

On and on, we could talk about job loss that results from cutting Medicaid. So if we are serious about helping children with disabilities and protecting seniors, we should think long and hard before voting for the block-granting of Medicaid.

One final point just with regard to Pennsylvania Medicaid.

If Medicaid were to be block-granted, as many legislators have supported and voted for, if that happens and if the Affordable Care Act were repealed without a replacement, Pennsylvania alone—one State—would lose \$80 billion over 10 years. This is a 38-percent reduction in funding for Pennsylvania. I am going to fight anyone who tries to take \$80 billion away from Pennsylvania for health care.

I would hope that if Representative PRICE were confirmed, he would abandon those reckless, extreme ideas to block-grant Medicaid because of the consequences for seniors, for children, and for individuals with disabilities.

I don't have a chance to get too far into Medicare today. If I can, I will a little later. I will try to come back to some of the stories people have written to us about the impact of the Affordable Care Act on their lives.

Let me quickly go through some points about Medicare. We know that in a State like ours, one of the oldest States in the country, about 2½ million Pennsylvanians rely on Medicare to help them pay for health care costs. Thank goodness we have Medicare in place. What we would not want to have happen in Pennsylvania is the enactment—and as I said before with regard to Medicaid, now this is a live issue. You have Senators and House Members in both Chambers who have already voted for budgets that would do the following: change Medicare into a premium support program or a voucher program, which means basically you give seniors a fixed amount of money to buy their insurance and then say: Good luck buying your own insurance, buying your Medicare insurance.

I don't think there are very many people in my home State who think that is a good idea.

Of course, none of this has been on the table because these budget votes go by and people vote for the budget, and then it doesn't go any further, so no one feels the urgency to oppose it. Now we have, apparently, people in both Houses in agreement with President Trump to have him sign legislation which would change both Medicare and Medicaid.

I think these are among the many reasons why I would vote against Representative PRICE in his confirmation vote. After a lot of review of his record, after a lot of review on what his proposals would mean if they were to become law—and now we are at a point in our history where these issues are no longer theoretical; they are live issues. These are matters that could be the subject not just of debate but the subject of enactment into law.

I will try to return later to go through some other issues with regard to the nomination.

At this time, I will 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. CASEY. 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. CASEY. Mr. President, before I recommence my remarks, I see the senior Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. INHOFE. I want to make sure that if he is prepared to take the floor, I will yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania, and the answer is, yes, I am prepared.

#### BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

Mr. President, President Trump is meeting this weekend with Japanese Prime Minister Abe, and so I want to take this opportunity to talk about the need for bilateral trade deals.

We have heard during the campaign and since he has been elected President of the United States that Donald Trump has not been adverse to trade. He said he is for fair trade. I think that makes sense, that we should have it.

I would like to talk about some of the problems that are there that I think he can correct that had not been corrected by the previous administration.

Bilateral trade agreements with our key allies should be a priority for this Congress, and I look forward to working with the Trump administration to ensure that these agreements grow American exports, especially for our agriculture and our energy producers.

For full disclosure, I must admit that my State of Oklahoma is a major ag State and also a major energy State.

Of our many key allies, I want to highlight three opportunities for the United States to engage in bilateral trade agreements with three countries: Japan, Taiwan, and then many of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Japan has the third largest economy in the world, but American farmers and ranchers are limited in their ability to access them, and this is why: They have very high tariffs on things we would want to export to Japan. At the same time, we are buying their automobiles. We are buying their products. And that is one of the typical examples of what I think our new President has been referring to. He wants to have the deals that benefit equally America and our partners. I think we can really do that.

We should engage with Japan to develop bilateral trade agreements with a focus on providing new and commercially meaningful market access for agricultural exports and smoothing the way for increased energy exports. In

particular, Oklahoma beef producers are chomping at the bit to get more access to the Japanese market.

In addition to agriculture, my State is an energy State, as I mentioned, and Japan is a nation that is hungry for energy. In fact, Japan has accounted for 37 percent of global LNG purchases since 2012. LNG is liquefied natural gas. I am biased because we are a major producer in the State of Oklahoma. It is something they need, and they need to get it from someone. We ought to make this a bilateral arrangement. A trade agreement with Japan would streamline the current lengthy and pretty cumbersome process for LNG exports to Japan, ensuring that they have a reliable source of energy production and providing jobs to Oklahoma at home.

In addition to Japan, Taiwan is a close friend and ally to the United States and our ninth largest trading partner. As I happen to be the chairman of the Taiwan Caucus, I know firsthand how important it is to strengthen the U.S.-Taiwan relationship, which we can do by engaging in direct bilateral trade agreement negotiations with that country. There is no reason for us not to.

I believe that a key component of any trade agreement, including with Taiwan, is an effort to ensure that food safety and animal health regulations are aligned and based on science to ensure that any differences do not become non-tariff trade barriers. This would enable us to directly address the ban Taiwan has against U.S. pork because we use an ingredient called ractopamine in our feed to keep the hogs lean. It is perfectly safe, but Taiwan uses that as an excuse to block imports of our pork to their country. This is an issue I have already brought up with the Trump administration and with Wilbur Ross, who is waiting for confirmation as the next Secretary of Commerce. That is why we need bilateral trade agreements with Japan and Taiwan.

Our trade relations with counties in Africa are also important because, according to the Economist magazine, six of the world's fastest growing economies were in Sub-Saharan Africa from the year 2000 to 2010. For too long Sub-Saharan Africa has been ignored as a trading partner for the American Government. In fact, they pretty much have been ignored anyway.

I can remember when the continent of Africa was in three different commands. They had the Pacific Command, European Command, and Central Command. For this continent with its significance, I was somewhat instrumental in changing that, in establishing a new command, which is called the AFRICOM. The same thing has been true in terms of not using it as a trading partner.

For the last 20 years, I have been—I think I made my 144th African country visit—working with that continent, and I have seen firsthand the vast potential that is there. When they say

their economies are growing—and a lot of times they say “Well, we are not interested in doing that” because they are not large enough yet.

Last year, Congress enacted my “Africa Free Trade Initiative Act,” which requires government agencies—the USTR, USAID, and other agencies—to collaborate on efforts to build trade-based capacity in African nations. This is a step in the right direction for America to partner with and secure deeper ties to the fastest growing economies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

While some in our government may not deem Sub-Saharan African countries ready for deeper collaborations on trade with the United States, let me tell you what is going to happen if we don't. We still have this country called China. Right now, China has become very active in Africa. What you hear in Africa is, America will tell you what you need, but China builds what you need. The problem with that is, that doesn't help Africa, and Africans know this, because China imports their own labor to build all these things.

So this is one of the things we are looking at where we can actually come out ahead if we will get in on the ground floor and get involved with these economically active countries. And we need to focus more on building trade in legal capacities so that they are ready to do trade agreements, and when that time comes, they will be doing it with us and helping their economies grow. That is what our economic assistance should be all about. They grow, and we are going to grow with them.

That is a go of what was enacted in last year's African Free Trade Initiative Act, and I will continue my work with the new administration to ensure that African nations are not left behind.

With China's rising economic might, we need to strengthen America's current relationships with some of our strongest Asian allies, such as Japan and Taiwan, with new bilateral trade agreements, and this will help counter China's growing influence if that region too.

Oklahoma farmers, ranchers, energy producers, and manufacturers need competitive access to international markets to sell Oklahoma-grown and Oklahoma-produced products. New agreements with our allies would generate more economic activity and create jobs not just in Oklahoma but throughout America.

I think this is the thing that the new administration is talking about when he says we need to have—there is no justification for arrangements where we are not able to have a comparable tariff arrangement where the countries can trade with each other, and that is what we anticipate doing.

Let me mention one other thing. I know that the Senators on the other side of the aisle are spending a lot of time blocking or trying to block the nominations by this President. Every

once in a while, I have to get on the floor and remind them that it is not going to work. You know they are all going to be confirmed. The votes are there, and you can say anything you want about some of the fine people who have been nominated by this President.

I was privileged to visit with President Trump in Trump Tower before he was President. I can remember going up there to visit and seeing the people who would be advisers and the types of people he was going to be nominating, and it was very impressive. Now we have gone through a situation where the Democrats in the Senate have stalled these nominations. They stalled them longer than they have ever been stalled in the history of America, going all the way back to George Washington. All we are doing is wasting time that we could be acting productively in correcting some of the problems we have in this country.

#### OVERREGULATION

There is another issue. I was fortunate enough to spend several years as the chairman and ranking member of a committee in Congress called the Environment and Public Works Committee. It has a very large jurisdiction. It is a committee that deals with—as the title infers—environment and public works, environmental and some of the overregulation that we have had, and created real serious problems.

Also, we have been successful in passing a lot of the initiatives, such as the FAST Act. That was the largest transportation reauthorization bill since 1998. So we have done a lot of good things there.

One of the problems we have had—that we dealt with in that committee and will continue to under the chairmanship of Senator BARRASSO—is doing something about the overregulation. This has been a problem, serious problem. In 2½ months between the Presidential election and Inauguration Day, the Obama administration produced over 200 rulemakings; 41 of which are considered economically significant rules, rules that would result in \$100 million or more in annual costs. Over the course of his administration, President Obama added 481 economically significant regulations to the Federal registry, over 100 more than the Bush or the Clinton administration.

Regulations cost our citizens, at the current time, \$1.89 trillion a year and more than 580 million hours of paperwork in order to comply with this staggering amount of rules. People don't realize the cost of rules. When they made such an effort, starting way back in 2002, to pass legislation that was aimed at trying to get into some type of an arrangement on global warming—and all of this to restrict emissions—they didn't realize at that time, until the bills got on the floor, that the cost to such cap and trade—a type of regulation—is between \$300 and \$400 billion a year to the American people.

Every time I see a large figure coming from Oklahoma—I get the latest

figures from Oklahoma, in terms of what has happened economically in the previous year—those regulations would cost the average family who pays Federal income tax in my State of Oklahoma an addition of \$3,000 a year, and by their own admission, it wouldn't accomplish anything.

I can remember as chairman of that committee, we had Lisa Jackson. Lisa Jackson was the Administrator of the EPA, the first one that President Obama had appointed. I asked her the question live on TV, in an open meeting, I said: If we were to pass, either by regulation or by legislation, the cap-and-trade legislation that they are talking about passing, and have been talking about, would this reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions worldwide? Her answer: No, it wouldn't because this isn't where the problem is. If it is not going to accomplish something, even if you believe the world is coming to an end because of fossil fuels, doing something in the United States is not going to correct it. But that is the cost of rules. That is what we are looking at right now.

We went through 481 significant regulations during the Obama administration. At the last minute, after President Obama realized that Hillary Clinton was not going to win, he got involved in what we refer to as “midnight regulations.” He had several of these last-minute regulations he was trying to get in after the election took place—and he knew who was going to be the next President—before the next President took office. One such midnight regulation, finalized January 13, is the Environmental Protection Agency's rule entitled “Accidental Release Prevention Requirements for Risk Management Programs Under the Clean Air Act.” EPA states that the purpose of the updated rule “is to improve safety in facilities that use and distribute hazardous chemicals.” As you can imagine, environmentalists will not be happy if this rule is changed, but I argue this rule does not make facilities or surrounding communities safer. In fact, it could put them at greater risk.

There are several concerns with this rule, but the biggest one is the national security implications due to the rule's public disclosure requirements. Under this rule, facilities are required to share information on the types of chemicals stored there and the security vulnerabilities with emergency responders, and upon request, to the general public. The rule does not provide for the protection of this information from further disclosure once it is provided. It is well known that terrorists have considered attacks on chemical facilities as a way to kill citizens and cause mass destruction in our communities, and of course requiring the disclosure of this information to anyone whose asks is very reckless and impossible to understand. We can't figure out why they would do that. The terrorists would have access to the same information, which would make their job a lot easier.