

While the Medicaid expansion seems to be working, the markets for subsidized health insurance are stressed in many states. Also affected are millions of people who buy individual policies outside the government markets, and face the same high premiums with no financial help from the health law. Larry Levitt of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation says “implosion” is too strong a term. An AP count found that 12.2 million people signed up for this year, despite the Trump administration’s threats to repeal the law.

I might add, that it is despite all of the speeches made on the floor of the Senate and the House, promising that it would be repealed as well.

The last point I want to make is this. I was troubled last night by a recurring theme in the President’s speech. It was a theme about immigration in the United States. We are a nation of immigrants. My mother was an immigrant to this country. I am proud to serve as a Senator from the State where she and her family settled. I am proud of the struggle they went through—coming to this country, not knowing the language, going through some pretty rough times, facing poverty, taking the dirtiest and toughest jobs. Because of that, the second generation of my family—the one I represent—has brought some great people to this world in our own families and perhaps even added to the benefits of the United States for others.

Last night, if you listened to the characterization of immigrants, it was negative, virtually from start to finish.

In the audience last night, I had a young lady as my guest. She is an extraordinary lady. Her name is Aaima Sayed. She is Pakistani, and she was brought to the United States at the age of 3 by her parents from Pakistan. They settled in Chicago and eventually moved to New Jersey. It turns out the family had its difficulties and the mother and father split and separated. When the father left, he left behind his paperwork—which was in place or at least in the process—of trying to legalize the presence of his family, and nothing was done.

It wasn’t until she was in high school that this young lady realized that she was undocumented. That creates obstacles for any young person. In her case, a special obstacle was the cost of higher education. As an undocumented child in America, she didn’t qualify for government assistance—Federal Government assistance—and limited State assistance. Yet she aspired to go on to school and to borrow the money, if necessary, at high interest rates from private sources in order to finish her education. She graduated from Rutgers University magna cum laude and then wanted to go to medical school.

There weren’t many medical schools accepting undocumented students, but there was one. I am proud to tell you that it was Loyola University of Chicago, the Stritch School of Medicine. There were about 65 undocumented young people in medical school in the United States, and 30 of them were at

Loyola in Chicago. I have met most of them. Each and every one of them is more inspiring than the next.

They opened up the competition. They didn’t give them slots to fill. They said: Compete with everyone. These students were so outstanding from across the United States that they made it to Loyola.

This young lady, in her third year, faces another 6 years of education before she completes her medical degree. When she is finished with those 6 years, it isn’t over. In Illinois, we told her she could go to school, but it was part of a contract. She could attend school, and we would reduce the interest payments at a later part in her life if she gave us 1 year of service in an underserved community in Illinois for each year of medical school. She has 6 years of school left and 4 years of serving in a rural community or an underserved neighborhood clinic in the city of Chicago or nearby.

She signed up for it. She is an amazing young person. She is determined to get this medical degree—despite the debt, despite the obstacles. The only reason she can do this is because she is protected by something called DACA.

Let me explain. Some 16 years ago, I introduced a bill called the DREAM Act. It said that if you were brought to the United States, like she was, under the age of 16, you had a good life, no criminal record or history of a problematic nature, and completed your education, you can stay in the United States and eventually work your way toward legalization.

President Obama took it up and created an Executive order called DACA and said to the young people in that situation: Come and apply, pay a \$600 filing fee, then go through a criminal background check, and if you make it, we will give you 2 years to live in the United States without fear of deportation, with a work permit.

She signed up. That is how she can go to medical school. You need to work to go to medical school. She is going through a clinical experience where she is actually working in these hospitals. Without a work permit, she wouldn’t be able to complete medical school.

The obvious question is this: What is going to happen to this program under President Trump? In fairness, the President has said positive things about DACA and DREAMers. I thanked him personally. I have only met him three times, but I thanked him personally twice for doing that. I hope that it means that ultimately there will be some path for the 750,000 young people, just like her, who are simply asking for a chance to be educated and be part of America’s future.

I hope that, as people who listened to the speech last night think about immigrants to the United States, they will think about this young woman, as well, who has worked so hard her entire life to better herself and to be able to help others at a later point in life.

She is an extraordinary person, and there are so many more just like her.

They are immigrants to this country. In this case it is Muslim immigrant to this country who someday will be an exceptional doctor, who is going to give 4 years of her life back to my home State and then is going to help others all across the United States. That, to me, is an image of immigrants that shouldn’t be lost with the negative connotations that were raised last night.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

MINERS PROTECTION ACT

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to call for immediate action on the Miners Protection Act. Today, as we sit here, 22,600 miners have received letters. This is a copy of the letter, and I am going to read it to you. This is a letter they received today letting them know their healthcare benefits will be terminated at the end of April. This letter basically says:

The UMWA 1993 Benefit Plan notified you in December 2016—

This is one of multiple letters they received. Can you imagine getting a 4-month extension? Then by law you have to have 90 days before they can terminate you. Every time you get an extension, within 30 days you get another letter saying you are going to be terminated. That is the inhumane treatment our retired miners and mostly widows are receiving—

that the U.S. Congress had passed the Continuing Health Benefits for Miners Act, which provided for the transfer of federal funds to the Plan to cover the health care benefits you receive through April 30, 2017. The Plan cautioned that further Congressional action would be necessary in order for the Plan to provide health care coverage to you after April 30. At this time, Congress has not taken the action needed to continue your benefits. Unless Congress acts before the end of April, the 1993 Benefit Plan will not be able to provide you with the health benefits that you have been receiving from the 1993 Plan, and those benefits will terminate effective May 1, 2017. In addition, your Funds’ Health Service Card will no longer be valid.

Can you imagine a 75- or 80-year-old woman—a lady, a widow—who has lost her husband, probably because of black lung, and all the work he did for our country and for himself and his family, and she has received that three times or more now—not knowing what in the world or why they can’t do something that we promised, something that was done in 1946, where the Krug amendment and the Krug act basically said that we would take care of our miners so that they would have permanent healthcare and a pension. It was not done by taxpayers’ dollars. It was done by the coal they mined. For every ton of coal, there would be so much set aside. Then we had the bankruptcy laws happen in the 1980s, which basically destroyed a lot of companies for paying into it. Then we had the crash of 2008, which took it further down.

Now we stand here today, and we have a fix coming out of the AML, the

abandoned mine lands, coming, again, from coal that was mined to pay for the miners' pension and benefit plan, and we can't get it done.

I will tell you, if that piece of legislation was allowed to be voted on tonight, we would have well over 60 votes, bipartisan. My Republican colleagues and all of our Democrat colleagues here understand the importance of the working people.

President Trump is speaking about this every time. Last night he shouted out to miners. I was so pleased. I have not heard that since I have been here—anyone saying: Thank you for the job you have done. We are not leaving you behind. You have given to this country the energy we have, the superpower of the world. You have produced the energy through the toughest of times, and we appreciate that.

I was very, very appreciative to see that type of recognition. I can't tell you how much more appreciative I would be right now to see us as a bipartisan group—Democrats and Republicans—standing up for the working people that we talk about every day and saying: Listen, as to the pension guarantee act, which basic to the Miners Protection Act, we are going to pass that. We are going to put this aside. We don't have to worry about this anymore. We have done it.

That is all we are asking for. Everybody who has joined me in this journey understands that we are all fighting for the working people, which is what we were sent here to do, from your wonderful State of South Carolina to my beautiful State of West Virginia. They depend on us. The retired miners are walking our halls. Maybe you have seen them. If not, I am sure they will come by and say hi to you. They are very appreciative of the consideration we are all giving them. They are hoping we finally get this done.

I am doing it for them and for their families and what they have done for our country. The 4-month extension is not even humane. I have said that. My reason for saying that is that these people can't comprehend it. I can assure you that, when I go back to my office after I leave the floor, I will get phone calls: JOE, they are going to take my healthcare again. What am I going to do?

I keep saying: Ma'am, please, trust us; hold tight.

We could have had this fixed before. We kicked the can down the road 4 months. Now I have been told—and we all seem to accept it—that they are going to do a permanent healthcare fix. I am appreciative of that. The bottom line is that we have pensions out there hanging, which is going to be a bigger albatross around us if we don't something, and we have a chance to fix it all and put that aside.

I spoke to President Trump, and I am hopeful that he will speak out on this, and he has spoken out. He has told me that he supports it.

I said: Please, Mr. President, speak to our friends on the other side—our

leadership—and let them know how much you support this, and let us put this behind us because we can fix it once and for all.

We were told to get a legislative hearing, and we did that. We were told to go through regular order. We went to the Finance Committee, and it was passed out—bipartisan, overwhelmingly bipartisan.

I know we have the 60 votes. I was told we have to reintroduce it again. So here we are. I reintroduced it, and we have bipartisan support again. We are ready to go.

Why do we put these people through this type of agony? I don't know. We have so many other challenges, and we have to come together. This is one we have already agreed we are together on and can't move it.

I know you have always been a dear friend and supportive, and you know the hard work our people have done, and I appreciate that. However, it is time to act. It is time to get this done. If we wait until April, that is exactly when our continuing resolution is coming up, and, basically, we have no budget to work off of. So we have to do another extension until we can get something more permanent. They could get caught up in that CR again. We are going to say: We are sorry; we couldn't get it done, but we will give you another 2, 3, or 4 months.

I can't go home and continue to tell these wonderful people who have been so good and so patient that I am sorry, but we just have to wait another few months.

When is enough enough? When are those few months going to be up and we do the right thing? I am asking all of you; I am asking all of my colleagues: Please, this is one time when we can do something and feel good about it and go home over the weekend and go back to our constituents and tell them that this one is finished, that we fixed this.

I am asking for that vote. I would encourage all of my colleagues to do the same, to speak to the leaderships to make sure that we can move the miners protection and make sure the miners get the healthcare and the pension benefits they were guaranteed and they have been promised and which has been kept until now, and that we are not going to let them down.

With that, Mr. President, I thank you, and I thank all of my colleagues for the support we have been receiving. I am asking the majority leader to please let us have this vote and put it on the floor. Let's go from there and see what happens. I am willing to do that.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

FAMILY PLANNING PROVIDERS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, thank you, and thank you to some of my colleagues who are going to be joining me on the floor this afternoon.

The day after President Trump was inaugurated was one of the most inspiring I have ever gotten a chance to be part of. Millions of people, men and women, marched in Seattle, in Washington, DC, and in cities and towns in between. They carried signs, they chanted, and they made it absolutely undeniably clear that when it comes to women's rights and healthcare, people across the country do not want to go backward. Since then, they have continued to speak up and stand up.

But we are here today because Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress simply are not getting the message. I want to discuss one crucial example in particular—the possibility that in a matter of days, Senate Republicans could roll back a rule protecting family planning providers from being discriminated against and denied Federal funding.

Let me start by explaining a bit about what family planning providers mean to our community. These providers—part of the Title X program, which has bipartisan history—deliver critical healthcare services nationwide but are especially needed in rural and frontier areas. In 2015 alone, Title X provided basic primary and preventive healthcare services, such as Pap tests, breast exams, birth control, and HIV testing, to more than 4 million low-income women and men at nearly 4,000 health centers. In my home State of Washington, tens of thousands of patients are able to receive care at these centers each year. They often have nowhere else to turn for healthcare. In fact, 4 out of 10 woman who receive care at health centers funded by Title X consider it to be their only source of healthcare.

Taking resources away from these providers would be cruel. It would have the greatest impact on women and families who are most in need. But that is exactly what the law passed in the House, which is now on its way to the Senate, would mean. It would undo a valuable effort by the Obama administration to ensure that healthcare providers are evaluated for Federal funding based on their ability to provide the services in question, not ideology. In doing so, the bill would make it even easier for States, led by extreme politicians, to deny family planning providers Federal funding, not because of the quality of the care they provide or the value to the communities they serve but based on whether the politicians in charge agree that women should be able to exercise their constitutionally protected rights to safe, legal abortion.