

these tough decisions. We ought to be making it easier for them. That is our job. There are no excuses. I intend to work with our colleagues to see if this is a possibility.

While Senator WARREN is here, I wish to engage the Senator from Massachusetts and yield to her for an answer. As we sat on the Special Committee on Aging, we heard the testimony of how dire, on the line, and on the razor's edge the income is for senior citizens with these Social Security benefits. When that does not keep up with the cost of living—surely there is a cost-of-living increase in one year over the other, but if their Social Security checks don't reflect that, does that not invite a tremendous hardship on that elderly person?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, the answer is yes, it does. Senator NELSON has put his finger on a very serious problem; that is, every year because of policies made here in the Senate, we do a calculation of cost-of-living changes for Social Security. The problem is that calculation for cost-of-living changes is based on only about one-quarter of the population. It is not based on the whole population, and it is certainly not based just on those who receive Social Security.

We know from independent analysis that costs have gone up for seniors, but because of the policies made here in Congress, there will be no cost-of-living increase for seniors this year. That means they face high costs. Yet, at the same time, they are going to have a flat income.

The proposal here to give them a one-time payment of about \$581 is enough to pay 3 months' worth of food bills for the average senior. It is enough to help cover the costs of prescription drugs that are not covered by Medicare. These are significant differences for seniors who most need it, and I appreciate Senator NELSON coming here early to talk about and raise this important issue. He is exactly spot on about the difficulty with this issue.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator from Florida has expired.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for an additional 30 seconds.

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

Mr. NELSON. Therefore, I conclude by resting the case. If the cost of every person's daily living is in fact going up and yet our formula shows that they get no cost-of-living adjustment, is that not putting a burden upon the ones who we should be respecting and protecting that should not be there? We can do that with this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 5:15 p.m. today, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, soon we will be debating the future of ObamaCare. The American people have told us they want Congress to repeal this so-called health care law. They told us to start over with real health care reform. This actually shouldn't be a very controversial vote. It is clear, even to the law's supporters, that the Obama health care law has not worked out in any way they had specifically expected. The ObamaCare health care law is collapsing, whether the President wants to admit it or not.

Democrats should really be eager to join us to help fix the damage that has been done by this law. So far they have been much more focused on protecting President Obama's legacy than on protecting the American people and the health of the American people from ObamaCare.

Last month President Obama did a radio show in which he was asked about the law and about problems with the law because people all across the country are seeing significant problems with the law. The President would not admit to a single problem with this law. He insisted: "It has been a success."

Well, I go home to Wyoming every weekend. I am a doctor. I practiced medicine in Wyoming for 25 years, and the people whom I talk to—my patients, my neighbors, people all around the State, and the people whom I run into in my travels—do not consider ObamaCare a success.

Democrats come to the floor and say: It is OK that insurance rates are rising. Remember when the President said they would go down by \$2,500 per family? The Democrats say it is OK that the insurance rates are rising because they say the rates also went up before the law. What they won't tell you is that premiums aren't just going up a little; they are going up a lot next year. Actually, they are going through the roof.

There was a study by the McKinsey Center for U.S. Health System Reform. They found that the median increase for the bronze plans went up 13 percent from this year to next year. That is just the average. That means for half of the people, they are going to pay more than that. The silver plan is up 11 percent, the platinum plan is up 12 percent, and the gold plan is up 15 percent. These double-digit price increases are not a success.

Democrats have come to the floor and have talked about some of the peo-

ple who have gotten insurance coverage since the law took effect. What they won't tell you is that having insurance coverage is not the same thing as getting medical care.

The New York Times ran an article about 2 weeks ago with this headline: "Many Say High Deductibles Make Their Health Law Insurance All But Useless." They don't even call it health insurance. They call it health law insurance because it is insurance to comply with the law and not to actually give you the health care. It is astonishing. Even the New York Times calls it health law insurance.

The article tells the story about David Reines from Jefferson Township, NJ. He is 60 years old and has a history of chronic knee pain. This man says: "The deductible, \$3,000 a year, makes it impossible to actually go to a doctor." He says: "We have insurance, but can't afford to use it."

President Obama, this is not a success. Democrats who support the health care law say that it created these marketplaces where people can shop for insurance. What they won't tell you is that companies have been pulling out of the marketplaces and exchanges all across the country. More than half of the State co-ops have gone out of business and have failed. The largest health insurance company in America says that it may drop out of the program entirely next year.

In Wyoming, there is just one company participating in the ObamaCare exchange. That is the choice on the Wyoming exchange—one. Does President Obama consider that a success? Democrats say a lot of people like their insurance plans. Well, they won't tell you about the Gallup poll last month that found that the American people are far from happy. Just 33 percent of Americans said that the health care coverage in this country is either excellent or good—one out of three. Only one out of five is satisfied with the total cost of their health care.

Now, both of these numbers are worse than they were when President Obama took office. When asked: How are you going now compared to where you were when Barack Obama moved into the White House, people will tell you that when it comes to health care, it is worse.

Another survey last month by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that just 38 percent of Americans have a favorable opinion of the health care law. Is that the way President Obama measures success? Is that what he calls a success?

Why won't the Democrats come to the floor and talk about these surveys? Democrats come down to the floor and say that ObamaCare has put millions of people on Medicaid. I am not sure how many of them have a full understanding of Medicaid. As a doctor who practiced medicine for 24 years, I can tell you a lot about Medicaid. They won't say anything about this failed program. They won't admit to the fact that Medicaid is a failed program.

A new study last month found that cancer patients with Medicaid in California—we have 2 Senators from California who voted for this law—are less likely to get recommended treatment and they have a lower survival rate than people with other types of insurance. The Democrats celebrate the fact that they have all of these new people on Medicaid. This is not a success. Democrats don't want to talk about any of this.

Nobody on this side of the aisle is denying that there are people who have been helped by the health care law. Why won't any Democrat come to the floor of the Senate and admit that for every person who has benefited, someone else may have been harmed and may have suffered? Why won't Democrats admit and the President admit that the law has not lived up to their promises?

Why did we need a 2,000-page law that upended the entire health care system in this country basically to expand the broken Medicaid program? None of this had to happen. None of this is what people were asking for when Democrats wrote their law behind closed doors back there. It is certainly not what people are asking for today. This health care law has been expensive, disruptive, and devastating. It is headed for collapse, and if Democrats won't admit it, then they are just kidding themselves.

Republicans are ready to move on with a better approach. We will work to lower costs and make insurance affordable for all Americans. We will make sure that people who need insurance can actually get usable insurance. That means making coverage equal care. That is what it should do. Coverage ought to equal care. We will give people freedom, flexibility, and choice to allow patients to make the decisions that are best for them and their family—not Washington and President Obama telling them what is best for them and their family. Those people will be making those decisions for themselves. We will protect consumers by making insurance predictable and stable so people don't have to switch their coverage and their doctor every year.

Finally, we are going to fix Washington by making Medicare and Medicaid stronger for people who will absolutely rely on these programs.

President Obama and Democrats in Congress do have a choice. They can join with Republicans in accepting the inevitable. They can act now to reform our health care system in a way that works or they can stand by and watch as the wheels continue to come off of ObamaCare. The program is collapsing, and it is unavoidable. Congress should not allow this health care law to harm the American people for one day longer. Democrats should work with us to create a replacement that actually delivers care, not just unusable coverage.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

SENIORS AND VETERANS EMERGENCY BENEFITS ACT

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, the clock is ticking. Exactly 1 month from today, on January 1, approximately 70 million seniors, veterans, Americans with disabilities, and others who depend on Social Security and other benefits will get their first check of the new year. For those 70 million Americans—that is 1 in 5 Americans—January 1 is supposed to be a day of relief. This is the day when the Federal Government boosts their checks just a little bit to help with the rising costs of housing, food, and medical care. But unless Congress does something right now, for just the third time since 1975, seniors and veterans won't be receiving any cost-of-living increase on January 1—not one penny more.

Look at who gets left out in the cold. Two-thirds of seniors depend on Social Security for the majority of their income. For 15 million Americans, Social Security is all that stands between them and poverty, but not one of these Americans will see an extra penny next year, and millions of other Americans whose benefits are pegged to Social Security—millions who receive veterans' benefits, disability benefits, and other monthly payments—won't see an extra penny either.

Times are tough, but not for everyone. Last year, the CEOs at the biggest 350 American companies received, on average, a 3.9-percent pay increase. How much money is that? Since the average CEO at one of those top 350 companies made a cool \$16.3 million, a 3.9-percent raise landed them an additional half million bucks each. Everything is just great for America's top CEOs, who got huge raises, while 70 million seniors, veterans, and others who worked hard will be left with nothing. Why? It is not an accident. It is not inevitable. It is the result of deliberate policies made right here in Congress.

Social Security is supposed to be indexed to inflation so that when prices go up, benefits go up. But Congress's formula looks at the spending patterns of only about a quarter of the country, and the formula isn't geared to what older Americans actually spend their money on. In fact, official estimates show that the cost of core goods and services has increased, but seniors won't be getting a raise. Costs go forward while Social Security falls behind all because of the way that Congress says to calculate COLAs.

Skyrocketing CEO pay is also, in part, the result of policies set right here in Congress. Taxpayers subsidize CEOs' huge pay packages through billions of dollars in tax giveaways, including a crazy loophole that allows corporations to write off gigantic bonuses as business expenses. Sure, companies should make their own decisions

on how much to pay their executives, but because of laws Congress has passed, American taxpayers are forced to subsidize these multimillion-dollar pay packages.

These two decisions—how to calculate Social Security raises and whether to give tax breaks for multimillion-dollar CEO bonuses—are made right here in Congress, and right now Senators bow and scrape for highly paid CEOs while they turn their backs on retirees and vets. We are here because it is time for Congress to make different choices.

Representative TAMMY DUCKWORTH and I have introduced the Seniors And Veterans Emergency Benefits Act, or the SAVE Benefits Act, to give retirees, veterans, and Americans with disabilities a one-time payment of about \$581. That is the equivalent of a 3.9-percent increase over the average Social Security benefit—the same percentage raise CEOs received just last year.

Where would the money come from? Well, we can pay for it by closing the tax loophole for CEO bonuses that exceed \$1 million. In fact, according to the Chief Actuary of the Social Security Administration, closing just this one loophole will create enough revenue to give a \$581 raise to seniors and vets and still have billions of dollars left over to help boost the Social Security trust fund for the future.

The SAVE Benefits Act would give seniors, vets, and the disabled an extra \$581 a year. That \$581 a year may not mean much to a CEO, but that money will cover almost 3 months of groceries for seniors or a year's worth of out-of-pocket costs on prescription drugs for someone on Medicare. For seniors and vets, that \$581 means a lot.

Already, 21 Democratic Senators have signed on as cosponsors. Dozens of organizations—Social Security Works, the AFL-CIO, MoveOn.org, the National Organization For Women, VoteVets, the National Council of La Raza, and I could go on and on with this list—have already endorsed the bill. Across the country, more than 400,000 people have signed petitions urging Congress to pass the SAVE Benefits Act.

This is about money, but it is also about values. For too long, we have listened to a handful of the rich and powerful insist that we cut taxes for those at the top and leave everyone else behind. And now, across this country, people are saying: Enough. Taxpayers should not be forced to subsidize millionaire CEOs while seniors and vets have to fight for whatever scraps are left behind.

The clock is ticking. It is time for Congress to step up. The money is there—either way. It can go for a payment to 70 million Americans who need it and who have earned it or it can go to CEOs and the wealthiest corporations.

Let's vote on the SAVE Benefits Act. Let's show everyone where we stand—whether we stand up for tax breaks for