

fake IDs.” He reminded us that having health insurance under ObamaCare is not the same thing as actually having health coverage.

There is a woman from Ohio who lost her plan after ObamaCare forced out her insurer. “They fine you if you don’t have insurance,” she said, “then they take your options away.” She put words to the frustration of literally millions.

I explained how ObamaCare is chasing out insurers in States such as Ohio, Arizona, and Alabama, throwing thousands off their plans all over again. I explained how ObamaCare’s co-ops are failing in States such as New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Connecticut, massively disrupting coverage for thousands more. I explained how ObamaCare is shooting up premiums by almost unimaginable amounts in States such as Minnesota, Illinois, and Montana, forcing more Americans to make impossible financial decisions.

I invite Democrats to recognize that ObamaCare’s human toll is evident from north to south, from east to west. That includes States such as California, where, according to what the Democratic leader told us yesterday, ObamaCare is supposedly “working wonderfully.” Really? Is it wonderful that premiums in California are set to spike by more than three times the average of recent years? Is it wonderful that ObamaCare is causing huge, double-digit increases in the Golden State, while reducing access to doctors and hospitals at the same time?

The Los Angeles Times quoted a left-wing activist summarizing the situation this way. This is a leftwing activist: “We’re paying more for less.” Indeed, before these massive increases had even been announced, polling showed Californians more concerned about the cost of health care than whether they even had insurance. Two thirds reported they worried “very much” about rising health costs, and a majority credited ObamaCare for causing costs to go up “a lot” for average Americans. It is similar to what Americans said nationwide when they cited health care as their biggest financial worry. That was ahead of wages, ahead of college costs, and even job loss—more concerned about health care. No wonder even some on the left have taken to calling ObamaCare the un-Affordable Care Act.

What we are seeing with ObamaCare may be shocking, but it is not surprising because there are inevitable consequences to this partisan law—the partisan law littered with broken promises. Democrats said premiums would be lower. Remember that? Democrats said copays and deductibles would be affordable too. Obviously, that was wrong. Democrats said Americans could keep their health plans. Remember that promise? Democrats said Americans could keep their doctors. Of course, that wasn’t true. Democrats said ObamaCare wouldn’t touch Medicare. Democrats said taxes wouldn’t in-

crease on the middle class. Democrats said shopping for ObamaCare would be as simple as shopping for a TV on Amazon. Wrong, wrong, and wrong again.

Democrats have broken one promise after the next on ObamaCare. But now, get this: They are asking Americans to trust them to fix—they want to fix the mess they created. They say they have the perfect solution too. It is more ObamaCare. Really. Seriously, I am not kidding. They actually think they can pull another fast one on the American people. They are actually pushing government-run ObamaCare 2.0 as some kind of solution, and they are doing this with a straight face. So, look, we already know what we could expect from a Democratic-run Congress next year on ObamaCare: more broken promises, more stonewalling, more of the same.

ObamaCare’s attack against the middle class is a nationwide phenomenon. It is hurting the very people we were sent here to represent. The only way to deliver true relief for the middle class is to finally build a bridge away from ObamaCare. That is why we passed a bill to repeal this partisan law and sent it to the President—because the middle class deserves better than the pain of ObamaCare.

I think even President Obama, if he is being honest with himself, should be able to recognize that as well. Here is what he himself said last month: “Too many Americans still strain to pay for their physician visits and prescriptions, cover their deductibles, or pay their monthly insurance bills; struggle to navigate a complex, sometimes bewildering system; and remain uninsured.” That is from the President himself. That is not the description of a law that is working. It is time to leave this failed experiment in the past and move toward the real care that Americans deserve.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, a FOX News poll released this month found that “a record-high 54 percent of American voters feel the U.S. is less safe today than it was before 9/11.” Fifty-four percent of Americans think they are less safe than they were before 9/11.

The article went on to say:

Voters also think: A major terrorist attack is likely in the near future. . . . Last year’s U.S.-Iran agreement on Iran’s nuclear program made the U.S. less safe. . . . The \$400 million the U.S. paid Iran after American prisoners were released was ransom. . . . Terrorism is one of the most important issues facing the country.

Those are all quotes from the survey that was done where 54 percent of Americans indicated they thought they were less safe today than they were before 9/11. And it is not surprising that Americans are worried.

When President Obama was elected, he was widely regarded as America’s

next great foreign policy President. Here was a President who would restore America’s standing in the world and calm the troubled waters of international conflict. Confidence in his abilities was so high that he was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize before he had actually done anything to bring peace.

But after 8 years of the Obama administration, the world is less, not more, safe. America’s standing in the world has been weakened, terrorism is spreading, the Middle East is more hostile and dangerous, Iran is counting pallets of ransom money and is in a better position to develop a nuclear weapon, and all too often, President Obama and Hillary Clinton’s foreign policies have been a contributing factor.

Take the rise of ISIS. When President Obama came into office, he was determined to fulfill his campaign promise to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq, and that is exactly what he and Secretary Clinton proceeded to do on a timetable that he announced to our enemies. America’s hasty withdrawal left gaping holes in Iraq’s security, and before too long, ISIS had stepped in to fill the void. By mid-2014, ISIS had made significant territorial gains in Iraq and neighboring Syria.

Although ISIS has since lost territory in both Syria and Iraq, it was able to establish a foothold from which to expand its global terror reach. The list of ISIS-linked attacks has grown very long—Nice in France, Istanbul, Brussels, Paris, Orlando, San Bernardino, and on and on and on. In the past 2 months alone, ISIS has been linked to a suicide bombing at a Turkish wedding, a suicide bombing at a hospital in Pakistan, a suicide bombing in Yemen, and a gruesome attack at a church in northern France. ISIS has also been linked to an attack on police officers in Belgium, a music festival bombing in Germany, and another railway attack there. And that is just in the past 2 months. Yet, despite this ever-growing stream of attacks, the President has never seemed to understand the depth of the threat.

While U.S. efforts have succeeded in reclaiming some territory from ISIS, the group’s terrorist activities continue unabated and its international profile is increasing. Its communications have grown especially sophisticated, making intercepting and decoding ISIS’s messages and tracking its recruitment efforts increasingly difficult.

In June the President’s own CIA Director told Congress, “Our efforts have not reduced the group’s terrorism capability and global reach.” That was from the President’s own CIA Director. Yet, just days before the CIA Director’s testimony, the President claimed we were “making significant progress” against ISIS. As long as ISIS’s global terrorism capability remains unchecked, we are not making significant progress.

Unfortunately, President Obama's foreign policy failures are not confined to his halfhearted campaign against ISIS. Take the President's nuclear agreement with Iran. This agreement was supposed to protect our Nation and the world from the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran. The actual deal that emerged, however, doesn't even come close to that goal. Even if Iran complies with all aspects of the deal, which doesn't seem likely, it will not stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. In fact, the deal will actually make it easier for Iran to acquire advanced nuclear weapons down the road. On top of this, recent reports suggest that the United States and the other signatories to the deal have actually already allowed Iran to evade full compliance with some of the deal's provisions. It is no surprise that even some of the deal's supporters are getting worried.

Iran has been in the news lately for other disturbing reasons as well. In August, news emerged that the Obama administration had delivered a \$400 million cash payment to Iran on the same day four American hostages were freed. Furthermore, the administration had paid the money over the objections of Justice Department officials, who were concerned that the Iranians would regard it as a ransom payment. The administration, of course, strenuously denied that the payment was a ransom, but it is pretty hard to get away from the fact that there had been a de facto exchange of money for prisoners. Two weeks after news of the ransom broke, a State Department spokesman admitted that the administration had held the money until three American hostages had departed the country by plane.

The President's ransom payment to Iran is troubling for more than one reason. First, of course, tying the receipt of a large cash payment to the release of prisoners could easily encourage Iran to expand its hostage-taking. Since the ransom payment in January, Iran has continued to detain individuals on spurious grounds. In late August, the State Department warned U.S. citizens not to travel to Iran because of the danger of being detained by the Iranian Government.

So \$400 million in cash in the hands of the Iranians is a disturbing prospect. Iran is the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism and has a finger in many of the world's worst conflicts, particularly in the Middle East. There is a good chance that at least a chunk of that \$400 million will go to funding Iran's illicit activities, from support for Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad to funds for terrorist organizations like Hezbollah.

On top of all of this, there is the fact that every time Iran gets the better end of a bargain, it feels even more free to act aggressively. Recently, Iranian fast boats have been harassing U.S. Navy ships, and warning shots have been fired. It is not a stretch to think that this aggression and boldness

springs from the administration's position of weakness when it comes to Iran.

Teddy Roosevelt used to say: "Speak softly and carry a big stick." President Obama's foreign policy has reversed that. The President talks a big game, but he has no follow-through. To our adversaries, his statements have become no more than empty threats.

Take Syria. The President drew a redline 4 years ago. If Syrian President Bashar al-Assad used chemical weapons against his own people, the United States would respond. Well, Assad used chemical weapons, and the United States did nothing. It should shock no one that a recent U.N. investigation found that Assad has continued to use chemical weapons against his citizens. After more than 4 years of inaction from our President and 5 years of civil war, Syrian cities lie in ruins, millions are displaced, and tens of thousands—literally, tens of thousands—have been slaughtered. The world's eyes are now on the tenuous ceasefire in hopes that it may lead to peace talks and permit humanitarian aid to reach those most in need. But we must ask how we got here and what lessons can be learned.

The consequence of empty threats is bolder and stronger enemies. When the United States fails to follow through, we send a message that the United States can be ignored at will. We can see the results in chemical attacks on civilians in Syria, in the belligerent acts of the Iranian Navy, in a defiant North Korea testing nuclear bombs, in China boldly asserting territorial claims and building up reefs in disputed waters, and in Russia annexing Crimea and flexing military and political influence in Ukraine.

In 2008, then-candidate Obama spoke of the need for "tough, direct diplomacy, where the President of the United States isn't afraid to let any petty dictator know where America stands and what we stand for." That is a direct quote from the President back when he was running for President. Well, Presidential candidate Obama was right. That is the kind of diplomacy that we need. But, unfortunately, it has never been the kind of diplomacy actually displayed by President Obama.

In that same speech, then-candidate Obama spoke of the need for "the courage and the conviction to lead the free world." Well, that is something that we need even more today, after 8 years of an administration that has frequently lacked the conviction to lead at all.

Senate Republicans will continue to do what we can in Congress to restore America's leadership and to strengthen our country's security. This includes working to advance the essential National Defense Authorization Act and Defense appropriations measures—the latter of which have been blocked repeatedly in this Chamber by Democrats.

I hope my colleagues across the aisle will work with us. Our Nation is al-

ready in a more dangerous position today, thanks to the foreign policy failures of the Obama administration. If we don't start getting our foreign policy right, the consequences could haunt us for generations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here for the 146th time to wake this Chamber up to the consequence of climate change. The leading edge of consequence is already upon us, and it is threatening the people and economies of all 50 States. Because of the dark influence of the fossil fuel industry, we can't have an honest, bipartisan conversation here in the Senate about climate change. So I travel. I have been to 13 States.

Last month, I visited Utah and met with local business, policy, and science leaders to learn more about the effects of climate change in Utah. Coastal Rhode Island and landlocked Utah may seem worlds apart, but we share a common future under climate change, and both Utahns and Rhode Islanders share a deep connection to our home State's natural environment.

Generations of Rhode Islanders have been drawn to Narragansett Bay and our coasts, and it is not just for love and beauty. In 2013, Rhode Island's ocean economy generated \$2.1 billion and supported more than 41,000 Rhode Island jobs. The Presiding Officer from Alaska can appreciate the importance of an ocean's economy.

Narragansett Bay comes alive in the summer's warmth. But it is mostly frozen water that brings people to the mountains of Utah. With what they call the "greatest snow on Earth," winter blesses Utah. During the last ski season, nearly 4½ million skiers and snowboarders visited the State, generating over \$1.3 billion in spending. According to the Utah Office of Tourism and the University of Utah, almost 1 in 10 jobs in Utah is in tourism. Well, whether it is ski boots or boat shoes, there is no question that significant portions of both Utah's and Rhode Island's economies are tangled in the consequences of climate change.

Rhode Island has already seen winter surface temperatures in Narragansett Bay increase by about 4 degrees Fahrenheit since the 1960s, and the sea level at the Newport Naval Station tide gauge is up almost 10 inches since the 1930s. We are seeing more flooding and erosion along our coast, threatening our shoreside businesses and homes. Fish stocks are shifting in search of cooler waters, upsetting the ecological balance of Narragansett Bay and endangering Rhode Island's traditional fisheries.