

action in the midst of a Presidential election. As I have said all along, this is not the time we want to interject into this political process the decision to make a lifetime appointment to the Supreme Court—a decision that may tip the balance of this particular Court.

Then-Senator BIDEN also said, when discussing the potential of holding Supreme Court confirmation hearings against the backdrop of election-year politics:

A process that is already in doubt in the minds of many will become distrusted by all. Senate consideration of a nominee under these circumstances is not fair to the President, to the nominee, or to the Senate itself.

I agree with then-Senator BIDEN that the confirmation of a lifetime appointee to our Nation's highest Court is far too important to become entangled in the partisan wrangling during a Presidential election year.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I am, therefore, proud to stand with Chairman GRASSLEY and my colleagues in the committee in saying no Supreme Court nominee should be considered by the Senate before the next President is sworn into office. I also believe that it shouldn't be taken up in a lameduck session. You can't have it both ways, Mr. President.

OBAMACARE

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I have one other topic I would like to cover, if I may, and that is about the other conversation we hear about from back home, and that is ObamaCare.

We just spent several weeks back home in the State working, and I personally spent the last 3 weeks touring our State, from Hahira to Hiawassee, and I can tell you that I get one question out of every group to which I speak, and that is this: What can be done about ObamaCare? My premiums are going up. My insurance was canceled. It said that I could keep my doctor if I wanted to. It said I could keep my insurance company if I wanted to. Yet I lost my doctor and I am losing my insurance.

I really believe this is a critical issue we need to talk about. Americans have never settled for failure. Yet right now people are saying that we need to accept ObamaCare, that it is the law. Yet I am saying it is collapsing under its own weight. In four decades of business, I don't think I have ever seen anything as perverse as ObamaCare and the effect it is having not only on our business community but on the people back home.

We are still talking ObamaCare today, Mr. President, because it is a complete disaster. It has failed the very people this President and the Democrats in this body claimed to champion—the working men and women of America. It did nothing to go after overall costs and the spiraling nature of health care costs, which continue to explode and are the No. 1 driv-

er of the fact that in the next 10 years, unless we do something, this President has a budget that will add \$10 trillion more to our current debt.

ObamaCare did nothing at all to deal with the number of doctors in this country. It inserted government between patients and their doctors and created a shortage of doctors. Right now we are averaging around 10,000—we are losing about 10,000 doctors a year under ObamaCare. In fact, projections are that a doctor shortage in just the next 10 years could top 90,000 doctors. That is staggering.

ObamaCare raises taxes, increases premiums, and it chokes out our choices. Not only that, but deductibles are up dramatically. My home State of Georgia is feeling the weight of this failure. UnitedHealthcare and Cigna are leaving the ObamaCare exchange at the end of the year. Last month, Aetna announced it was joining them.

At the start of this year—this is an astounding number—all 159 counties in Georgia had at least 2 carriers to depend on. Now, after 9 months, 96 of the 159 counties in Georgia have only 1 option. I repeat: 96 of the 159 counties have only 1 option.

Georgians are being robbed of health care choices. They are also facing even higher premium and deductible costs. Premiums have risen in Georgia by an average of 33 percent. Every provider left in Georgia is raising premiums by double digits next year. I will highlight a couple of them: Blue Cross Blue Shield, 21 percent; Alliant, 21 percent; Ambetter, 13.7 percent; Kaiser, 18 percent; Harken Health, 51 percent; Humana, 67 percent.

In 2009, President Obama railed against fewer choices. While selling ObamaCare, he said: "In 34 States, 75 percent of the insurance market is controlled by five or fewer companies . . . and without competition, the price of insurance goes up and quality goes down."

Gee, it sounds like he knew what was coming, except he was complaining about that at the time, and today it has gotten worse. That is exactly what is happening in Georgia because of ObamaCare. These are problems that are not limited to just Georgia. Aetna is leaving 10 other States as we speak. Today, 31 percent of all counties nationwide, comprising almost 2½ million Americans enrolled in ObamaCare exchanges, are more likely than not to have just one choice in provider. That is what the President was complaining about in 2009.

Insurance companies across the country are facing hundreds of millions in losses. It means fewer choices and higher costs for patients. The GAO recently reported that the pre-ObamaCare plans available in most States were more affordable and had lower deductibles than the options now available in ObamaCare exchanges. Profound.

Nationally, premiums have risen by an average of 26 percent. Deductibles

have risen for individuals with an average income of more than 60 percent than when ObamaCare became law. Premiums are up 26 percent. Deductibles are up over 60 percent. There is no way around it. ObamaCare is a Washington takeover of our health care system that isn't working for average Americans.

When they were talking about this back in the day, my comment all along was: How do you feel about ObamaCare? I said: Well, if you like the way the VA is being run, you are going to love ObamaCare. Those words are coming true today. It is collapsing under its own weight. It is failing the very people whom the other side claims to champion—the working poor and the working middle class of our country who are bearing the burden of this nonsense.

Monopolies are festering and prices have skyrocketed. As I said, ObamaCare is yet another example of liberal policies failing the very people they claim to champion. The diagnosis is in. None of these problems are going away. That is our problem. In fact, they are getting worse. ObamaCare cannot be allowed to stand.

This is not a question of tweaking it around the edges. It is profoundly built incorrectly. We have to repeal the individual and poor mandates and pass an alternative that goes after real drivers of spiraling health care costs. Instead, we should offer transportability, insurability, and accessibility—all the things that were missing prior to ObamaCare but have been proposed fixes that have been in for over 10 years on the Republican side.

Accessibility is one of the main things to those who want to purchase coverage without mandating it. This would ensure that no one is priced out of the market, including those with preexisting conditions. We should offer more access to health savings accounts to help drive down costs and allow for the purchase of insurance across State lines to increase competition.

Finally, we have to address the frivolous lawsuits that have forced some doctors to practice defensive medicine out of fear of being sued. All these steps are within our grasp. So don't believe those who say there isn't an ObamaCare alternative out there. My friend and Georgia representative, TOM PRICE, has championed H. 2300, the Empowering Patients First Act, for years. It contains all the solutions I just mentioned and more. I am proud to cosponsor that with JOHN MCCAIN in the Senate. Our health care system is too important for too many Americans and too many to settle for this failure. I wasn't sent to the U.S. Senate to settle for the status quo.

I want to say one thing in closing. In the last 8 years, we have been told over and over again that the status quo is the new norm. This is one where the American people are telling me and telling you that they are not accepting this new norm.

Mr. President, I yield my time.

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

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

REMEMBERING JAMES DUNN

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate the life and legacy of former South Dakota State Senator James Dunn.

Jim was born in Lead, SD, on June 27, 1927, and died in Sturgis, SD, on August 11, 2016, at the age of 89.

Immediately after graduating from high school, he joined the U.S. Army Signal Corps and served from 1945 through 1947.

He returned home to Lead and worked at the Homestake Gold Mine for the next 38 years. During that time, he also raised four children with his wife, Betty, and earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and economics. At the mine, he was a crewman, a machinist, the assistant director of public affairs, and then the director of public affairs.

Jim inspired his coworkers with his intelligence, his humor, and his leadership. He became a constant promoter for the Black Hills and all of South Dakota. He inspired magazine articles, books, films, and other publicity about South Dakota.

He was also an enthusiastic supporter and volunteer worker for dozens of local and State organizations during his 89 years. He was even the first male president of the Black Hills Girl Scout Council.

In 1971, he was elected to the South Dakota House of Representatives. In 1973, he was elected to the South Dakota Senate and served until his retirement in 2000. His 30 years of consecutive service is matched by only three other legislators.

Jim Dunn was elected to many legislative leadership positions, including the chairmanship of the executive board of the legislature. However, his leadership went beyond any position he held.

He was a great mentor to all the legislators who served with him, including me. For my first 4 years of working as the majority leader, he sat next to me. The wisdom of his additional 20 years of experience kept me out of trouble. No one saw the many times I wanted to jump up and join a floor fight, but Jim would calmly grab my arm and say, "Not yet, wait." His deep, raspy whispers guided me and taught me how to be a leader.

Jim removed the rancor from committee and floor debates with his knowledge and explanation of the facts. He guided our discussions back to what was really important. Then he would lead us to consensus.

He was a tough negotiator, but also a practical compromiser. He always brought the focus to what was best for the people back home and all the people of South Dakota.

He was always there for us in solving problems and creating new opportunities, such as saving the State's railroads, increasing tourism as the prime sponsor of the Deadwood gaming law, substantial expansion of the financial services industry, implementing welfare reform, reducing property taxes, and promoting the transformation of the Homestake Gold Mine into the deepest underground physics laboratory in the world.

But more important than all of his career accomplishments is the kind of person Jim Dunn was.

He was a loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend to all who knew him. He had an enormously positive impact on the many thousands of people he met and touched with his kindness and generosity.

South Dakota is a better State and we are a better people because of Jim Dunn.

With this, I welcome the opportunity to recognize and commemorate the life of this public servant and great human being, my friend, Jim Dunn.

Thank you, Mr. President.

RECOGNIZING LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, in honor of the National Park Service's 100th birthday year, I want to recognize one of Arkansas' most recognized and historic sites: Little Rock Central High School. As one of the most well-known high schools in the United States, Little Rock Central's story is an important one in the history of our Nation.

Central High School played a pivotal role in the desegregation of public schools in the United States. On September 23, 1957, following the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, nine African-American students attempted to attend class at Little Rock Central High School. Now known as the Little Rock Nine, these students were met with heavy public disapproval by an angry mob. President Eisenhower ultimately ordered Federal troops into Little Rock to escort the students into the school for their first day of class on September 25, 1957.

These courageous nine students changed the course of history. They showed us that we should always pursue what is just, no matter how hard the journey is.

Former President and Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton signed legislation in 1998 designating the school a national historic site. To this day, Little Rock Central High School is the only functioning secondary school in the United States to have this distinction. Preserving Little Rock Central High School and presenting its history so

that others might learn from it is an important mission, one that we should never abandon.

Named "America's Most Beautiful High School" by the American Institute of Architects, Little Rock Central High School certainly has a storied history, and when you find yourself in Little Rock, be sure to take an afternoon to visit the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING ARKANSAS' FIRST DUAL PURPLE HEART CITY AND COUNTY

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Izard County and the city of Horseshoe Bend on becoming the first dual Purple Heart city and county in the State of Arkansas.

Created by George Washington in 1782, the Purple Heart is our Nation's oldest military medal. The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the Armed Forces who are wounded or killed in combat. These men and women are some of the finest heroes in our Nation.

Similarly, Izard County has also committed to show its respect and appreciation for our veterans by becoming a Purple Heart County. Showing our admiration for the heroes who have served and sacrificed so much for our freedom is such a worthy endeavor and this recognition is well-deserved. I commend Izard County and the city of Horseshoe Bend for publically acknowledging these heroes, declaring unwavering support of them, and showing how grateful we are for our veterans and their willingness to serve their country. There truly is no greater display of service and sacrifice than that.

I want to take this opportunity to applaud the city of Horseshoe Bend and Izard County for publicly recognizing our veterans and Purple Heart recipients by becoming a Purple Heart City and Purple Heart County. Arkansas is proud that our local communities are paying respect to our veterans and standing behind them.●

RECOGNIZING MARION COUNTY

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Marion County, AR, which became a Purple Heart County on November 15, 2015.

Created by George Washington in 1782, the Purple Heart is our Nation's oldest military medal. The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the Armed Forces who are wounded or killed in combat. These men and women are some of the finest heroes that our Nation has to offer.

Last year, Marion County chose to honor the service and sacrifice our Purple Heart heroes in Arkansas by becoming a Purple Heart County. Marion County's unwavering support of the heroic actions of our Purple Heart recipients stands as a reflection of the appreciation and gratitude of its residents.