. That is a massive, massive change. Now, by various estimates that translates into a job loss of between 480,000 to 680,000 jobs. So half a million Americans lost good-paying jobs as a result of NAFTA.

Let's take a look at China. China came into the World Trade Organiza-

tion, or WTO, in the year 2000. So let's compare 1999 with 2014. The trade deficit went from \$68.7 billion to \$343 billion. That is an increase of one-quarter of a trillion dollars. That is not a collective amount. That is an annual amount. By various estimates that resulted in job losses of between 2.7 million and 3.2 million American jobs.

Or let's look at South Korea. Remember how folks said that this would facilitate so much access to consumers in South Korea, and it would not have a big impact on our trade deficit? The South Korea agreement was signed in 2011 or ratified. So comparing 2010 to 2014—just 4 years—the trade deficit ballooned. It ballooned from \$10 billion to \$25 billion. The resulting job losses are estimated to have been between 75,000 and 150,000 jobs. Now, when I say jobs, maybe that is abstract. So let's translate this to families. Between the low estimates and the high estimates, we are talking about 3.3 to 4 million American families losing their jobs—good-paying manufacturing jobs. You know, there is no better foundation for a family than a good-paying job.

So when we pull away that foundation by striking agreements that send our jobs overseas, that is utterly devastating to families across our Nation and certainly to families in my home State of Oregon and certainly to families in every single State. So you cannot be pro-family and also be for shipping our good-paying jobs overseas. There is no government program that substitutes for a good-paying job.

That is why I am so deeply disturbed about the outline of the agreement that we are undertaking. Each and every time that improvements to wages here in the U.S. come up, the makers will say: If you raise your wages, if you add family vacation or family leave or sick leave or medical leave or help with daycare for your children—you know what—we may just have to move our manufacturing overseas or we may have to move our supply chain overseas or we may have to produce less at the factory here and more at the factory overseas.

It does not stop there. The construction that is envisioned by our multinational manufacturers in pursuit of their low-cost production is not just to play off the United States against Malaysia or the United States against Mexico or the United States against Vietnam—although all of that will happen—it is also to play off each of those low-cost countries against each of them.

So they can say to China, which has a certain cost structure and is not yet envisioned to be part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership but does benefit from WTO access: China, your costs are going up. Oh, you are enforcing those environmental laws, and your costs are going up. Oh, you are adding health standards, labor standards, and your costs are going up. You are paying overtime, and your costs are going up. We are going to shift more of our man-

ufacturing to Malaysia, and if you keep at it, we will shift all of it.

Or to Malaysia: You are just close by to Vietnam. Your costs go up, and we are going to ship more to Vietnam.

Or to Vietnam: You raise your standards, you raise your costs, you raise your pay, and you raise your standard of living. So we are going to move those jobs to Mexico.

This is tremendous leverage if you are an owner of a multinational, if you own stock in a multinational, if you are an investor in a multinational, because you can sell—you can produce your product at lower costs by playing off economy against economy—at the world market price and you make more money.

But if you are a worker in the United States who is being played against a worker in Vietnam, it is a bad deal. If you are a worker in Vietnam being played off against a worker in Malaysia, it is a bad deal.

That is not all that is wrong with this arrangement. Let's look at the various things that could have made fast-track stronger and that are not in fast-track. We have heard a lot of conversation and a lot of presentation that this is a gold-standard framework, that this is a new style of trade agreement. But the fact is that key provisions that could have made it a gold standard or a new strategy are not there.

Let's start with the fact that there is no minimum wage required in this agreement—not even a minimum wage of \$1 an hour, which would have certainly affected Mexico or Vietnam—and no mechanism for where there is a minimum wage, to increase it gradually over time to help lift up workers in our poorest nations and to reduce the gap and level out the playing field between low-wage countries and high-wage countries such as the United States.

Second, the agreement does not address currency manipulation. Everyone in international trade understands that tariffs can be replaced by a pseudo-tariff through currency manipulation, through intervention in the currency market. In 2009, when I came to the Senate, our Congress estimated that the currency manipulation by China amounted to a 25-percent tariff on American products and a 25-percent subsidy to Chinese products. Why would we agree to an arrangement where currency manipulation can produce a tariff against our products and a subsidy to our competitors within that framework?

Third, we have had a problem with the loss of our sovereignty on health issues, environmental issues, and consumer issues by giving that sovereignty away and that decision-making away to an international panel. Just weeks ago, under the World Trade Organization structure—the WTO structure—we lost a case, and the outcome of that case was that here in America we are not allowed to label our meat “Produced in America.”

That is a loss of our sovereignty. I want to live in an America where if our consumers, if our policymakers, if our legislators believe it is in the best interest of this Nation for our consumers to be able to know where their meat is raised, if our consumers want to exercise some patriotic decisionmaking and support American ranchers, they ought to be able to do so. We ought to be able to have that law and not give away our lawmaking authority to an international panel.

So this is an investor-state dispute settlement panel of three corporate lawyers, who can be advocates in one case and the judges in the next. It does not provide anything close to an appropriate mechanism to decide issues of health, safety, and the environment. We could have taken those off the table so that if we wanted to control a dangerous environmental toxin such as cancer-causing flame retardants in our carpets, we could do so without going afoul of trade agreements.

But there was no effort to protect our health and safety here in America in this trade agreement. If we really believed that we were going to have a new-order agreement, we would have an enforcement mechanism for labor standards and for environmental standards. We have heard folks talk on the floor that there are such new enforcement standards. So I am aggrieved to report to you that that is simply not the case.

Now, let's start with the fact that we could have required the passage of laws before countries are admitted into the trade agreement and required that they bring their environmental standards, their legal standards, and their labor standards up to snuff before admission and then show that they were actually implementing them and have a 2-year demonstration period to show that they were actually enforcing them. Because that is the easiest point at which to bring nations accountable before they are members of the trade agreement, before they get the lower tariffs. That is the point you have incentive. That is the point you have leverage. But there was no effort to force countries to require countries to meet those minimum standards before being admitted into this trade agreement.

We could have had some form of snapback provision that said: If you fail in bringing your laws into accordance on the environmental side or the labor side, if you fail to enforce your laws, then tariffs snap back. But there is no snapback provision in this agreement.

We could have expanded the dumping provisions in international law to give a way to take on situations where countries are producing at low cost because they are not abiding by the goals in the environmental or the labor area, but there is no such provision envisioned or required in fast-track or anticipated in the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

In the course of our trade agreements, there has been only one situat-

tion where we challenged labor laws, and it was with Guatemala. We challenged them 7 years ago, and to date that case has never been adjudicated. It is virtually impossible, after a country has failed to come up to standards, to go back and retroactively enforce those standards without some new mechanism, some new strategy. But there is no new mechanism or strategy that applies in this situation, nothing that would solve the Guatemala case and actually end with it being adjudicated.

To continue with the challenges to this fast-track, the failures of this fast-track, there is nothing in this that provides for Congress to be consulted when other nations dock; that is, tie on to the framework that will exist in the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

We had an amendment here on the floor that if China was to try to dock with the TPP and become a TPP fully privileged member, it would have to come back to the United States for consideration. That would give us a chance to look at China's currency manipulation or China's cheating on international intellectual property. That would give us a chance to examine a whole facet of things. But no requirement like that exists.

To add on to everything else, now, because of the way this process has proceeded, there is no guarantee that there will be trade adjustment assistance for families who lose their jobs when their jobs go overseas, no assistance in training.

I find it absurd that the same folks who say that there will be virtually no jobs lost proceed to say that the cost of compensating families by giving some minimal training to them when they lose their jobs will be vastly expensive and that America can't afford it. So on the one hand they say there will be no jobs lost. On the other hand they say that so many jobs will be lost that it will be too expensive for our Nation to afford. So they are OK with leaving American families not only stranded without jobs but stranded with no training to try to find new jobs in the economy.

If we go back to where I started with President Kennedy and his vision that the trade of a nation expresses in a concrete way its aims and aspirations, our aim should be to create good-paying jobs here in America. Our aspiration should be to create a trade agreement that works for working families. Unfortunately, this trade agreement is constructed around a different aspiration, one of maximizing the value of stock in the multinational manufacturing corporations, and that is done by shipping our jobs overseas. That is the wrong aim for this Nation. That is the wrong aim for our working families. We have seen the impact of Korea. We have seen the impact of China joining the WTO. We have seen the impact of Mexico and NAFTA. As a result, we have lost millions of good-paying jobs in our Nation and undermined the success of millions of American families.

There is a lot of conversation on the floor of the Senate about inequality in our Nation. Do you know what drives inequality? Well, I will tell you. It is this: When you create trade agreements that are great for investors but are terrible for workers, that drives inequality. That is why I encourage my colleagues to vote no when it comes to the fast-track legislation being voted on later today. It is wrong for America because it is wrong as far as solving inequality. It is wrong for America because it is wrong for working families to have their jobs shipped overseas. It is wrong because it does not fulfill the vision of working for working Americans.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am on the floor today for the 104th time—one of these days, I am going to get it right—to urge that we wake up to the dangers of climate change.

The scientific community has been sounding the alarm for decades. Our most respected scientific institutions are virtually unanimous in their verdict: Carbon pollution from humans' burning of fossil fuels is warming our atmosphere and oceans, raising and acidifying our seas, loading the dice for more extreme weather, and disrupting the natural systems upon which we all depend. They are not alone.

Our defense and intelligence communities warn us of the threats these climate disruptions pose to our national security and to international stability.

Public health officials warn that greenhouse gas pollution and its effects trigger human health risks.

Economists—even very conservative ones—have long recognized the distortion of energy markets ignoring the true cost of carbon pollution.

Our government's accountants now list climate change as one of the most significant threats to America's fiscal stability. The new Republican CBO chief even put sea level rise and increased storm activity from climate change into his budget outlook just last week.

Of course, voices of faith call to us. They plead that we heed the moral imperatives of protecting God's creation, seeking justice for all people, and meeting our own responsibilities to future generations.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has called for us to "develop a sense of the oneness of humanity" and address climate change.

The Archbishop of Canterbury recently issued a declaration, along with other British religious leaders, warning of the "huge challenge" of climate change and supporting an international climate treaty to be negotiated in Paris this December.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians worldwide, has called climate change “a matter of social and economic justice.”

More than 350 rabbis have signed a rabbinic letter on the climate crisis calling for vigorous action against climate disruption and global socio-economic injustice, reminding us that “social justice, sustainable abundance, a healthy Earth, and spiritual fulfillment are inseparable.”

Last week, Pope Francis, the worldwide leader of the Catholic Church, which is the largest Christian denomination in the world, the largest Christian denomination in the United States, and the largest Christian denomination in my home State of Rhode Island, added his charismatic voice to the call.

In the Roman Catholic Church, an encyclical is a papal letter sent to all bishops. It is considered among the most authoritative documents of Catholic teaching. Rather than just an internal communication to the clergy, however, this encyclical of Pope Francis on climate change is explicitly addressed to “every single living person on this planet.” It is entitled “*Laudato Si*,” or “Praise Be to You,” a reference to the “Canticle of the Sun” by St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of the environment, friend of the poor, and namesake of this Pope.

This encyclical accepts and affirms what we know about climate change: that most is due to the greenhouse gases emitted by human activity; that seas are rising, oceans acidifying, polar ice melting; that weather is worsening at the extremes; and that basic systems of life on our planet home are being disrupted.

He writes:

[W]e need only take a frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair. . . . [T]hings are now reaching a breaking point. . . . [H]umanity has disappointed God's expectations.

The Earth herself, he says, “groans in travail.”

Pope Francis tells us that “humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production, and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.” Specifically, he says that “technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels needs to be progressively replaced without delay.”

The Pope reminds us that as we in power sleepwalk through this crisis, we are hurting people who have no voice today. First, we harm future generations, leaving them a world that, to use his own words, “is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.”

“[T]he world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others,” the Pope writes. “Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice.”

The Pope also emphasizes that when we damage that gift, we inflict par-

ticular harm on the poor, who live close to the Earth—outside of our privileged bubble of consumption. They rely on agriculture, fishing, and forestry for their livelihoods and sustenance. As climate change disrupts natural systems, the poor take the hit most directly. As a result, Pope Francis says, we who have profited most from burning fossil fuels owe a debt to the rest of the world. He calls it our “ecological debt.”

The United States has produced more carbon dioxide than any other nation. Our historical responsibility calls us to help other nations develop cleaner energy, relieve their systematized poverty, and soften the blow of climate change. This responsibility, this call from Pope Francis matters particularly for America, the indispensable and the exceptional nation. Years ago, Daniel Webster described the work of our Founding Fathers as having “set the world an example.” From John Winthrop to Ronald Reagan, we have called ourselves a city on a hill, set high for the world to witness, to emulate.

Should we ignore the climate disruption we have caused, Pope Francis warns, “those who will have to suffer the consequences of what we are trying to hide will not forget this failure of conscience and responsibility.” In saying that, Pope Francis aligns squarely with Daniel Webster’s warning from that same speech—his warning about our American experiment in popular liberty: “The last hopes of mankind, therefore, rest with us; and if it should be proclaimed that our example had become an argument against the experiment, the knell of popular liberty would be sounded throughout the earth.”

Pope Francis’s encyclical even has something to say directly to us in Congress. He says:

To take up these responsibilities, and the costs they entail, politicians will inevitably clash with the mindset of short-term gain and results which dominates present-day economics and politics. But if they are courageous, they will attest to their God-given dignity and leave behind a testimony of selfless responsibility.

Remember the Pharisees. Remember the traders and the money changers in the temple. If we choose to ignore the call of the Pope and of leaders of faith around the world and choose to protect the side that is polluting and destroying, even when we see right before our faces its ravage of our natural world, its harm to the poor, its robbery of future generations, what are we then? What are we then? Jesus himself, the Lamb of God, lost his temper twice, the Bible tells us; once at the Pharisees and once at the traders and money changers in the temple. He went after them with a lash, actually. Are we to take their side now? Must we, in the Senate, serve Caesar in every single thing? Is there no light left here at all?

Here in the Senate, the hand of greed lies so heavily upon us. Please, may

the Pope’s exhortation give us the courage to stand up against the power of these selfish forces and do what is right for our people and for our planet.

The fossil fuel industry has been a particular disgrace, polluting our politics as well as our planet. Ever since the Citizens United ruling gave polluters the ability to inject unlimited and untold amounts of money into our elections, the tsunami of their slime has drowned honest debate on climate change. Senators who once supported commonsense legislation have gone silent as stones under the threat of the polluters’ spending. Getting past the dark influence of the fossil fuel industry will indeed take some light and some courage, especially on the part of the Republican majority whom they so relentlessly bully and cajole. But we must do it. Again, mankind will not forget this failure of conscience and responsibility.

Senator SCHATZ and I have even offered legislation rooted in conservative free-market principles. We would put a fee on carbon pollution and return all the revenue to the American people. It would reduce carbon pollution 40 percent by 2025 and be a significant down-payment on our ecological debt to the world and, by the way, it would generate significant tax cuts and economic benefits for American families and businesses in the process. I urge friends across the aisle, please, take a serious look at our bill.

In seeking a solution to the climate crisis, Pope Francis asks each of us to “draw constantly from [our] deepest convictions about love, justice, and peace.” He dares us even “to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering”—into our own personal suffering—and thus discover what each of us can do about it.” He urges us to recognize the systems around us—the financial systems, the industrial systems, the economic systems, the political systems—are drawing us down a destructive and unjust path.

But his encyclical to the world illuminates another path—a compassionate path, blazed with abiding faith in the human family, a path toward the preservation of our common home and our common decency. The choice of which path we take will be a fateful one.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, before he leaves the floor, let me just commend the Senator from Rhode Island. He has made a number of important points this afternoon, but I am particularly pleased my colleague has laid out, in such a thoughtful way, the implications of the Pope’s encyclical. This was very important as a major new focus of the debate, and I really commend my colleague.

I suspect we are now on 101 or 102—oh, 104. I was there for 100, so I must have missed one along the way. But I

commend my colleague and thank him for his commitment. He knows I share many of his views with respect to creating a fresh set of approaches to deal with this climate change question, and I look forward to working with him.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator very kindly.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today the Senate is taking major steps toward a new, more progressive trade policy that will shut the door on the 1990s North American Free Trade Agreement once and for all.

One of the major ways this overall package accomplishes this goal is by kicking our trade enforcement into high gear. Later today, the Senate is going to vote to go to conference with the House on strong bipartisan legislation that was passed by the Chamber only a few weeks ago by a vote of 78 to 20.

It has long been my view that vigorous enforcement of our trade laws must be at the forefront of any modern approach to trade at this unique time in history. One of the first questions many citizens ask is, I hear there is talk in Washington, DC, about passing a new trade law. How about first enforcing the laws that are on the books?

This has been an area I long have sought to change, and we are beginning to do this with this legislation and I want to describe it. For me, this goes back to the days when I chaired the Senate's Subcommittee on International Trade and Competitiveness. We saw such widespread cheating, such widespread flouting of our trade laws, my staff and I set up a sting operation. We set up a sting operation to catch the cheats; in effect, almost inviting these people to try to use a Web site to evade the laws. They came out of nowhere because they said: Hey, cheating has gotten pretty easy. Let's sign up. And we caught a lot of people.

So we said, from that point on, that we were going to make sure any new trade legislation took, right at the center, an approach that would protect hard-working Americans from the misdeeds of trade cheats. In fact, the core of the bipartisan legislation that heads into conference is a jobs bill—a jobs bill that will protect American workers and our exporters from those kinds of rip-offs by those who would flout the trade laws.

The fact is, when you finally get tough enforcement of our trade laws, it is a jobs bill—a true jobs bill—because you are doing a better job of enforcing the laws that protect the good-paying jobs of American workers.

I guess some people think we are going to get that tougher enforcement by osmosis. We are going to get it because we are going to pass a law, starting today with the conference agreement that is going to have real teeth in it—real teeth in it—to enforce our trade laws.

Foreign companies and nations employ a whole host of complicated schemes and shadowy tactics to break

the trade rules, and they bully American businesses and undercut our workers. So what we said in the Finance Committee, on a bipartisan basis, is the name of the game will be to stay out in front of these unfair trade practices that cost our workers good-paying jobs. My colleagues and I believe the Senate has offered now the right plan to fight back against the trade cheats and protect American jobs and protect our companies from abuse.

It really starts with what is called the ENFORCE Act, which is a proposal I first offered years ago that will give our Customs agency more tools to crack down on the cheaters. Then, we have a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on the need for an unfair trade alert. That is another major upgrade that responds to what we heard companies and labor folks say again and again. What they would say is that trade enforcement laws get there too late. They get there too late. The plant is closed, the jobs are gone, the hopes and dreams of working families are shattered. So what we said is we are going to start using some of the data and the information we have to have a real trade alert so we can spot what is coming up and get that information to our communities and our working families and our companies to protect our workers. So this unfair trade alert is another major upgrade in how we tackle enforcing our trade laws.

My view is that any bill that comes out of that enforcement conference, the Customs conference, needs to reflect important American priorities, and that should certainly include smart protection of our environmental treasures. When our trade agreements establish rules on environmental protection, they have to be enforced with the same vigor as the rules that knock down barriers for businesses overseas.

Our colleague from Colorado Senator BENNET offered, in my view, a very constructive proposal that is going to accomplish this important goal. It was overwhelmingly agreed to by the Committee on Finance and passed by the Senate, and I would like to note that much of the good work done by Senator BENNET mirrors what my colleague in the other body, Congressman BLUMENAUER, is doing on this issue as well.

It is my view—and why it was important to hear from Senator WHITEHOUSE—that climate change is one of the premier challenges of our time. It is critical to make sure this enforcement package sends the right message on environmental issues. Whether the issue at hand is climate change, fisheries or conservation, this package—the package we are going to be dealing with in the Customs conference—strikes the right balance for the environment.

I also want to take a moment to build on what I discussed yesterday with respect to the Democratic priorities that my colleagues and I are going to fight for in conference. This

stems from an important point made by our colleague from North Dakota Senator HEITKAMP, who said we really need to go into this Customs conference with some markers—some strong markers that lay out a path for some of our priorities with respect to enforcing the Customs law.

So after the pro-trade Democrats met on Monday night, I talked with Chairman RYAN with respect to these issues. We intend to champion provisions by Senator SHAHEEN which will help our small businesses take full advantage of trade. A lot of people say, oh, trade bills are for the big guys; the big guys are the ones who are going to benefit. I have always thought big guys can take care of themselves. They have lots of people to stand up for them. But what Senator SHAHEEN is saying—and it is particularly important in my home State, where we have mostly small businesses. Senator SHAHEEN is saying she is going to make sure, as part of the enforcement efforts, we beef up the effort to help small businesses, particularly at the State level—not at the Federal level, at the State level—promote these efforts to have more markets for our small businesses in the export field.

In addition to Senator SHAHEEN's amendment, as far as those Customs markers are concerned, we are also going to make the environmental protection provisions I just described authored by Senator BENNET a priority and Senator CANTWELL's trade enforcement trust fund. I am very hopeful about the trade enforcement trust fund as well. Suffice it to say, there is interest on both sides of the aisle because there is an awareness that, again, we can have some trade laws, but we are going to need some resources in order to make sure they are implemented. So I think that trade enforcement trust fund is another very important priority, and it is one that the pro-trade Democrats have said would be part of our short list in terms of our Customs markers.

As I noted, when I have town meetings at home—I have had more than 730 of them and am going to have more of them this upcoming week—I do find people say that everybody in Washington talks about new laws, new proposals, trade ideas: Enforce the laws on the books first. It has been too hard—too hard in the past—for our businesses, particularly our small businesses, to get the enforcement that matters, enforcement with teeth, enforcement that serves as a real deterrent to cheating.

So this legislation is our chance to demonstrate that strengthening trade enforcement—enforcement of the trade laws—will now be an integral part of a new modern approach to trade, an approach that says we are not part of the 1990s on trade, where nobody had Web sites and iPhones and the like. We have a modern trade policy with the centerpiece enforcing our trade laws.

Our policies are going to give America's trade enforcers the tools they

need to fight on behalf of American jobs and American workers and stop the trade cheats who seek to undercut them. I strongly urge my colleagues to vote yes later today on the motion to send the enforcement bill to conference and work on a bipartisan basis, as we did in the Finance Committee, to put strong trade enforcement legislation on the President's desk.

Now, I would also like to briefly make some remarks on the trade adjustment assistance package. As we have said, later today, the Senate is going to take a series of votes that again speak to how we kick off a new progressive era in trade policy that closes the books on the trade ideas of the 1990s once and for all.

Once again, a key part of that effort is protecting our workers and ensuring that more trade means everybody has an opportunity to get ahead. That is why the package of legislation under debate expands and extends the support system for America's workers called trade adjustment assistance.

Now, this program dates back to the days of President Kennedy. President Kennedy, during his push for the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, called it "a program to afford time for American initiative, American adaptability and American resiliency to assert themselves." Since then, this program has been extended by Republican and Democratic Presidents. The program is now a lifeline for more than 100,000 Americans, including 3,000 Oregonians who receive job training and financial support. The heart of it is to provide a springboard to new opportunities, and it guarantees that workers and their families don't get knocked off stride when times are tough. In my view, it is a core element of what I call trade done right.

As I noted yesterday, Tim Nesbitt, former past president of the Oregon AFL-CIO, essentially said our legislation was a blueprint for trade done right.

Now, for 1½ years, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program has been running at reduced strength. But that is going to change once this legislation becomes law. The funding for trade adjustment assistance goes back up to a level that will cover everybody who qualifies. Once again, service workers will be eligible for the program because in today's economy they are facing competition from overseas as well. Trade adjustment assistance would take into account competition from anywhere in the world, not just from our trade agreement partners.

These are significant improvements that I will tell the Presiding Officer and colleagues I fought very hard for in what were negotiations that really lasted well over 6 months with Chairman HATCH and Chairman RYAN. I believe these changes are going to make a big difference for workers across our Nation who fall on tough times. If China manages to lure a manufacturer away from the United States, for exam-

ple, now those workers will be covered. They will have a chance to learn new skills and find a job that pays good wages, and they will not have to worry about whether the bills will get paid or if they are going to have food on their table.

Along with trade adjustment assistance, this legislation will reinstate the health coverage tax credit that expired at the end of last year. The majority of workers in this country—tens of millions of middle-class people and their families—get health insurance through their employer. The health coverage tax credit guarantees that workers and families affected by trade are going to still be able to see their doctor. If they get sick or suffer an injury, they aren't going to face colossal medical bills or the threat of bankruptcy. They get protection, and they get it until they are back on their feet.

In the process of bringing this legislation together, my friend and colleague on the Finance Committee Senator BROWN offered a proposal that goes a long way, in my view, to strengthening our enforcement of key trade laws. It is called the Leveling the Playing Field Act. I urge the Senate majority leader to include this important legislation in the TAA bill, both because it is a good policy and it is a sign that both parties are working on issues that are logical bipartisan priorities. Leveling the playing field—and I can say this at this point in the debate. If we look at the Senate Finance Committee files, leveling the playing field was a top priority for those in the unions—the steel unions and others—and it was also a top priority for their companies. So having this policy in trade adjustment assistance is exactly the kind of bipartisan work the American people want done—business, labor, Democrats, Republicans—a strong record of evidence as to why it is needed. This legislation is going to be the difference between steelworkers and paper workers being on the job or being laid off because it ensures that the remedies of trade law—what is called countervailing duty law, anti-dumping law—is going to be available to workers and their companies earlier and in a more comprehensive way. It is going to protect jobs, which is a priority of both political parties.

I made mention how important this was to me. My first hearing—my first hearing when I became chairman of the Finance Committee's trade subcommittee—was on trade enforcement. So I could have chosen a lot of topics. We could have talked about exports, hugely important to my State. We could have talked about the fact that the trade laws haven't kept up with the digital age, hugely important to my State. I said my first hearing was going to be on trade enforcement.

My good friend from United Steelworkers, Leo Gerard, together with the U.S. Steel chairman, Mario Longhi, spoke at length about how American workers wanted to see the Senate and

the Finance Committee stand up for them and finally fix the shortcomings in our trade remedy laws. That is what we have done now. Getting behind SHERROD BROWN's proposal to strengthen our trade laws, to stop unfair trade so foreign companies do not undercut American workers and manufacturers ought to be an American priority—a red, white, and blue priority, a priority for every Member of this body.

I am proud to have worked with Senator BROWN on this important issue. I thank him for the fact that he has brought this up again and again and again. I said quite some time ago that we weren't going to let this package become law without the Leveling the Playing Field Act authored by Senator BROWN at the outset. That is going to be the case, and I thank him for his work.

The three programs—the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program, the health coverage tax credit, Senator BROWN's Leveling the Playing Field Act—are now moving through the Senate alongside legislation that creates new economic opportunities for impoverished countries in Africa and other places around the world. This trade package will extend the biggest of these programs, the African Growth and Opportunity Act—what is called AGOA—for 10 years. I am a strong believer in AGOA. It works for our country, it works for Africa, and it builds a stronger economic future for so many around the world. We worked hard again on a bipartisan basis in the Finance Committee to find ways to strengthen AGOA. That was the point of our hearing, to find ways to strengthen it, extend it for another decade, and the committee came together on a bipartisan basis to make smart improvements.

Once again, we see the value of a progressive trade policy. Two of our very outstanding colleagues—my colleague Senator COONS on this side of the aisle and our friend Senator ISAKSON on the other side of the aisle—are always working in a bipartisan way, pointing out that this is what our country is all about, and certainly creating opportunities for impoverished parts of the world is a core American priority. Hearts and minds around the world are hoping we will have this kind of leadership.

I will close, and I think this will be my last comment before the vote. It is my view that for all who want to see trade done right, for all who want American workers to thrive in the 21st century, getting behind these key programs is an ideal way to do it. By supporting this legislation, the Congress reaffirms what President Kennedy really rhapsodized over half a century ago: You get behind these programs, and it reaffirms America's commitment to American initiative, to adaptability, and resiliency.

I encourage all of my colleagues to vote yes to support these important programs when we vote later today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk briefly about trade adjustment assistance, or TAA, and about trade enforcement. I will be supporting the TAA bill.

TRIBUTE TO CASEY ADEN-WANSBURY

But before I talk about that, I would like to recognize my chief of staff, Casey Aden-Wansbury, who has never been on the floor before. She asked to be on the floor today, since she is leaving. Of course, I said yes.

But I said that so that I could talk about you, Casey. You didn't know that. You have to sit through this.

Casey has served in my office since I joined the Senate in July of 2009. She is leaving Washington next week and is heading to San Francisco, where her husband will be starting an amazing new job. Jamo has a great job, and he has been so supportive of you, Casey, and also of Casey's parents. You will now be much closer to them.

I am very excited for Casey, but I wish she weren't leaving. Everyone in my office is going to miss you—no one more than me.

When my grandson was 30 minutes old, I held him in my arms, and I said to him: It is all staff.

It is true. It is all staff. Casey has been an amazing chief of staff. She is the most focused, determined person I know.

I am a member of the Writers Guild and the Screen Actors Guild. I get screeners. We got "Zero Dark Thirty" sent to me during the awards season. My wife and I were in our living room. We put "Zero Dark Thirty" on. At a certain point in the movie, I said to Franni: The lead character reminds me of someone. Finally, I said: It is Casey. If Casey had been in the CIA, I think we would have gotten bin Laden a little earlier.

Casey deserves an enormous amount of credit for all the work that I and our office have been able to get done in my first term—the day-to-day work that we do to improve the lives of people in Minnesota and across the country. Whether it was mental health in schools or improving workforce training or protecting net neutrality or defeating the Comcast-Time Warner Cable deal, I am so proud of the work we have done in the Senate. And it is all staff. Casey has led that staff brilliantly every step of the way. I will miss Casey more than anyone, including myself, really knows.

Whoever gets Casey next will be very, very lucky indeed.

Casey, I cannot express how deeply thankful I am for all you have done for me, for our office, and for the State of Minnesota. Thank you.

Now, Mr. President, I would like to turn briefly to the trade adjustment assistance package. I believe that when trade is done right, it can benefit our workers, our communities, and our businesses. But I was concerned that

the fast-track procedures set up by the trade promotion authority bill will not do enough to make sure that we do trade right. So I voted against that bill, and I will vote against it again later.

Once we are done with that bill, we will consider the trade adjustment assistance bill that was originally packaged together with the fast-track bill. I will support TAA. It is far from perfect. For one thing, it simply does not provide enough assistance. But it will go a long way toward providing help for workers who are displaced by trade, as we know some will be.

I also strongly support the Leveling the Playing Field Act, which is included in this package along with TAA. Senator BROWN's bill, of which I am proud to be a cosponsor, would help strengthen our trade remedy laws—the laws that enforce our trade policies and protect our domestic industries from dumped and subsidized imports from other countries.

In Minnesota, I have seen firsthand the damage that happens when we don't have—and just as importantly, can't enforce—strong trade protections. In the last few months alone, we have seen what happens when countries unfairly dump their goods here. Nearly 1,000 Minnesotans in the Iron Range are losing their jobs after a flood of dumped steel imports.

The Leveling the Playing Field Act would help improve our anti-dumping laws, including restoring Congress's original intent in setting the standard for when a domestic industry is materially injured by unfairly traded foreign imports. We need to be able to respond effectively when dumped imports are harming our domestic iron and steel industry and the workers in that industry or when those imports are harming other industries, as is happening now. This bill will be an important step in enabling that more effective response. With these provisions, we are standing up for American manufacturers by putting in place and enforcing fair trade practices.

For these reasons, I will be voting for the trade adjustment assistance bill, and I look forward to its being enacted into law.

Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to say a few words about Casey and about TAA.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. 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. BROWN. Mr. President, I have come to this floor a number of times arguing against trade promotion authority. I have done that for months. This body should not give up its authority to amend trade agreements, and it should not pave the way for a

trade deal that looks like it is going to be more of the same—corporate and worker sellouts.

We have seen it with NAFTA, and we saw a similar kind of move on PNTR with China, where our bilateral trade deficit almost literally exploded since 2000, when this body and the other body moved forward on PNTR. We saw it with the Central American Free Trade Agreement, when President Bush had to wake in the middle of the night and get on the phone with Republican Member after Republican Member to get them to change their vote on fast-track so he could get the Central American Free Trade Agreement, which he sold in the name of counter-terrorism. We saw it in the South Korean trade agreement, when this President made promises of more job creation and higher wages, neither of which has borne out.

We have seen big promises and bad results on trade issue after trade issue after trade issue after trade issue. We have seen it through the Presidencies of George Bush 1, Bill Clinton, George Bush 2, and now Barack Obama.

As I said, this body should not give up its authority to make better trade agreements. In essence, what we are saying in this body with this vote, which will take place within the hour or so, is that we are willing to give up these powers to the executive branch to give us more of the same, trade agreements that don't work for our communities, don't work for our workers, don't work for our families, and don't work for our small businesses.

While this Chamber will vote on trade promotion authority today, so-called fast-track, it doesn't mean we throw in the towel on the congressional oversight of our Nation's trade policy. Moving forward with fast-track means it is more critical than ever that we protect Congress's prerogative to have a say on a deal that could offset 40 percent of the world's economy. Members on both sides of the aisle, Members on both sides of this debate, supporters and opponents, Republicans and Democrats, a good mix of each, have had conversations with me and many others about how this deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, is too secretive.

We have had conversations about how the U.S. Trade Representative is not answering the concerns of Members, even supporters of TPA and TPP, on issues such as currency, workers' protections, workers' rights, tobacco, and public health. Starting today, we need to make sure any Trans-Pacific Partnership deal—and that is the deal we will vote on later. I am assuming TPA will pass today. I hope not. I assume it will pass, go to the President, and I assume he will sign it.

The next question is, What happens with the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is 12 countries coming together. It includes a handful of countries in the Western Hemisphere, including the three NAFTA countries—Canada, the

United States, and Mexico—a couple of South American countries and Asia and the Australian subcontinent countries will be part of this trade agreement. If China is added to it, we hope there is a vote in the Congress, although there is no promise of that from the administration—but we need to make sure any deal on the Trans-Pacific Partnership includes strong labor protections. There are always big promises about labor protections, but a President has yet to deliver on these labor protections.

I am particularly concerned about Vietnam, a large country of tens of millions—approaching 100 million people. Vietnam is a country that has one labor union controlled by the Communist Party. It is a country that doesn't have collective bargaining rights. Yet we are assuming somehow that wages will come up high enough in Vietnam that they don't undercut U.S. wages, even though they don't have free trade unions, they don't have collective bargaining, and there is no mechanism so far in these trade agreements, whether it is TPA or Trans-Pacific Partnership, that Vietnam reach these wage levels and begins to move toward collective bargaining and free trade unionism prior to its admission to TPP.

We need to figure out all of those questions. We need to make sure that any TPP deal has strong environmental protections. Again, there were big promises on other agreements, but there is never much on the delivery side of these promises.

We want to see strong currency provisions. Again, there have been big promises on TPP but with little results in the past, and so far we have an administration that is not willing to carry it out.

We need to make sure we protect Medicare and Medicaid from investor-state dispute resolution, and we need to preserve access to medicines. We know citizens in the developing world simply can't afford the high cost of Western medicines. Much of the time Americans can't afford the high cost of medicines, and we are an affluent country.

When we look at some of these TPP countries in South America and Asia, they can afford them even less. We need to make sure there are strong pre-service-access-to-medicine provisions. We need to include protections that prevent this deal from being a tool for tobacco, which is perhaps the simplest to understand and one of the most troubling because of its moral bankruptcy.

This body is about to vote for fast-track legislation. If we don't stop this train from going down the track on which it seems to be heading, we are handing Big Tobacco even more power to addict children to tobacco in the developing world and countries that don't have nearly the public health system we do and don't have the affluence to be able to fight back against Big To-

bacco. We have been pretty successful in doing that and protecting our children.

About 15 years ago when I was a member of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, I remember seven tobacco executives came to our committee. There was a picture on just about every front page of newspapers in the country, where the seven CEOs of the biggest tobacco companies in the country, some of the biggest in the world, raised their right hands and pledged to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and out and out lied to that committee about nicotine and cigarettes and the addictive qualities of nicotine.

These same tobacco companies, over time, pledged that they would no longer put billboards near schoolyards, pledged that they would no longer hand out sample packages of cigarettes near schools, pledged that they would stop their Joe Camel promotions.

I remember the ranking member of the Finance Committee, Senator WYDEN, was as outraged as I was with Big Tobacco.

I asked them a question at this hearing. I said: You are willing to do that in this country? You are willing to say that you will no longer have billboards near high schools, and you will no longer hand out samples of cigarette packs near schools, and you will stop your Joe Camel ads? I then said: Are you willing to do that in other countries around the world?

The answer was: No, no, no, no, no, no.

When these tobacco companies go to the developing world and peddle their poisons, they know public health in the developing world is about fighting cholera, fighting AIDS, fighting malaria, and fighting tuberculosis. They simply don't have the public health resources that we do in our country to fight Big Tobacco. That is my concern about what could happen.

I will talk for a moment about how Big Tobacco uses trade agreements generally to undermine public health. We know tobacco use is the world's leading cause of preventable death. It is why countries around the world are passing stricter laws to protect their citizens from the massive health risks tobacco poses. Big Tobacco has turned trade deals into a tool for defeating commonsense international public health efforts.

How could that happen? Why would a trade deal be a vehicle to weaken anti-tobacco laws, the laws that especially protect children against addictive tobacco? Here is how it happens: It uses a trade agreement provision known as investor-state dispute settlement to attack a nation's public health law. Under this process, corporations use trade agreements to dispute domestic laws that they say undermine their investments.

I will use the best example, but there are several. Not many years ago, Australia passed the Tobacco Plain Pack-

aging Act. Big Tobacco challenged this law. First of all, they opposed it in the Australian Legislature. They lobbied against it, but they were unsuccessful. The Australian Legislature passed the plain packaging consumer protection anti-addicting children tobacco law in 2011. Then, they sued, and it went to the Australian supreme court. Big Tobacco lost that case too.

So you know what they did? I give them credit for being pretty clever. They paid their lawyers a lot of money. Big Tobacco challenged this new law under the Australia-Hong Kong Bilateral Investment Treaty in a World Trade Organization dispute settlement proceeding. That means although Australian courts had ruled in favor of this law—their legislature passed it and the supreme court said it is constitutional—Big Tobacco, from the platform of Hong Kong, sued the Australian Government, saying, fundamentally, that was takings, that would undermine their profits.

I believe a three-person tribunal will hear this case. These are not Australian lawyers. Australia has nothing to do with this case except that they are going to be victimized.

I know the Presiding Officer cares about sovereignty for our country. I know this cuts across party lines. Conservatives, as much as progressives, care about sovereignty and public health. What we are doing is turning over the sovereignty of our Nation to these tribunals that can undercut our sovereignty.

Tobacco companies have launched similar cases against Uruguay and Togo over proposed laws. Cases like these can bankrupt small countries. Togo is one of the 10 poorest countries on Earth. It was forced to give up its tobacco labeling laws, bowing under pressure from Philip Morris, a company whose sales, I believe, are larger than the GDP of Togo—bowing under pressure from Philip Morris, which threatened an “incalculable amount of trade litigation.”

So here are some U.S. trade lawyers who threatened to sue a poor African government or, in some cases, Latin American government which, once it exercised its sovereignty to protect its children against potential addictive tobacco marketing—marketing that will lead to children being addicted to tobacco—but they back off because they can't afford to go to court against the deep pockets of Philip Morris. This is Big Tobacco's strategy: Litigate and bankrupt countries into submission.

What we are facing is huge corporations using trade laws to blackmail countries—call it another word if you want; I think “blackmail” is about as close as it gets—into overturning laws that were passed by their legislature and usually ratified by their court system. People from another country—a

very rich country—and one of the richest industries in that country, represented by some of the most privileged Harvard- and Yale-trained lawyers, are saying: We are going to overturn your democratically elected law because our profits are more important than protecting your children in Togo or your children in Uruguay, than protecting your children's health. That is fundamentally what they are saying.

So a vote today—since we haven't fixed tobacco—on fast-track is essentially saying—unless the people voting for it are going to go to bat, for a change, against Big Tobacco—fundamentally, we are saying it is OK for Big Tobacco and it is the privilege of the Big Tobacco lawyers to go to court and choose large tobacco profits over 15- and 16—or may I say 12- and 13-year-old children's health in poor countries in the developing world. That is a rather uneven match. Yet we ratify that with a "yes" vote today.

(Mr. TOOMEY assumed the Chair.)

We also have a responsibility to look out for the American worker who we know will be hurt by this deal. We know that—while I may disagree with the Presiding Officer from Pennsylvania over whether these trade agreements produce net jobs or what he, I think, believes—I believe these trade agreements produce a net loss of jobs.

That aside, people on both sides of this debate understand and have acknowledged that because of our actions, because of what we do here in this body and in the House and in the White House—what we do here with this trade agreement will throw some people out of jobs. We know there will be dislocation. People will lose their jobs because of our decisions. So how in the world could we possibly pass this without first taking care of those workers who lose their jobs? We make a decision; you get thrown out of work. My colleague makes a decision; you get thrown out of work. We are just going to turn our backs because we don't really care about helping you even though you lost your job because of our decision.

So TAA is particularly important. It is not that we should pass the trade adjustment assistance; it is what we should do with it. I am disappointed that the TAA bill being considered today is significantly less generous to those workers than it should be. There will be many workers who lose their jobs. Even if we pass TAA, there will be many workers who lose their jobs who will not be taken care of under TAA. It does not make the program available to all workers.

I am disappointed that the bipartisan funding levels—which almost every Democrat in this body cosponsored—in my legislation that included a more generous level for TAA—we agreed to it in 2011 in this body, but for no reason at all, those numbers were cut. I want to expand eligibility. I want to increase its funding.

We are making it easier to pass TPP, but we are cutting the TAA Program

by 20 percent. So how does that figure? We are saying we are going to pass this trade agreement—40 percent of the world's economy—yet we are cutting the protection for workers, the aid for those workers who lose their jobs because of our decisions in this body. We are cutting those workers 20 percent.

Last, we have an opportunity in this bill today to once again support the Leveling the Playing Field Act and ensure it gets to the President's desk. This will be the vote after the TPA vote. This bill is essential to protect our manufacturers from illegal foreign competition. We can't have trade promotion without trade enforcement. This is not controversial. It shouldn't be partisan. Regardless of how one votes on TPA, we need to make sure our deals are enforced.

Leveling the playing field will increase U.S. companies' ability to fight back against unfair trade practices. It is critical for our businesses, and it is critical for our workers who are drowning under a flood of illegally subsidized imports. It has the support of businesses and workers, Republicans and Democrats.

I want to particularly thank Senators PORTMAN and GRAHAM and CASEY for their work in support of this issue. No matter where we stand on TPA, we should all be able to come together to demand enforcement of our trade laws. We cannot have trade promotion without trade enforcement and without protecting those workers who we know will be left behind.

We know these agreements cause wages to stagnate. We know these agreements cause factories to close. They cause imports to increase. They devastate families and communities. This is a terrible mistake we will make—which we have made over and over and over and over—if we pass this today. If we pass TPA, it is the same mistake we made with NAFTA—big promises of job increases, wages going up. Bad results. We did it when we passed PNTR. We did it when we passed CAFTA, the Central America Free Trade Agreement. And we are about to do it again. Shame on us. At least take care of workers if we are going to pass this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, there is a lot of talk about the imminent decision of the Supreme Court ruling in King v. Burwell. I will get to that a little bit later in my speech, but I wish to start by talking about how we got here.

I would like to review what Americans were told were the reasons for ObamaCare. It was supposed to help the 15 million people who are currently uninsured to get covered with quality, affordable insurance. Everyone else, we were promised, would be left alone. Remember that promise: If you like your doctor, you can keep him. If you like your health care, you can keep it. That

is the first of several broken promises ObamaCare has ultimately produced. I will go through a few this afternoon.

Let's take a look at what has happened since ObamaCare was implemented and where we stand. Most of the uninsured nationwide are—and they were prior to ObamaCare—working families; 71 percent in 2013. They either couldn't afford the cost-sharing of their employer plan or their employer didn't offer a plan. Of those who got insurance under ObamaCare, too many were working families who actually didn't get private insurance under ObamaCare; they were ultimately forced into Medicaid, which is supposed to be a safety net, not a permanent solution for working families.

Is Medicaid the quality, affordable insurance that we all want for Americans and that people thought they were getting with ObamaCare? I don't think so. The provider payment rates in Medicaid are so low that many doctors refuse to see patients and participate in the plans. I don't really begrudge the doctors and the health care providers for this because the cost of care oftentimes exceeds the Medicaid reimbursement rates, and the redtape that comes with it absolutely is destroying the administrative side of health care. That is why doctors don't participate in the plan. That is why the doctors are not available for the people who actually need good, quality health care.

It is not for lack of investment though. States are drowning in unaffordable Medicaid Programs that eat more and more of their budgets at the expense of other essential services. States are throwing everything they can and then some at Medicaid, but it is still unacceptable in terms of cost, quality, and access. That is exactly why North Carolina refused to participate in ObamaCare's Medicaid expansion. I was speaker of the house in North Carolina at the time.

We know that if we are going to solve the health care problem, it has to be a real solution. We have to bring back a vibrant, robust, patient-centered, private insurance system, customized for our State rather than dictated by bureaucrats in Washington.

My constituents deserve a plan that pays doctors fairly so that provider networks are big enough to ensure that people don't get turned away at the door. Herding more of our hard-working, proud neighbors into a sub-standard welfare plan designed to be a temporary safety net is no solution at all, but that is exactly what ObamaCare has done. The President even brags about it.

In North Carolina, prior to the implementation of ObamaCare, there were some 1.9 million of our citizens who were uninsured. Who are these people? Ten percent were already Medicaid eligible before ObamaCare. Most of them are children. We could have enrolled them without ever passing ObamaCare and disrupting and destroying health care for everyone else. About a third

were people who were eligible for subsidies on the exchange—almost half a million.

So did all of those folks get help? It might look as though they did. After all, 459,000 have signed up through the Federal exchange in North Carolina. But wait. Are those the same people, the same ones who were insured before ObamaCare? It turns out that even more than that—473,000 people—had their plans canceled by ObamaCare. Again, 473,000 North Carolinians received a letter saying: The Affordable Care Act has determined you can't keep your plan. They didn't like it, even though those who were insured were satisfied with their plans.

This was a nationwide trend. The Associated Press reported that 4.7 million people had their plans canceled because of ObamaCare. There was such an outcry that the President, by Executive fiat, actually instructed the insurers to continue to allow the plans for a period of time. So how many people lost their plan this time is still not clear. But what is clear is that the individual mandate is going to cause problems down the road because those who lost their plan or who will lose their plan, are going to be required by law to buy a Washington-approved insurance plan no matter how unaffordable ObamaCare has made insurance.

Again, in North Carolina, more people received cancellation notices for plans they liked than have actually signed up for ObamaCare. Between the half million whose plans were initially canceled by ObamaCare and the 1.9 million people who were already uninsured prior to ObamaCare, we should end up with a wash—with no change in the uninsured figures for my State of North Carolina, but, actually, we don't. The uninsured rate has gone down 2.7 percent—from 19.9 percent in 2013 to 17.2 percent in 2014—after the first full year of the ObamaCare implementation, so roughly equivalent to about 200,000 people in North Carolina. But were all of those people getting quality, affordable plans on the exchange as promised by ObamaCare? Hardly. The reason is Medicaid enrollment. The majority of the people who the administration claims ObamaCare covered have been those who went to the exchange to get insurance but were then forced to enroll in Medicaid. And when I say forced, I mean forced. The law requires them to have insurance, but the exchange doesn't allow them to buy a private plan if they are eligible for Medicaid. It shows them one option: Medicaid.

Well, wait. You said North Carolina didn't expand Medicaid, so how did this happen? It is true. Medicaid enrollment for my State has increased by 300,000 people—the biggest enrollment increase of any of the States that didn't expand Medicaid. What that means is much if not all of the drop in the uninsured rate is due to North Carolinians enrolling in Medicaid through the exchange. These are the same people who

were eligible before ObamaCare was ever passed.

Nationally, last year, nearly 90 percent of ObamaCare's net coverage gain was through Medicaid. A study from MIT released in April found that Medicaid enrollees receive much less value from the program than the cost of paying for services.

So far, I have been talking about people who were targeted by ObamaCare, including the population of previously uninsured, as well as those who became uninsured because ObamaCare forced them into the exchange. Again, ObamaCare didn't really make a dent in our uninsured numbers—not to this point in North Carolina—and it actually harmed many who were forced onto the exchange. It turns out that ObamaCare is an equal opportunity wrecking ball. It hurt the people it was supposed to help. It forced working families who needed quality, affordable, permanent care into a program that provides the lowest quality access there is—Medicaid.

ObamaCare took over and removed the insurance options, the individual market for people who didn't have employer coverage, leaving those Washington-approved ObamaCare plans with increased premiums, increased deductibles, and increased copays. You see, increased coverage doesn't necessarily mean better health care. If you can't afford your plan or you can't find the doctor, then your health care suffers.

But that is not all. ObamaCare broke health care for everyone else. Those of us who were supposedly happy with our doctors and happy with our health plans have been affected and will continue to be negatively affected.

What about the majority of Americans who actually have insurance through their employer? They haven't necessarily lost coverage yet, but they have been harmed. Despite the President's promise to lower insurance premiums, the average family premium for employer-sponsored coverage has risen \$3,500 a year between 2009 and 2014.

In North Carolina, during the first full year of the exchange rollout, premium price increases outpaced increases in wages and inflation, losing ground to the working family. Even worse, premium prices in individual insurance markets—a market my daughter was a part of—went up 147 percent as a result of a plan that promised to reduce our health care insurance costs.

I know I am not the only one who remembers what President Obama said about ObamaCare. He said the average premiums would go down \$2,500. The reality is they have gone up an average of \$3,500 a year. All of this leads to the problem of people having insurance they can't afford, and they are not able to use it because their deductibles and copays are simply too high.

Between this group and the people who are now on Medicaid who can't get appointments with the small number of

doctors who accept Medicaid, what one gets is a dramatic increase in the use of emergency rooms. That is exactly the opposite of what supporters of ObamaCare predicted. They predicted that emergency room visits would go down. We were told that once everyone was insured under ObamaCare, people could go to their doctors in outpatient settings and not show up at the ER. Instead, people can't afford the copays and deductibles or they can't get an outpatient appointment, so they wait until their problem is critical and end up in the ER.

In fact, Kaiser Family Foundation reports that emergency room utilization is up significantly among ObamaCare participants. In a survey of more than 2,000 emergency room doctors, three-quarters of them said emergency room visits have risen since January 1, 2014. Medicaid recipients covered under ObamaCare are struggling to find doctors who will accept their coverage, so they have no choice but to end up at an emergency room, where the costs skyrocket.

A spokesman for the Emergency Room Doctors Association, Dr. Howard Mell, noted:

There was a grand theory the law would reduce emergency room visits. Well, guess what, it hasn't happened. Visits are going up despite the ACA, and in a lot of cases because of it.

One of the most troubling elements of ObamaCare to me is the intergenerational wealth transfer from the young and the poor to the older and the wealthier. When I say "older," I don't mean elderly and frail or the population who may be on Medicare; I am talking about a wealth transfer from young people in their twenties to people like me in their fifties. I would never ask my daughter, who is about to start a career in nursing, to pay for her mother's insurance or for my insurance, neither would any of you or any other American. That is not how parents are wired. But an impersonal law that empowers an impersonal bureaucracy does not have the same moral compass as a parent.

For example, ObamaCare's mandates have jacked up premiums for young people to keep premiums down for older people like me. I am not sure "let's fleece our children and grandchildren" is a winning talking point, so the supporters of the bill try to hide the truth in Washington-speak. They call this "age rating bands."

Another talking point that tends to not fly too well with folks is "Let's kick seniors off of their Medicare Advantage plans." That is exactly what happened in North Carolina late last year. Many who know about Medicare Advantage plans know they are very important and popular among seniors. In my State last year, 57,000 seniors—more than any other State in the Nation—were sent cancellation letters from the Medicare Advantage plans they liked. Many of these seniors were offered a minimum benefit plan with

higher copayments and higher premiums instead, all because ObamaCare cut reimbursement for Medicare Advantage plans out of some bizarre but longstanding aversion to the program on the part of some of our friends on the other side of the aisle. I have never understood it. Does Medicare Advantage somehow give seniors too much control, stability, and convenience in their Medicare benefits? I suspect my mom is watching me right now in Nashville, TN. I bet if she was asked that question, she would say no.

Just when you think it is really bad, realize that some of the toughest ObamaCare hits haven't even been taken yet.

First, the individual mandate penalty. The penalty for not having insurance increases next year to almost \$700 per adult or 2.5 percent of one's annual income, whichever is greater. This is a penalty which many people will be surprised to see when they get their tax return and they are expecting this amount and it is \$700 or \$1,000 less to pay for the mandated care. If an individual's income is \$50,000, they will pay a penalty of \$1,000. A family with two adults with an income of \$50,000 will pay \$1,400. When adding a college kid to the mix, the penalty is \$2,100. A lot of people are in for a shock when they open up that tax refund and they see the additional hidden costs of ObamaCare on working families. That penalty, however, is still dramatically lower than the out-of-pocket costs of an ObamaCare plan. So we are forcing Americans to pick between bad and worse.

Second, the employer mandate and penalty. President Obama knows the devastation the employer mandate will cause not only for businesses but, more importantly, for workers. Employers will be forced to cut workers. They will be forced to reduce wages and drop employer-sponsored health plans altogether and pay the penalty because the penalty will cost less than the mandates will to provide the care, and many employers simply can't afford it.

So far, people with employer-sponsored coverage have been harmed only by rising costs and shrinking provider networks, but they haven't for the most part lost their plans yet. The day is coming when the President can no longer delay the employer mandate, and that is when the plans they were promising you can keep will be canceled. We will see a massive disruption in the group market where most North Carolinians get their health insurance.

Premiums are going up every year because fewer younger, healthier people are enrolling than projected. This was completely predictable. Young people are no dummies. They know this is a terrible deal for them. As a result, insurance companies recalculate premiums based on the cost of the pool actually enrolled. The largest insurer in my State announced premium hikes for next year in the individual market of at least 26 percent. You know it is a

bad thing when I felt better about the fact that our premium increases in North Carolina were only 26 percent because in some States they were upwards of 50 percent, and there is more to come.

ObamaCare relies on people paying into the pool to subsidize the sicker and poorer members of the pool. That is how insurance works. But virtually no one is signing up who isn't eligible for the subsidies.

CMS released data yesterday showing that 2015 exchange enrollment is 30 percent below projections made just 3 years ago. And of those who do enroll, they are doing it because of the lure of the subsidy. Ninety-three percent of the North Carolinians who are on the exchange have received those subsidies. That means the plans are unaffordable without massive subsidies. Those ineligible for the subsidy don't bother to sign up. That is why we have seen almost no movement in our State for uninsureds.

ObamaCare is forcing employers to cut jobs and move full-time workers into part-time positions. New data show a decline in the average hours worked per week by lower wage employees, and many workers are just below that 30-hour threshold, 30 hours per week.

I was at a restaurant in North Carolina a couple months back, and I was talking with a manager, who said it was heartbreaking for her to go and talk to a single mom who was able to make ends meet between the tips and her salary at 40 hours a week and tell her that she can now only work 30 hours a week because the restaurant simply cannot afford to be exposed to the mandates.

Now you have people who may have been able to make it on 40 hours a week or 45 hours a week having to get two jobs to make ends meet. I hear employers talking about how they are having to call each other to try to work out the schedules for these hard-working folks.

The CBO projects that ObamaCare will reduce employment as a result of all this by 2 million full-time equivalent jobs in 2017.

President Obama campaigned saying he wouldn't raise taxes on families making less than \$250,000 a year. Let's talk a little bit more about that. ObamaCare broke that promise as well by creating or raising 20 different taxes amounting to more than \$1 trillion in the first decade. Several taxes directly punished families making less than \$250,000 a year.

University of Chicago economist Casey Mulligan modeled the macroeconomic effects of ObamaCare and estimated that the damage would be twice as large. He expects Obamacare to cause a 3-percent drop in employment and work hours and a 2-percent drop in our gross domestic product and worker income. If he is right, the total loss of worker compensation caused by the President's health care law will exceed \$2 trillion between 2017 and 2024.

Now let's talk about the King v. Burwell case that has everyone's attention, with the Supreme Court imminently in a position to issue a ruling, probably sometime next week. The question for the Supreme Court is this: Did the President break the law by going around the will of the people in the States that wanted to opt out of establishing a State exchange, like we did in North Carolina?

Mr. President, what I just finished was a very long list of broken promises and the fiscal disaster we call ObamaCare. But now I want to talk about the King v. Burwell decision.

The question is this: Did the President break the law by going around the will of the people in the States that wanted to opt out of establishing a State exchange, such as North Carolina?

I am not interested in litigating this. I am not an attorney; I am a businessman. I will leave the lawyering to others. When I look at King v. Burwell, I don't see a legal battle; I see an opportunity. It may sound trite, but I see hope. The Court may give us the chance of a generation—the chance to fix health care once and for all. We can't fix ObamaCare, but we can fix health care.

But here is the thing. We don't come up with the solution ourselves. The press is counting on us to come up with a solution. Others are pressuring us on the other side of the aisle. But here is what I think we need to do. I think we need to look beyond the traditional way of trying to solve health care to a new way, and it starts with something fairly simple—humility.

I won't read the definition, but I think it is something that is sometimes missed in Washington. The solution is that we take the power out of Washington and we let the States do it. We give States, which are closer to the people, the chance—the privilege, really—to offer health care solutions that are local, accountable, and affordable.

Every State is different. Let's respect those differences. I believe the solution is one that will give States the flexibility, the funding, and the control to decide how best to serve the people of their particular State.

I just went through the long list of problems with ObamaCare. It has been problematic from the start, with higher costs, lower quality, less freedom, and people losing their coverage. It is a badly written law, and it hurts almost everyone.

Washington had its chance. Now it is time to let the States decide what is best for their people, and let the people decide what is best for their health care. To do that, we are going to have to do something we don't always do up here. We are going to have to jump on this opportunity and work together—Republicans and Democrats, the Federal Government and the States—to find commonsense solutions that are truly patient-centered.

That is the type of patient-first approach that will give patients more

freedom, more choice, and control over their health care. That is what will expand coverage—not bureaucratic power. That will promote genuine quality and innovation. It is also what is going to bring costs down. I do not think my responsibility is to my party. I do not think our responsibility is to the institution of the Senate or the prerogatives of the Federal legislative branch.

I think our responsibility is to the patients who deserve the highest quality care; to the patients who want the best treatments for their children; to the nurses and doctors who deserve freedom to heal according to their wisdom, their experience, and their conscience; and to the businesses that deserve the freedom to design affordable coverage that fits their workforce.

Finally, I think we are responsible to the seniors who have paved America's road to prosperity before us and who deserve a strong, secure Medicare program. The Court may just give us the opportunity to firmly and finally reject ObamaCare so that we can deliver what everyone in America deserves—a health care solution.

The law has not worked. It cannot work. It is time we return the power of medicine to the people. It is time to stop fighting and to start cooperating and to find a permanent solution.

Patients deserve portability in their health insurance, and they deserve affordability. They deserve their peace of mind when their parent or their child or they themselves are in their hour of crisis and when they can count on getting the best health care America has to offer.

Sometimes politicians in Washington forget that health care is not about systems or rules and structure or even markets. It is about real people and real families and real lives. So my commitment is simple. Our commitment should be simple. No one who has ObamaCare-subsidized care today will lose that coverage tomorrow. We are equally committed to providing long-term, State-designed, patient-empowering solutions that deliver better long-term results, and safe, secure, and affordable health care and an improved economy.

We commit that every patient with a preexisting condition will be able to find affordable coverage. No one will hit a cap on benefits. Anyone can renew their health plan. That is our commitment. Health care is about patients, not politics. It is about doctors and nurses, not politicians. For the millions who have been affected, from the cancelled plans to the higher costs, we are committed to real solutions to protect patients and make health care genuinely personal and genuinely affordable.

Hard-working taxpayers deserve certainty, stability, and peace of mind when it comes to health care. A temporary extension of subsidies alone would not be enough. It would just be another Washington gimmick. It would

not address the very real problems with the President's health care law. Let's commit to each other—Republicans and Democrats—that we will show a little modesty. We won't assume we know what is best for every American, and we will let the States come up with solutions. We will work together to return power to the States, to the people, and really to the kitchen table, where most health care decisions are made.

I know what you are thinking: I am new and have been here for 6 months. Maybe I am a little bit naive. But I have herded a lot of cats in the North Carolina legislature. I have stepped up to very serious challenges, and we produced a lot of good results for my friends and colleagues and citizens in North Carolina. I know it can be done at the State level when policies are on the line that have a real impact on our neighbors—neighbors we have to face in the checkout line and in the church pews.

I am looking forward to providing a solution to the health care problems in the United States. I am looking forward to seeing bipartisan cooperation, to delivering on the promises that we make here, and to fulfilling the promise of fixing health care for our great country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 4 p.m. today, June 24, all postclosure time on the motion to concur with respect to H.R. 2146 be considered expired, the pending motion to concur with amendment be withdrawn, and the Senate vote on the motion to concur; that if cloture on H.R. 1295 is invoked, all postclosure time be considered expired, all motions and amendments be withdrawn except the motion to concur with amendment, and the Senate immediately vote on the motion to concur with amendment; further, that following the disposition of H.R. 1295, all time on the compound motion to go to conference under rule XXVIII on H.R. 644 be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture with the mandatory quorum waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, we are now one vote away from final passage of our bill to renew trade promotion authority. One more vote and we can finally, and at long last, send this important bill to the President's desk. That vote is expected to take place within the next 25 minutes.

This is a critical day for our country. In fact, I would call it a historic day. It has taken us a while to get there, longer than many of us would have liked. But we all know that anything worth doing takes effort. Believe me,

this bill has been worth the effort. This is, I believe, the most important bill we will pass in the Senate this year. It will help reassert Congress's role over the U.S. trade negotiations and reestablish the United States as a strong player in international trade.

Renewing TPA has been a top priority for me for many years, and as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I am pleased that with the help of Ranking Member WYDEN, we have been able to deliver a robust and bipartisan bill. It has also been a high priority for the Senate majority leader. Thanks to his strong support and leadership, we are one step away from completing this important task.

This bill will help farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and our entrepreneurs throughout our country get better access to foreign markets and allow them to compete on a level playing field. This bill will help give these job creators and the workers they employ greater opportunities to grow their businesses, which will help create a healthier American economy. The business and agricultural communities understand the importance of strong trade agreements. That is why they came together in strong support of this important legislation. We have heard from all of them throughout this debate. I appreciate their enthusiasm and support.

This has, from the outset, been a bipartisan effort, and I am glad that it has remained that way. Throughout this entire debate—here in the Senate and over in the House and here in the Senate again—we have been able to maintain a bipartisan coalition in support of TPA, fair trade, and expanded market access to U.S. exporters. This is no small feat. I am appreciative of everyone who has worked so hard to make this possible.

With this final vote, we can complete the work we began so many years ago. But let's be clear. Passing TPA is not the end of the story; it is just the beginning. As chairman of the Finance Committee, I intend to remain vigilant in our oversight as the administration pursues the negotiating objectives that Congress has set with this legislation. If they fall short, I will be among the first to hold them accountable. But that is for another day.

Today, I urge my colleagues to help us finalize this historic achievement and join me in voting in favor of this bipartisan TPA bill. If the vote moves the way I think it will, today will be remembered as a good day for the Senate, the President, and the American people.

Once we vote to pass TPA, we will then be voting to invoke cloture on the Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015. This bill will reauthorize and improve three of our trade preference programs: the Generalized System of Preferences, or GSP; the African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA; and tariff preferences for Haiti. I want to take some time to reiterate why each of these programs is important.

First, the GSP promotes trade with developing nations by providing duty-free tariff treatment of certain products originating in those countries. The program helps beneficiary countries advance their economic development and move toward more open economies. It also helps manufacturers and importers in the United States to receive inputs and raw materials at lower costs.

Approximately three-quarters of U.S. imports under the GSP are raw materials, parts and components, or machinery and equipment used by U.S. companies to manufacture goods here at home.

The program expired in 2013. As a result, businesses that would typically benefit from this program have had to deal with high tariffs on these imports for the last 2 years. Last year alone, American companies paid over \$600 million in tariffs that would otherwise have been eliminated with the GSP in place. Once we finally pass this bill, we will take a long overdue step toward solving these problems.

The preferences bill also includes a long-term renewal of the AGOA Program, which lowers U.S. tariffs on the exports of qualified sub-Saharan African countries, encouraging them to further develop their economy. Since AGOA was enacted in 2000, trade with beneficiary countries has more than tripled, with U.S. direct investment in beneficiary countries growing more than sixfold during that time.

The program has also helped to create more than 1 million jobs in those countries. The AGOA authorization in this preferences bill will improve on this past success.

Some of our colleagues here in the Congress have voiced concerns about the AGOA Program and the failure of some beneficiary countries to live up to their commitments. I share many of these concerns. We tried to address them with this bill. Most notably, the bill creates a mechanism under the AGOA Program to allow for benefits to be scaled back if a country is found not to be making good faith progress on eligibility criteria. We expect the administration to use this new tool aggressively.

Finally, the preferences bill will also extend preferential access to the U.S. market for Haiti. As we all know, Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. The Haiti preference programs support the creation of jobs and stability in a country dealing with debilitating poverty and unemployment. I hope this extension will encourage continued economic development and democracy in Haiti.

It is easy to see why these programs have all received bipartisan support. I expect that support to continue. In addition to those preferences programs, the bill we will be voting on includes legislation introduced by Senators PORTMAN and BROWN to strengthen the enforcement and administration of our antidumping and countervailing duty

laws. As I have noted in the past, anti-dumping and countervailing duty laws are among the most important trade tools we have to protect U.S. companies from unfair foreign trade practices.

A number of Utah companies do benefit from these laws, which allow them to compete against imports that unfairly benefit from the support of foreign governments. I am pleased we were able to include this legislation in the preferences bill.

Finally, also included in this bill is an extension of the trade adjustment assistance, or TAA, Program. I think I have said enough about my opposition to this program here on the floor over the past several weeks. I will not delve too deeply into that issue here. However, I do understand that for many of my colleagues who want to support TPA and free trade, passage of TAA is a prerequisite.

From the outset of this debate over trade promotion authority, I have committed to my colleagues to working to ensure that both TAA and TPA move on parallel tracks. I plan to make good on this commitment, and today will show that. That is why, despite my misgivings about TAA, and with the entire picture in view, I plan to vote for this latest version of the trade preferences bill.

Back in April, the Senate Finance Committee reported four separate trade bills. All of these bills have enjoyed bipartisan support and are priorities for many Members of Congress. I committed to doing all that I could to get all of these bills through Congress and onto the President's desk. While the path has taken some unexpected turns, I think the light at the end of the tunnel at this point is very visible. Once again, we will shortly be voting to pass our TPA bill and send it to the President. Shortly thereafter, I expect that we will pass our trade preferences bill, which includes TAA, and send it to the House, where I think it will pass, hopefully, without much difficulty.

Then we expect to appoint conferees on the Customs bill, which will get us closer to the finish line on that important legislation. Needless to say, I am pleased with these developments. I think they speak well of what Congress is able to do when Members work together to address important issues and solve real problems.

Once again, I thank my colleagues for working with us on the bipartisan effort to update and improve U.S. trade policy. Most notably, I once again thank Senator WYDEN for his assistance and support throughout this effort and on all of these trade bills. He has been a great partner and deserves much of the credit for getting us this far. I also thank our distinguished majority leader for his unwavering support, even in the most difficult times. I also need to thank Chairman RYAN of the House Ways and Means Committee, who has been a coauthor and a key partner in this endeavor. Of course, I

thank Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republican leadership for their efforts in getting us through all the twists and turns we have had to take to get to this point.

We also need to give credit to President Obama and Ambassador Froman for their work in building and maintaining a coalition of support for this entire undertaking.

Ultimately, I need to thank everyone who supported our work on these bills in the Senate, in the House, in the administration, and elsewhere, but that list is too long for me to go through on the floor. I just hope everyone who had a hand in today's success knows I am grateful for the work they have put in. I hope we can build on this success and that we can find more ways to work together to help the American people solve our Nation's problems.

I also praise my chief trade counsel on this matter, Everett Eissenstat, who with his vast foreign policy experience and trade experience has been nothing but a tremendous help to me.

Chris Campbell, who is our chief of staff on the Finance Committee, has played another role; Jay Khosla, who is one of my chief policy advisers; and the rest of my staff: Mark Prater, Jeff Wrase, Bryan Hickman, Shane Warren, Rebecca Eubank, Kevin Rosenbaum.

I compliment Senator WYDEN's staff as well: Joshua Sheinkman, Jayme White, Elissa Alben, Greta Peisch, Anderson Heiman, and Michael Evans. They have worked long and hard and, really, we have had a lot of good days together and a lot of tough days together, but hopefully it will come out all right.

I can say without reservation that I look forward to tackling the bipartisan challenges that lie ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

OBAMACARE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it has been said that there is nothing certain in life but death and taxes.

I would suggest there is a third item that can be included in that saying, and that is bad news about ObamaCare, because if there is one thing that can be counted on, it is the regular revelation of new ObamaCare failures.

This past week, we learned that the Obama administration cannot verify whether almost \$3 billion in subsidies that it paid to insurance companies during the first 4 months of 2014 was properly paid. Thanks to the government's failure to ensure that a reporting system was in place by the time exchange plans went into effect in 2014, the government made payments to insurance companies without any way of verifying if the payments were correct or if the people it made payments for were still enrolled in their plans.

Unfortunately, missing systems are just par for the course when it comes to the President's health care law.

I don't need to remind anyone of the massive breakdowns that occurred

when the partially finished healthcare.gov kicked off 2 years ago. The President himself referred to healthcare.gov last week as a “well-documented disaster.”

But as bad as these problems have been for a health care law that the President once claimed would make purchasing health care as easy as shopping on Amazon, they are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to ObamaCare.

Two weeks ago, I came to the floor to talk about the massive rate hikes customers on exchanges are facing for 2016. Let me just read a couple headlines from the first week in June. CNN: “Obamacare sticker shock: Big rate hikes proposed for 2016.” From the New York Times: “Many Health Insurers Go Big With Initial 2016 Rate Requests.” From the Wall Street Journal: “More Health-Care Insurers Seek Big Premium Increases.” From the Associated Press: “8 Minnesota Health Plans Propose Big Premium Hikes for 2016.” From the Newark Star-Ledger: “Premiums to jump more than 10 percent on many Obamacare policies.”

I could go on. Nationwide, insurers have requested double-digit premium increases on hundreds of individual and small group plans for 2016. More than 6 million people are enrolled in plans facing average rate increases of 10 percent or more. Around the country, rate increases of 20, 30, and even 40 percent are common.

Yet the President promised that his health care plan “would bring down the cost of healthcare for millions.” Well, in fact, the President’s health care law has been driving up the cost of health care for millions since its inception. The average family health care premium has increased by almost \$3,500 since 2009, despite the President’s promise that health insurance costs for families would decrease by \$2,500 if his law were passed.

I could go on about ObamaCare’s many failures. I could talk about the State exchanges that are failing or those that have already failed. I could talk about the individuals who lost their health insurance plans—plans, I might add, that they liked—as a result of this law. I could talk about the people who no longer can see doctors they saw for years because their new ObamaCare plans have severely limited the network of doctors they can see. I could talk about the small businesses that are struggling with the costs imposed by ObamaCare or the fact that the Congressional Budget Office has stated that the law will reduce work hours equivalent to 2 million full-time workers by the year 2017.

I think every American gets the point. ObamaCare is broken. It has been broken from the beginning. It has failed to deliver on the promise—the President’s promise—of more affordable, accessible health care, and it has made things worse for American families.

In the next few days, the Supreme Court will release its decision in the

King v. Burwell case. If the Supreme Court abolishes or phases out the ObamaCare subsidies, Republicans will take action to provide effective assistance to Americans to repeal the mandates that forced these Americans to buy government-approved insurance in the first place. Our plan will protect families while we move away from costly, top-down, government-mandated health care and toward a system that will actually drive down costs and increase choices for American families.

President Obama promised that his health care law would be a solution to the problems plaguing our health care system. The last 5 years have proved that ObamaCare is anything but. Not only did ObamaCare fail to solve the existing problems in our health care system, it has created entirely new ones, and American families are those who are suffering as a result.

It is time for Democrats to stop defending this broken law and start working with Republicans to replace it with real health care reform that will lower costs, put patients back in charge, and provide greater access to quality care. That is what we should be working on. That is what the American people expect, and it is long overdue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to speak for up to 4 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the greatest domestic policy train wreck we have seen in our lifetime, a fundamentally flawed law that is holding back our economy and limiting people’s freedom when it comes to choices in health care. Of course, I am talking about the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare.

ObamaCare was the creation of a Democratic supermajority that crammed ObamaCare through Congress without open debate by the American people. In the last 5 years since ObamaCare became law, the American people have not yielded in their strong opposition to ObamaCare. In fact, today, more than a majority of Americans continue to disapprove of this law, and there is no wonder why.

When I am back home in Georgia, one of the most frequent and sobering concerns I hear about is the insidious, negative economic impact of this law. The consequences of ObamaCare are hurting Georgians in many ways and millions of Americans.

First, the individual mandate is forcing people onto ObamaCare, whether they can afford it or not. Like my wife Bonnie and I, many people have had their insurance plans actually canceled, lost access to their preferred doctors or were forced onto insurance plans that cost more, not less. In Georgia alone, dozens of ObamaCare plans are expected to have double-digit rate

hikes next year, with some people’s plans skyrocketing over 60 percent. That is just unacceptable.

Second, ObamaCare’s employer mandate is causing small businesses to cut back workers’ hours and, in some cases, businesses have actually stopped hiring completely. Due to the 30-hour workweek rule inside ObamaCare, many people are being forced to move from full-time to part-time work. This is devastating the families already struggling to get from payday to payday. Without a full workweek, many moms and dads are juggling multiple part-time jobs to provide for their families and try to save for the future. Next year, for example, 2.6 million people are in danger of having their hours cut because of ObamaCare. Sixty percent of those individuals are female and over 60 percent are the young, first-time workers between 18 and 35 years of age.

Third, given the growing, aging population, ObamaCare is contributing to a dangerous doctor shortage. The Association of American Medical Colleges is predicting a shortage of as many as 90,000 doctors by 2025.

Another survey by the Physicians Foundation found that 81 percent of doctors describe themselves as either overextended or at full capacity, and 44 percent said they planned to cut back on the number of patients they see, retire, work part time or actually close their practice to new patients.

Ultimately, ObamaCare is raising costs, not lowering them; cutting workers’ wages, not growing them; decreasing access, not expanding it; and making it harder on the middle class, not easier.

While the sentiment of the Supreme Court on ObamaCare is still to be determined, one thing is crystal clear: ObamaCare is hurting people and our economy. It must be fully repealed and replaced.

We have to stop allowing Washington to dictate what is best for individuals and their families. Putting bureaucrats between patients and their doctors, between patients and their insurance provider, and between doctors and the insurance providers is what created this catastrophe in the first place.

ObamaCare was wrong from the start. We have seen the growing unintended consequences of this flawed law in its implementation over the last 5 years. We now have the power to change course and create a better health care system for all Americans. I remain committed to using every tool at our disposal to repeal ObamaCare.

Achieving consensus on repealing ObamaCare with a patient-based alternative will require diligence and robust debate, but I am hopeful we can achieve that goal. I urge my colleagues to continue to work not just to fight against ObamaCare but to fight to protect the millions of people who are hurt by it every day.

We can create a health care system that offers the American people affordability, transportability, and yes, insurability. We can create commonsense health care policy that lowers costs and doesn't harm the economy like ObamaCare. And yes, we can create a bipartisan solution that helps people by putting patients first and getting Washington out of the way.

It won't be easy, but is achievable. It must be achievable. For the sake of our kids and grandkids we must do this. We must get rid of ObamaCare once and for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

Under the previous order, the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2146, with an amendment, is withdrawn.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2146.

Mr. HATCH. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The result was announced—yeas 60, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 219 Leg.]

YEAS—60

Alexander	Ernst	Moran
Ayotte	Feinstein	Murkowski
Barrasso	Fischer	Murray
Bennet	Flake	Nelson
Blunt	Gardner	Perdue
Boozman	Graham	Portman
Burr	Grassley	Risch
Cantwell	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heitkamp	Rounds
Carper	Heller	Sasse
Cassidy	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Shaheen
Cochran	Isakson	Sullivan
Coons	Johnson	Thune
Corker	Kaine	Tillis
Cornyn	Kirk	Toomey
Cotton	Lankford	Vitter
Crapo	McCain	Warner
Daines	McCaskill	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	Wyden

NAYS—38

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	King	Sanders
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schatz
Brown	Leahy	Schumer
Cardin	Manchin	Sessions
Casey	Markey	Shelby
Collins	Menendez	Stabenow
Cruz	Merkley	Tester
Donnelly	Mikulski	Udall
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Franken	Paul	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	

NOT VOTING—2

Lee	Rubio
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The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator GRAHAM and I be allowed to speak for about 5 minutes, equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONDEMNING THE ATTACK ON
EMANUEL AFRICAN METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 212, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 212) condemning the attack on Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and expressing encouragement and prayers for all affected by this evil assault.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 212) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I stand before you today and before the Nation not as a Senator, not as an elected official but as a humble South Carolinian. The past week has been one of terrible tragedy and amazing unity.

Last Wednesday night, we experienced an unimaginable tragedy. Nine men and women—nine mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sons, daughters—were lost forever. The hateful and racist actions of one deranged man have changed nine families forever. It has changed South Carolina forever and Charleston forever. But what we saw from the nine families at last Friday's bond hearing was simple. It was powerful and absolutely the best of who we are as Americans.

A few minutes ago I was in the cloakroom, and I had the opportunity to talk to one of the victim's sons, Daniel Simmons, Jr. I was talking to him back there.

I said: Is there anything you want me to share when I go on the floor of the Senate?

He said: Please share that God cares for his people. God still lives.

I was amazed.

Then he said with great enthusiasm and energy and a sense of excitement:

This evil attack will lead to reconciliation, restoration, and unity in our Nation.

Those are powerful words.

It is with great sadness and amazing hope that our future as a nation has been changed. It has been changed because one person decided to murder nine. It has been changed because the response of those nine families has been so courageous and so inspiring.

If you permit me, I will read the names of those nine individuals.

We honor the Reverend Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, beloved teacher and coach at Goose Creek High School. Her son Chris has shown us all what an amazing mother she was through his strength over the past 6 days.

We honor Cynthia Hurd, whose love for education has been shared for over 31 years as a librarian in the public library system.

We honor Susie Jackson, who at 87 years young still offered her beautiful voice to the choir and had recently returned from visiting her family in Ohio.

We honor Ethel Lee Lance, who served her church with pride and whose daughter calls her the strong woman who just tried to keep her family together.

We honor Depayne Middleton-Doctor, who dedicated her life to serving the poor and helping her students as an enrollment counselor at Southern Wesleyan University.

We honor my good friend, the Reverend Clementa Pinckney, an amazing man of faith, a great dad, and a wonderful father.

We honor Tywanza Sanders, beloved son of Tyrone and Felicia, whose warmth and heartfelt spirit has kept us moving.

We honor the Reverend Daniel Simmons, Sr., whose granddaughter said: My granddaddy was an amazing man. It seemed like every time he spoke, it was pure wisdom.

And we honor Pastor Myra Thompson, who served the Lord with grace and dignity. She loved her children, her grandchildren, and her great grandchildren.

If you would pause for 9 seconds, I would appreciate it.

(Moment of Silence.)

Thank you.

In closing, I want to thank all of my colleagues in the Senate and the House for their kind words over the past week and for the prayers that continue to come into our city from across the Nation.

We are Charleston, we are South Carolina, and we are absolutely united. We are committed to replacing hate with love, pain with kindness, and ill will and hostility with goodwill and comfort.

I yield to Senator GRAHAM.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I want to recognize Senator SCOTT. We all know Senator SCOTT is a man of quiet