

make you want to get up every day and continue to pursue that American Dream.

But not only from the individual side of this—certainly very important—but what about this corporate tax rate, this business rate that we talk constantly about that almost has become Washington jargon talking points? Why is that so important?

Over the years since the 1930s and 1940s, our corporate business rate has climbed to the highest in the industrial world.

Why is that? Why would we make it tougher on our manufacturers and our companies to have a higher tax rate? What incentive is it to stay here? We could track company after company.

I come from the State of North Carolina where textiles and furniture used to be two of our top three job providers. A lot of those companies now you will find in Vietnam or other places.

That corporate tax rate that literally has gone through the roof, why wouldn't we want to reduce that business rate? Why wouldn't we want to incentivize companies to begin to bring those jobs back to the United States?

I think it is crucial, and I think it is something that all of us should have the energy and the ability to be able to get behind and really push forward.

We have been promising this for how long? Since 1986? I was a junior in high school. Thirty-one years this has been on the docket, and the moment is now for us to deliver. If it is not now, as Reagan used to say, then when? Then how?

What should we be doing if it is not fulfilling the very promise that we have made to the American people, and that is that we are going to provide genuine—not some kind of phony legislation, not some kind of showboat, but genuine tax reform and tax relief for the American people?

Now, you may hear sometimes that, hey, the Republican plan is only for the most wealthy. Let's look at the numbers. Let's put a little math equation up, if we could, please.

Let's say that the most wealthy—if you are talking about somebody who makes \$1 million, let's say we reduce their taxes by 1 percent. My math that I am doing here in my mind, that comes to about \$10,000.

Let's say, if you go to that middle-income family, two parents working as hard as they can, they are bringing about \$50,000 a year annually, yet their tax break, their tax benefit is 10 percent. Now, math tells me that is only \$5,000 compared to the \$10,000.

So you may hear the spin from time to time, well, the wealthier are getting the higher tax break, the wealthier are getting the higher tax credit. Listen, when it comes to dollar for dollar, the impact that that makes to the middle and lower income families is drastic. I will tell you this. Every time we turn around, every time that each Member goes back and forth to his district, he

is hearing the same message: "Get something done."

Tax reform is one of those areas where, specifically, we are being compelled, we are being urged, and we are being called. My fellow Members in the House, please hear those urgent voices right now. Even if Members want to move past the tax relief and the humanitarian component, is it not politically strategic for us to do what we have promised to do on behalf of the American people?

As I said in my opening, I am confident that the American people will deliver the final grade over the next 3 months. The 115th Congress, what kind of grade will we have over the next 3 months if we do not deliver on these three promises?

I am hoping that that urgency is resonating. Repealing and replacing, continuing to fight to repeal and replace ObamaCare, to make sure that we are continuing to reform and do everything that we can to reform the Tax Code. Finally, the promise that we have been making year after year is to make sure that we are protecting the American people by securing our border.

I understand that each of these items is a major legislative item in its own right. To be frank, we should have been delivering on them throughout the year. It is October, the 10th month of year. It is high past time. We only have such a busy agenda this late in the game because we haven't delivered on our promises.

□ 1800

I want to thank my colleagues and fellow Republican Study Committee members tonight for joining us this evening.

I would ask the American people to continue to support and continue to urge their Members of Congress to deliver on these promises.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REAUTHORIZE CHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Congress, as a father, and as a grandfather, nothing I do is more important than ensuring every child in Arizona and America has the opportunity to live up to their God-given potential. No matter where they live, kids deserve to grow up healthy, with every chance to succeed.

That is why it is beyond unacceptable that, for the first time ever, Congress missed the deadline to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program.

For decades, CHIP has been a bipartisan program and has been reauthorized with broad support, until now. It has now been 11 days since CHIP ex-

pired. This is an outrage for children across the Nation who depend on the affordable, quality care they receive, thanks to CHIP. It is especially troubling for Arizona.

Arizona has had the unfortunate distinction of being one of the worst States for healthcare access for children. Until last year, it was the only State in the entire Nation without an active Children's Health Insurance Program.

Arizona froze CHIP KidsCare program in 2010. At its height, the waiting list for coverage after the freeze topped 100,000. I repeat: the list topped 100,000 because of a freeze put on by the State of Arizona.

Two years ago, Congress reauthorized CHIP and included enhanced match rate funding for States under the Affordable Care Act. Thanks to advocates on the ground and with bipartisan support in our State legislature, this enhanced funding finally paved the way for our State to reopen KidsCare.

Last year, KidsCare began enrolling children—over 23,000 so far. We have just begun the hard work of educating and reaching out to the working families who qualify for coverage.

Arizona is one of a handful of States, as you can see here in this chart in blue, that would run out of Federal funds to cover children by December of this year, absent congressional action.

Families in these States are the most at risk for losing critical access to care, until Congress steps up to the plate and passes a robust reauthorization with enhanced rate funding.

I have met and heard from many of these families and their providers. I know what is at stake for them.

Cate Arnquist is a mother from Tucson, Arizona, whose 8-year-old son, Zachary, was approved for coverage through KidsCare last month. This is a huge relief to Cate, who recently moved to Arizona with her husband and works at a local elementary school. Cate said:

It's important for me to know that if I need to take him to the doctor, I will be able to take him. As a parent, your kids are always your biggest priority. I think every parent wants to make sure their kids are healthy.

Cate, I couldn't agree with you more. Kids like Zachary deserve to know that their elected officials here in Congress are looking out for them.

Graciela is a working single mom who lives in Phoenix. Her 17-year-old daughter, who suffers from high blood pressure, relies on KidsCare coverage. Graciela says:

I just pray and ask everybody who is behind CHIP to think about it. They don't know how hard it is sometimes when you are a parent and you don't know what to do. Should I put a plate of food on the table or should I take my kid to the doctor?

These are questions no parent in Arizona or in America should have to ask themselves. Doctors in our community agree.

A pediatrician practicing in Gilbert, Arizona, shared an important story

with us about a family with five children in her practice. The father works as a grocer, but makes \$20 too much to qualify for Medicaid. That is \$20.

One of the children has significant developmental delays and another child has a serious neurological disease. After the youngest child was born, it became clear that he most likely had the neurological disease as well.

The doctor referred this child for evaluation, but the family was unable to take him to the neurologist because they could not afford the office visits and diagnostic testing necessary. Had KidsCare been open at the time, the family could have applied for coverage, since they qualified, based on their income.

This story and our experience in Arizona should be a cautionary tale for the rest of the States who may freeze their program if Congress fails to reauthorize CHIP now.

No family should be put at risk when they need help for their kids. Working families like these are doing their best to make ends meet and raise healthy kids.

Reauthorizing CHIP isn't just the right thing to do morally, but it is the smart, economic decision for our communities. I understood that when I was a Republican State legislator and fought for KidsCare, and I understand it now here in Congress.

We all know that when children have meaningful access to quality, affordable, comprehensive healthcare coverage, our schools, families, and our State's bottom line all win.

Healthy kids have a better shot in school and grow up to be healthy adults. When we invest in them, when we invest in their families, we are investing in their futures and our future.

We must do better. Instead of playing partisan games and spending time on bills that make coverage and affordability worse for Americans, we need to make CHIP reauthorization front and center of our focus.

While I am pleased that the Senate Finance Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee have started to take up action, it is past time to get a robust bill to the President's desk.

CHIP has long been a bipartisan program, and I will keep working with anyone, regardless of office or party, to make sure our kids have the care they deserve. They are counting on us. We cannot let them down.

I am pleased to be joined this evening by my colleagues who are committed to fighting for kids in our communities. I want to thank them for joining this Special Order hour to fight for CHIP and a strong reauthorization process.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona for yielding and for his leadership in organizing this Special Order hour.

There is no more sacred responsibility that we have than to ensure that the children in this country have access to quality, affordable healthcare. So I rise this evening to speak in support of the vital Children's Health Insurance Program, also known as CHIP.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, CHIP authorization expired on September 30, 2017—this past September. This program assures that 9 million children, including 27,000 children and pregnant women in my home State of Rhode Island, are provided with low-cost health insurance, which covers essential services such as routine checkups, immunizations, doctor visits, prescriptions, dental and vision care, inpatient and outpatient hospital care, laboratory and x-ray services, and emergency services.

This historically bipartisan program has been successful in lowering the percentage of children who are uninsured from nearly 14 percent when it started in 1997 to 4.5 percent in 2015. Historic achievements.

If not extended by Congress soon, many States will no longer be able to fund the program and will begin limiting coverage, some as early as the end of this year.

In fact, the Kaiser Family Foundation recently concluded that, without an extension of CHIP, "States would face budget pressures, children would lose coverage, and implementation of program changes could result in increased costs and administrative burden for States as well as confusion for families."

If not extended by Congress soon, many States will no longer be able to fund the program and will begin limiting coverage.

Congress must also act with urgency to extend and reauthorize the other programs that were enacted in the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015, including extending funding for community health centers; the Personal Responsibility Education Program; the rural and Medicare-dependent hospitals program; Teaching Health Centers; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; and the Special Diabetes Program for type 1 diabetes and for Indians.

These critical programs, as well as CHIP, are vital to the American healthcare system, and they support access to high-quality, affordable care.

I want to again thank the gentleman from Arizona for providing this Special Order. This is urgent and should be an urgent priority for the Congress of the United States to reauthorize this critical program to absolutely insist that children—as I said, 9 million children across this country—have access to quality, affordable healthcare, including 27,000 children and pregnant women in my home State.

Democrats are urging our Republican colleagues to reauthorize this bill immediately so that the families who are so anxious about whether or not they

will continue to have the ability to access quality, affordable healthcare can rest comfortably and know that this work is done.

I thank the gentleman again for his leadership and for yielding to me on this very important issue.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Rhode Island for caring about our Nation's children.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I think it is a new low for this Congress to allow the critical and bipartisan Children's Health Insurance Program to expire. This program is 20 years old, and this has never happened, where we have allowed the basic safety net healthcare program for children to expire.

We hear over and over again, Mr. Speaker, you talk about the ne'er do well, lazy ones of our constituents who are poor and don't want to work. But, Mr. Speaker, these are children who are ineligible for work and unavailable to take care of themselves. We are destroying the health safety net for children.

But it is not that we haven't had time to extend CHIP. We have renamed post offices. We have renamed a highway. We have advanced the House budget reconciliation riddled with unpaid tax cuts for the wealthy, including the repeal of the estate tax, which alone would increase our deficit by \$269 billion by 2025. Mr. Speaker, that is billion with a B.

Are Republicans in this body trying to solve the budget crisis and our deficit problem by cutting CHIP?

I don't think so.

Even more, Mr. Speaker, last week, we spent a considerable amount of time debating the 20-week abortion ban. We heard passionate speeches about how important it was to preserve the life of fetuses. We spent all this time and speaker after speaker making emotional demands on this body that we restrict women's body autonomy, but we spent no time reauthorizing the program for little Junior, once he crowns and is born—the basic healthcare that he needs immediately exiting the womb.

□ 1815

Mr. Speaker, simply put, it is hypocritical for you to say that life ends as soon as the umbilical cord is cut. And, Mr. Speaker, your actions prove it.

You know, I am of the mindset of one of our news reporters, Rachel Maddow, that we ought to just watch what you do and not what you say.

Almost 9 million children depend on CHIP for healthcare; 9 million children from low- to moderate-income families who will lose access to vaccinations, routine checkups, dental care, mental healthcare, prescriptions, and some of these children are profoundly disabled.

Mr. Speaker, what is going to happen to the 24 percent of the children enrolled in CHIP that have special

healthcare needs, including asthma and learning disabilities?

The health of our children depends on this program, yet, Mr. Speaker, all you can do to muster up a reauthorization for CHIP is to fund it by increasing Medicare premiums—Medicare, a program designed for people over 65—and cutting the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

All you can do, Mr. Speaker, is to pit old people against our babies in order to provide basic healthcare to children. This sounds really Faustian, and it is unimaginable, yet this is the reality that we are working with.

Mr. Speaker, it is now time to put these politics aside and to reauthorize CHIP now for 5 years. This is a disgrace not only in this Nation, but internationally. I, as an American, don't want to be judged by putting our kids last.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Wisconsin for her comments.

Mr. Speaker, I am kind of new to this body, but when I came here, I came with the same intention as I did when I first got into the Arizona State Legislature. One of the first issues I worked on was this program, a program that helped kids stay healthy, a program so that they could be successful at school, a program that is imperative. Yet, today, millions of people around this country, millions of families around this country are asking themselves: What are they going to do about my children's health? What is going to happen? Who is going to be there for my child?

When I was a police officer, I had, sadly, the ability to see people in poverty day in and day out, what it meant to their families, but especially what sick children look like, what it means to see children taken out of homes in ambulances instead of having preventative care, what it means for a child to have to be in a hospital instead of having had the ability to have preventative care, what it means to a child with disabilities to have to go through that process and not have the physical therapy that is needed.

This happened time and time again before CHIP became reality. I don't think America wants to go back there. I think America wants to move forward and make sure our children are healthy and able to withstand the issues in our society that lead us to make sure that they do.

I cannot understand, for the life of me, why we would keep these families—it is 11 days now. It is going to mean many more. We will have to find some level of agreement. Yet, as was just mentioned by the gentlewoman from Wisconsin, we are funding this by taking money away from the elderly, from those also in need, from those also at risk.

I have to say that when I patrolled the streets of Chicago, I did so to make sure that people were saved and safe. And I can't believe that I have come to

this body and found out that we are willing to keep these families waiting, we are willing to sit back and not understand the core issues of what it means to those families to have to suffer through this process of the unknown of their child's future healthcare.

I have to say that this is an issue that most Americans and most of this body agree to. I don't know why we have gone down this path of taking money—or thinking of taking money away from the elderly. It is wrong. But I do know that we should get this dealt with quickly and make sure the families in America that need it can provide for their children's health.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to Representative LANGEVIN, the gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding. I appreciate all his time and effort he is putting into bringing attention to this vital issue. It is an honor to join him this evening as we highlight the imminent need to pass a full reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Now, I represent the great State of Rhode Island, a State with over 27,000 children and pregnant women at risk of losing healthcare if CHIP is not fully funded. It is deeply troubling to me and many of my constituents, my colleagues in government; and we fought hard over the years to make sure that we did better by our young people, by the most vulnerable, and by pregnant women in making sure that they had the healthcare coverage that they desperately need and deserve.

Now, in Rhode Island, the lack of a reauthorization endangers \$26 million in Federal funds that support this vulnerable population, many of whom will not otherwise have comprehensive coverage. This is particularly frustrating because congressional Republicans knew that CHIP funding would expire on September 30. They had ample time to fix this problem in a bipartisan way and have chosen not to.

Instead of proactively crafting legislation to ensure 9 million low-income children and families maintain access to affordable, high-quality healthcare, Republicans focused their efforts on gutting the Affordable Care Act to the exclusion of everything else.

Now, in the service of their political priority to eliminate coverage for 23 million, they are passing on an opportunity to govern on multiple healthcare fronts. Rather than work to find meaningful bipartisan solutions, Republicans still seek ways of systematically unraveling ACA protections and have only offered untenable options to offset the cost of CHIP. That is no way to govern responsibly or to even remotely do it in a bipartisan way, which they could do.

Now, their plan to pay for healthcare for one population by stripping access to healthcare from another is wrong. This approach of robbing Peter to pay

Paul does nothing to build a foundation for a healthier future, nor does it protect the communities with sufficient healthcare access today.

Proposing to slash the ACA's Prevention and Public Health Fund and creating a greater financial burden on seniors by suggesting destructive Medicare changes are not acceptable ways to bring Democrats to the table and pass a CHIP reauthorization with bipartisan support. Which, by the way, I am sure my colleagues have mentioned as they were speaking tonight, when CHIP was first authorized, it was done collaboratively in a bipartisan way at a contentious time in Congress, back when it was first enacted. But they found a way to do the right thing for vulnerable individuals, particularly our children, and we need to come together again.

We have a responsibility to move quickly, to ensure our children continue to have access to high-quality, affordable coverage. States like Rhode Island deserve to know that we will support the efforts to provide for the children in the State. The health professionals who treat these children deserve more certainty. Most importantly, the children who benefit from CHIP deserve much better than to be threatened with coverage termination because my colleagues in the majority can't set aside their political ambitions and goals.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to again thank my colleague for raising an alarm bell on this issue, calling attention and focusing the American people on the need to reauthorize CHIP.

We take great pride in Rhode Island that over the years we have built a very strong program to cover vulnerable children and pregnant women. We have been leaders in the country in having a very low rate of uninsured. Going back even before the ACA was enacted, we had a model program with our Rite Care and Rite Share program. There were hard-fought battles that moved the ball forward for providing better and more responsible health coverage for the people who need it and deserve it the most.

We need to come together now in a bipartisan way to make sure that CHIP is reauthorized. We cannot let this program fail. We cannot fail our children, our most vulnerable populations. We can come together in a bipartisan way. Democrats stand ready to do just that, come together in a bipartisan way to reauthorize CHIP, just as it had been authorized in a bipartisan way when it was first created.

Now, I know that there are many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who care as passionately about covering low-income children, providing affordable healthcare, doing the right thing by our children, and I look forward to reaching out across the aisle to do just that. Let's do this in a bipartisan way. Let's do the right thing and put partisan politics aside and cover our children.

Mr. Speaker, I thank again Mr. O'HALLERAN for his leadership on this vital issue, and I look forward to continuing to work with him as we reauthorize CHIP, hopefully in the very near future. Again, we got to do this together.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Rhode Island not only for his discussion today, but also for all his work on behalf of the children of America. I think that his record speaks for itself, and it is obvious that what we just heard came from his heart. So I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

I asked my fellow colleagues, when they start to work on this bill again—hopefully, they do it in a speedy fashion—that when they wake up in the morning, they think of what it means to have their child potentially without healthcare, what it means to have the unknown that we don't know if next month or the month later they will lose that coverage because Congress has failed to address the issue that they have all agreed on for 20 years. We have to and we must find a way to come to agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NORMAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my good friend, Mr. HIGGINS from Louisiana.

THE PLIGHT OF THE CITIZENS OF LOUISIANA IMPACTED BY HURRICANE HARVEY

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise unscripted to bring to the attention of the entire Nation the plight of the good citizens of Louisiana who were impacted by Hurricane Harvey last month. Beside me at this graph shows the rainfall, the water event of Hurricane Harvey as it impacted Texas and Louisiana.

□ 1830

As anyone can see, it was a tremendous water event, unprecedented rainfall, that overwhelmed any water management system. And, as anyone can see, the parishes of southwest Louisiana were impacted, as well as many counties in Texas, yet, as we discuss disaster relief, Louisiana is absent from our conversation. I point out, to all who would choose to witness, the State line of Louisiana, as defined by the Sabine River, and the impact of Hurricane Harvey.

Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Harvey did not recognize the artificial State boundaries that we have created as a Republic, nor should we as we provide disaster relief for our citizens. Just after Hurricane Harvey had impacted Texas and Louisiana, my office drafted

a letter to the executive branch to a President that I admire and respect, advising him of the impact, and begging his expedited approval of the disaster status once the formal request had been submitted by our Governor.

Sometime later, just 2 weeks ago, that formal request was submitted by the Governor of our State. Just after that submission, my office drafted and submitted a second letter requesting expedited approval of disaster status for these citizens of Louisiana, who were clearly just as impacted by this storm as many citizens in Texas.

Tomorrow, we shall send a third letter, this time signed by the entire Louisiana delegation. I ask that the Nation recognize the plight of the people I represent. The good and patriotic citizens of southwest Louisiana are suffering.

I respect and admire my President, I support him, I have supported him since day one, and I support him still. But it is important that we, as representatives of we the people, communicate clearly our intent and our service.

I beg that the leaders of the executive branch level would witness this clear evidence of the need for disaster declaration of the parishes of southwest Louisiana. And I beg that this message is received with the spirit with which it is delivered, which is respectful, yet in determined service of the citizens whom I have sworn to represent.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding these precious moments to me.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we had some interesting days here, but, over the weekend, being back in Texas, I am hearing the cries from people all over east Texas. There is a small number that say: Hey, I am not making much, and I am getting a subsidy from the government, so I am okay on my healthcare, I am young, I have no health problems, and that is fine.

But over and over, there is a cry going out around America that says: We elected Republicans in the majority in the House and the majority in the Senate to help us with our healthcare—with really health insurance. Everybody can get healthcare. You can just go to the emergency room, whether you have money or not.

This is really more about health insurance. Some of us have not wanted health insurance to make our major decisions for us on our own healthcare. We haven't wanted the government to make major decisions on our healthcare, but both are making those decisions for people across the country today.

Unfortunately, there are people telling me they are paying \$8,000, \$10,000, \$12,000. I heard one for \$20,000 yesterday from Texas, \$20,000 for the family's insurance, and they have a \$12,000 deductible, and they can't afford either one. They expected help.

President Trump is not the Congress. He has pushed, shoved, cajoled, done

everything he could to try to get Congress moving in the House after a back and forth, wailing, gnashing of teeth. We got a bill. It wasn't perfect by any stretch. But at least it would have given people relief from high premiums, most Americans. Hopefully, Republicans won't misrepresent the truth, as some did.

Actually, we know some people just flat lied about ObamaCare. People who said, "If you like your insurance, you can keep it," they knew it was a lie. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. They knew that was a lie.

And now the people are suffering the consequences of trusting people in government who lied to them. They were deceived. But even with all the deception, most of the time it appeared that a clear majority of Americans did not want what was fraudulently called the Affordable Care Act. There was nothing affordable about it, unless you didn't have any healthcare problems at all.

People who are carrying the weight of the taxes in this country have needed help. They counted on us to provide legislative changes, repeal of ObamaCare, let's put a system in place where people can make their own healthcare decisions, and we sent the bill to the Senate, and I still believe we should have been demanding more of the Senate every day.

I know there are a lot of people who say: Well, Republicans can't lose the majority in the Senate because there are a bunch more Democrats whose seats are up this time instead of Republicans. Yes, we can lose the majority, even when there are more Democratic seats up for election.

That is what happens when people are sorely disappointed. Many stay home, and the wrong people will get elected when too many people stay home.

But the adage is, still true, democracy ensures people are governed no better than they deserve. So whether anybody liked or disliked President Obama as our President—and, by the way, for those who like to throw out the term "hater," I don't hate anybody, but I can certainly disapprove of conduct.

For 8 years, America deserved Barack Hussein Obama. Before that, whether you like him or not, I like him, America deserved George W. Bush. Before that, America deserved 8 years of William Clinton—I forget his middle name. Before that, 4 years of George H. W. Bush. Before that, 8 years of Ronald Reagan. And I am very pleased that America deserved Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton last November.

It is interesting, though, being in hearings today and hear people clamoring that they demand action from this department, that department, it is taking too long, while, at that very moment, Democratic Senators at the other end of this building are doing everything they can to prevent confirmation of President Trump's appointees