

those resources—RMPs should get a whole lot more interesting to Westerners.

Since 2014, BLM officials have been toiling away, rebuilding the current rules for land use planning in a significant way for the first time since 1983. . . .

One important change is that Planning 2.0 would let the BLM take into account local impacts from the beginning.

Going on to read from the editorial:

The Republican-controlled House has already passed a resolution to strike Planning 2.0 from the books once and for all. The Senate will vote within days on whether or not they'll use the same sledgehammer—the Congressional Review Act (CRA). It's an especially diabolical weapon.

Once the CRA is used on Planning 2.0, it will be gone forever. It prevents future BLM rules for planning land use from being introduced if they are "substantially the same."

The utterly confounding part is why this rule is being picked on in the first place. . . .

Planning 2.0 actually mandates more local control, gives it more often and is a smarter, more elegant solution to sharing use of our public lands.

I couldn't say it better than that editorial. Local communities are watching. They want more sunshine. They want more input. They want a smoother process. They don't want lawsuits that take forever. They want us to work in a collaborative fashion, guaranteeing the public input of local governments, States, and our citizens in how we manage our Federal lands.

I urge my colleagues to turn down this resolution.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I yield back the remaining time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. WICKER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 82 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Strange
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	McCain	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young

NAYS—48

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Bennet	Harris	Nelson
Blumenthal	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Brown	Heitkamp	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Udall
Donnelly	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Franken	Murphy	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Isakson

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 44) was passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 18, Seema Verma, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Seema Verma, of Indiana, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Seema Verma, of Indiana, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services.

Mitch McConnell, Steve Daines, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, Bob Corker, John Boozman, John Hoeven, James Lankford, Roger F. Wicker, John Barrasso, Lamar Alexander, Orrin G. Hatch, David Perdue, James M. Inhofe,

Mike Rounds, Bill Cassidy, Thom Tillis.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the nomination be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.J. Res. 58.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to H.J. Res. 58, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 58) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I rise in support of S.J. Res. 26, a resolution to disapprove the Obama administration Department of Education's regulation on teacher preparation issues. This resolution is simple. It overturns the last administration's overreach into scores of States and territories, into thousands of college and university teacher preparation programs, and into millions of American classrooms.

Last night, I drafted a fairly detailed statement on some of the problems deep inside this regulation, but I have decided to skip past most of that. Why? Because the problem with this regulation is actually much more basic than all of the substantive problems in the regulation. This regulation actually makes the assumption that bureaucrats in Washington, DC, are competent to micromanage teacher training programs in America. That is what this regulation ultimately does, and that is absurd.

So I would like to ask three questions of folks who plan to vote to defend this regulation. First, do you really think that bureaucrats in this city know better how to run teacher training programs than people who have spent most of their lives inside actual classrooms with actual future teachers and with students? How many of you have ever run a teacher training program? Has anyone in this body ever run a teacher training program? Because I have—almost. I have spent a lot of my life around these programs. As a kid, with my dad, who was a lifelong public schoolteacher and coach, and I have been in many of these classrooms with him when he was getting master's and continuing education programs; then with my wife who is also a public high school teacher; and then I was a college president at a university that had multiple teacher training programs. I know Keith Rohwer, and I know the other deans of education that have been at Midland University and at many other colleges and universities across Nebraska. Yet, even though I have been around a lot of these programs in some detail, I wouldn't possibly think I am ready to decree all the details inside those programs from thousands and thousands of miles away.

Question No. 2, has anyone actually read this regulation that folks are going to say they want to defend on this floor? Because I have been reading in it. I will not claim I have read it, but I have read in it. This is the 695 pages of the regulation itself. There is actually a lot of guidance material as well, but I didn't bring that because I didn't want to have both of my hands occupied. This is the 695 pages of the regulation we are talking about today, and it is actually really silly. If you read inside it, it is filled with enough specificity that if you tried to explain it to thoughtful, generally educated Americans, I submit to you that you would blush. There is a level of detail and a level of specificity in this that we are not possibly competent to defend at the micro level.

Question No. 3, can the folks who think this is what Washington, DC, ought to be doing right now—please show me somewhere in this document, the Senate version of the Constitution—show me somewhere in this document where we are given the specific authority to micromanage local programs like this from here. Because, honestly—I mean this sincerely to my colleagues who plan to vote to defend this rule—I don't see how you can defend this document and think that this is conceivably our job from here. We are not competent to do this.

Now, a couple of qualifications are in order. Am I suggesting that all teacher training programs in America work well? Heavens, no. There are some that are fairly strong, and there are actually a lot that are really, really poor and weak, but having a good intention to make them better is not the same as

actually having accomplished something that will make them better. Good intentions are not enough. For us in this body to act because we have compulsory governmental powers, we would need not merely good intentions, we would also need competence and authority. We have neither of those about teacher training programs.

Everyone in this body agrees that education is darn near the center of the future of our country. We all want and we need good teachers. Most of us can remember specific teachers who stood out because of her or his creative presentation, because of their unexpected humor, because of their charm and their compassion, because of their tireless drive, because of their inspired mentorship. None of us in this Chamber who has the privilege of serving our fellow country men and women regret or are unaware of the fact that the skills and the guidance and the abilities that we have are the function of the mentorship and the pedagogy of life-changing teachers early in our lives. We have benefited from and we need good, prepared teachers.

If we all agree teachers are critically important to our future, and since we all agree teacher training programs are important and we also agree that some of them aren't very good, the question would be, What would we do about that? What kind of debate should we have about why much education in America isn't good enough? Does anyone in this body sincerely believe that the big, pressing problem in American education is that there aren't enough rules like this coming out of bureaucracies in Washington, DC?

Because if you believe that, I would humbly suggest that you should go and meet with some of the ed school faculties back in your State and ask them if you can read them these 695 pages so you can tell them that we have the answers. Read it to them, and then please come back and tell us in this body that they agree with you, that what we really need is more 700-page regulations from Washington, DC, micromanaging things as specific and local as teacher preparation programs.

Oh, and one more thing, which is actually kind of big. This regulation explicitly violates the plain language and the congressional intent of the Federal education law that was passed in this body last year. You will all recall that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed in this Chamber with overwhelming bipartisan support last year. I think it got 83 votes. The act prohibits the Secretary of Education from prescribing "any aspect or parameter of a teacher, a principal, or other school leader evaluation system within a State or local education agency" or "indicators or specific measures of teacher, principal, or other school leader effectiveness or quality." There is nothing ambiguous about this language.

In addition, the Higher Education Act is clear that the levels of perform-

ance used by a State to assess teacher training programs "shall be determined solely by the State."

This rule overrides State authority over literally tens of thousands of discipline-specific teacher preparation programs across the Nation, burdening States with a federally defined and expensive mandate. Under this regulation, States would be required to create elaborate new data systems that would link K-12 teacher data to data on evaluations of teachers and administrators in particular schools and then on to the data back into the teacher preparation programs. This regulation's goal would be to measure the success of teacher preparation based largely on teachers' students' subsequent test scores, and it would all need to be backlinked in the data. This is data that is not currently gathered.

Rube Goldberg is smiling somewhere because this sounds like a bureaucrat's dream, a paperwork trail monitoring all the strengths and weaknesses of some vast machine spitting out layers and layers of new data over which Washington's experts could then postulate and tinker. Again, I have no doubt the bureaucrats who wrote these 700 eye-glazing pages—pages about rules, about data to be gathered that States are not currently gathering—I have no doubt the people who wrote this mean well. I also have no doubt the people who are going to defend this rule as somehow commonsensical—then why is it 700 pages—also mean well, but those good intentions don't change the fact that what they have actually done in this rule—what they have actually done—is build a much larger requirement set of paper trails, demanding further burdens on our teachers, on our principals, and on the professors who are teaching teachers, and then require all of them to report back through new or expanded bureaucracies at the State level, though the States have not chosen to gather this data, and then pass this data on to a bureaucracy a couple of blocks from here.

These Rubik's Cubes of rules and data collection are not being done today, and supposedly we are going to make teacher preparation programs better by all of the specificity that comes from this rule.

The fact that these regulations will likely cost States millions of dollars to implement simply adds insult to injury. Let's be honest. Education is not some vast complex machine that just needs a little bit more tinkering from Washington-level intervention before it will be at utopia. It isn't true, and this rule is not an effective way to actually help the teachers who care so much that they are investing their lives in our kids.

Nebraska's parents and educators and locally elected school boards are better equipped and better positioned to tackle the most important educational challenges. They are better equipped and they are better intentioned, even than the smartest, the

nicest, and the most well-meaning experts in Washington, DC. If you disagree, again, I humbly challenge you to go and try and read this rule to elementary and secondary school teachers in your State and to those who are running the programs that train them. Read the 695 pages to them and then report back to us that they actually share your view that the really big problem in American education is not enough 700-page rules from educational bureaucrats from DC.

Good intentions are not enough. Federal intervention and reforms should never make problems worse, and that is what this rule would do.

I urge my colleagues to reject this rule and to rededicate ourselves to the duties that really and fundamentally are ours, to the duties the Federal Government is exclusively and monopolistically empowered to carry out because it isn't this. We are not competent to displace the expertise of the district and the State level, and we should not be trying to regulate teacher training programs from Washington, DC. We are not competent to do this.

Thank you for your consideration.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor actually on behalf of students across the country, and for those who are so passionate about their education that they want to dedicate themselves to teaching, and to urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution and support strong and accountable teacher preparation in America today.

While this rule may not be the rule that any of us would have written on our own, it is important.

Let me say at the outset that there are many great teacher prep programs that exist around our country, and they are doing a great job preparing our teachers to succeed in the classroom, but there are also teacher preparation programs out there that are struggling and need support to help make sure they produce great teachers for our schools.

Now, as a former preschool teacher and as a mom, I know how important it is to have great teachers in our classrooms, and I understand how a good education, with an amazing teacher, can change a child's life. I am sure all of our colleagues think back on that one special teacher they had who shaped their mind and changed their life. They teach us not only how to read and write and do arithmetic, but good teachers teach us how to think critically, how to be creative, how to form an argument. I know I am not alone in saying that I owe much of what I have to the quality of the public education I received growing up, and I have spent my career fighting to make sure every child in America has the same opportunity I did.

Unfortunately, too many teaching students today are forced to take out huge amounts of student loans to afford continuing their education so they can realize their dream. They are will-

ing to make this sacrifice. They don't complain. The very least we can do for those who want to become teachers is to make sure they are actually getting their money's worth when they make an investment in themselves.

That is what this rule does. It helps make sure students can make informed decisions about the quality and preparedness of their education.

Here are a few of the ways this rule does that—and I am hoping my colleagues will see that this shouldn't be controversial. This rule strengthens and streamlines reporting requirements of teacher prep programs to focus on employment placement and retention of graduates. It provides information from employers to future teacher candidates so they can make an informed decision about their education by choosing a school that improves the likelihood they will find employment after graduation. It makes sure that prospective teachers can access this information they need before they take out massive amounts of student debt.

When teacher programs are struggling, this rule helps States identify at-risk and low-performing programs so States can provide them the support they need to adapt or adjust their programs and help their teaching students succeed.

There is one more reason I would urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution today. Simply put, it would put more power into the hands of Secretary DeVos, and many of us don't yet have the trust that she would use that power to promote the best interests of students in higher education. Secretary DeVos does not come from a higher education background. We don't know whether she supports providing information on teacher placement rates and retention rates before prospective teachers take out student loans. We have no idea what she would do if this rule went away, and I believe it would be too risky to find out.

By investing in our teachers, we are investing in our future generations. Our future teachers have the right to know whether they are receiving a quality education, and they deserve to know that before they take out massive amounts of student debt.

It helps to improve teacher prep program accountability and gives prospective teachers the information they need to make an accurate decision on which program is most likely to make them a successful teacher in the classroom.

It ensures that Secretary DeVos does not have more power to implement unknown policies that could hurt students and reduce the number of qualified great teachers in our public schools.

Without this rule and the information that it ensures, students will have a hard time finding a quality teacher prep program that will help them get a job after they graduate. I think that is simply wrong. We should be working to

make sure teaching students have full access to information and options. This rule would give them less.

For all the future teachers out there, I urge my fellow Senators to vote against this CRA because every young adult deserves to know that the program they enroll in is actually preparing them to be a successful teacher in the classroom, and every student deserves to have an amazing teacher in every classroom.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS BILL

Finally, Mr. President, I wish to bring up one more thing that is very important to me—the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act—and a potential serious threat to it. It seems that Republicans are thinking about bringing to the floor another CRA that would eliminate the rule that provides States with flexibility and guidelines to create their State plans. I want to be very clear. I hope Republicans reconsider that approach.

The Every Student Succeeds Act is a critical part of our bipartisan education law. It is an important part of the civil rights protections it offers, as well as the assurances it made that every student would have an opportunity to succeed, no matter where they live or how they learn or how much money parents make. Jamming through that resolution would weaken it, and it would be a major step toward turning our bipartisan law into another partisan fight.

Rolling back the Every Student Succeeds Act rule less than a month before States have to submit their plans to the Department of Education will cause chaos and confusion in the States, and it will hurt our students, our teachers, and our schools. It will also give Secretary DeVos greater control over that bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act and give her the tools to implement her anti-public education agenda.

Secretary DeVos's lack of experience and expertise, as well as her damaging track record on school privatization, leaves her unqualified to implement this bipartisan law that governs public education and public schools without the important guardrails that rule ensures. Given her record and her comments, she would almost certainly push for measures that disregard key civil rights protections in the Every Student Succeeds Act and could allow unequal, unfair, and unreliable accountability for schools across the country.

The Every Student Succeeds Act rule is supported by Democrats and Republicans, by teachers and businesses, and by parents and communities. We should not go backward.

I urge my colleagues to reconsider moving forward with that resolution, which I understand they want to bring up later this week, and work with us to continue building on that bipartisan progress that we all worked toward for our students.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

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

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

REPUBLICAN HEALTHCARE BILL

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to offer a few comments about the House Republican bill that was just unveiled yesterday. Those who have been promoting it or those who have been working on this issue for a couple of weeks are claiming it is a new healthcare plan or a new comprehensive healthcare proposal—in essence, by their argument, a replacement if the Affordable Care Act were repealed. I disagree. I don't believe in any way it is a plan. It might be a bill, but I think a better description of it in terms of its impact would be that it is a scheme, not a plan. It is a scheme that will roll back coverage gains from the Affordable Care Act, which is better known by a longer name: the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Kaiser—one of the great institutions that track healthcare data and healthcare policy—told us that there are 156 million Americans with employer-sponsored coverage. Those Americans didn't have much protection before the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act with regard to pre-existing conditions or annual lifetime limits—a whole series of protections for people that were not there before that.

This scheme, as I am calling it, will not only roll back coverage gains in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, in the process it will also devastate the Medicaid Program, leaving many of the most vulnerable Americans behind.

Another impact of this scheme will be to increase costs for middle-class families while cutting taxes for millionaires or multimillionaires as well as big corporations. It will raise the cost of care for older Americans and substantially cut funding for hospitals in rural communities.

How did we get there, and where are we going based upon the House Republican proposal? Last night the Republicans released their bill to "replace" the Affordable Care Act, and the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee will be marking up the bill tomorrow. I guess it doesn't require much reading to get to a markup tomorrow.

Usually when you introduce a bill, the bill is reviewed by Members of Congress. There is some public debate on it. There is some back-and-forth. And then a period of time later, maybe weeks, there is a markup. The committee engages in a thorough review of the bill, and the markup means they make changes. They add amendments or try to alter the bill in one way or another. That is a serious approach when you do this work of legislating on a serious issue.

Healthcare is about as serious and difficult an issue as there is. I think it should be accorded the serious review that the complexity and the consequence of this issue demand. This is not a serious proposal. It is a scheme, but it is also not a serious process that the House seems to be focused on right now. This process means the House will mark up this bill within I guess about 48 hours of it being unveiled, maybe less than 48 hours. That means there will not be a single hearing on the bill or getting the bill scored, which is a fancy Washington word for having someone tell us what it costs. There will be no thorough review, no serious review on such a monumental issue called healthcare and what happens to hundreds of millions of Americans.

At the same time, the markup will proceed with lightning speed, and there will not be any information on the record about an analysis of the bill that is thorough and serious, and of course we will not know how to pay for it and we will not have the score that will tell us how it will be paid for and what the cost will be.

It is hard to come up with the words, but the impact of this bill would be a disaster. If you are a millionaire and up, you are doing quite well under this bill. You are going to get a bonanza from this bill. You are going to have a great payday. If you are a child or you happen to be a senior or if you are a woman or if you are an individual with a disability or a chronic disease, you are out of luck. You are in big trouble. I would hope that those Americans would have the benefit of a serious review of a serious issue. If the bill is not serious, I guess they are going to ram it through. We will see what happens in the next couple of days.

There is one analysis that should be on the record. There are some that are hot off the presses. This is a report released today that I am looking at. It is about 2½ pages. They know the vote will take place soon in the committee—two committees, maybe in the House. This report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is moving quickly to keep up with the fast pace at which the bill is proceeding. I won't read the whole report, and I won't enter the whole report into the RECORD; I am sure people can go online and look at it. Here is the title of the report: "House GOP Medicaid Provisions Would Shift \$370 billion in costs to states over a decade." It is written by Edwin Park, who has been writing about Medicaid for a long time. Few Americans know more about Medicaid than Edwin Park and people like him who study it. I will read the first sentence, which gives you the basics of it: "The new House Republican health plan would shift an estimated \$370 billion in Medicaid costs to states over the next ten years, effectively ending the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) Medicaid expansion for 11 million people while also harming tens of millions of additional seniors, people with disabili-

ties, and children and parents who rely upon Medicaid today."

That is the opening line of this proposal, which I believe is a scheme. What does that mean for Medicaid?

One of the basic debates we will have here is what happens to Medicaid itself, and we will have a lot of debates about other aspects of the implications for the Affordable Care Act.

Here is what it means. It means that 70 million Americans who rely upon Medicaid—again, they are children in urban areas, children in rural areas, children in small towns who get their healthcare from Medicaid. It is a lot of individuals with disabilities, a lot of children with disabilities who benefit from Medicaid. It is also, of course, pregnant women, as well as seniors trying to get into nursing homes, because we know that a lot of seniors can't get into a nursing home unless they have the benefits of Medicaid. The idea in the bill on Medicaid that is objectionable, among other objections I have, is a so-called per capita cap. This idea limits Federal contributions to a fixed amount. If the caps are not tied to overall increases in healthcare spending, the net effect is fewer healthcare dollars over time so they can afford the tax cuts they want to have as part of this scheme.

We have heard a lot around here about flexibility, that States want more flexibility when it comes to Medicaid. I will tell you what they don't want. They don't want a flexibility argument to be a scheme that results in cuts to those States, where the Federal Government says: Here is a block grant that may increase or may not, but good luck, States, as you balance your budgets.

Of course, Governors and State legislators balance their budgets, and they have very difficult choices to make—sometimes choices the Federal Government never makes. That is why some Republican Governors took advantage of the Medicaid expansion and expanded healthcare to a lot of people in their States. That is one of the reasons they are worried about—and some will oppose this idea of so-called per capita caps or block-granting of Medicaid or the like.

If we have a proposal to cut \$370 billion from the House, what does that mean for some of those groups that I just mentioned earlier? Well, we know that more than 45 percent of all the births in the United States of America are paid for by Medicaid, so that is a consequence for pregnant women and their children. One in five seniors receives Medicaid assistance by way of the benefit to someone trying to get into a nursing home. Medicaid also pays for home-based care for seniors and, of course, long-term care as well. What if you have a disability? Over one-third of the Nation's adults with disabilities who require extensive services and support are covered by Medicaid.

We know that in a State like mine—because we had a Republican Governor

embrace the Medicaid expansion, and then we had a Democratic Governor embrace it and really develop it and bring it to where it is today—we have expansion of Medicaid that resulted in some 700,000—that is not an exact number, but it is approaching 700,000 Pennsylvanians gaining coverage through the Medicaid expansion. And 62 percent of Americans who gained coverage through the Medicaid expansion are working. So we are talking about a lot of families and a lot of individuals who are working and getting their healthcare through Medicaid. That opportunity presented itself because, in the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid was expanded.

There are lots of numbers we could talk about. I will give maybe two more. Medicaid is the primary payer for mental health and substance abuse treatment. Medicaid expansion enabled 180,000 Pennsylvanians to receive these lifesaving services. If you are a Member of Congress and you have been going home and talking about the opioid crisis—and to say it is a crisis is a terrible understatement. It has devastated small towns and rural areas. It has devastated cities. It has destroyed families. We know how bad it is. Some of the numbers indicate it is getting worse, not leveling off. If you say you care about that and you supported the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act as a Member of Congress and you supported the funding that was in the 21st Century Cures Act at the end of the year, and you say you are working toward help for communities devastated by the opioid crisis, it is OK to say that, but you can't then say: But I want to support the House Republican proposal on Medicaid, when Medicaid is the primary payer for these substance abuse treatment programs.

I mentioned before adults and children with disabilities. Medicaid covers 60 percent of children with disabilities. We know the range of that—ranging from autism to Down syndrome, to traumatic brain injury, and many other disabilities or circumstances that I have not mentioned. For a lot of people, this is real life. It is not some theory that gets kicked around Washington, often by people who have good healthcare coverage as they are talking about cutting healthcare for others. We have a lot of testimony from what we might want to call the real world.

One of the most compelling pieces of correspondence I received in my time in the Senate was from a mom about her son. Her name is Pam. She is from Coatesville, PA. That is in Southeastern Pennsylvania, within the range of suburban Philadelphia. She wrote to tell me how important Medicaid is to her family and to tell me about her 5-year-old son Rowan. She sent me a picture of Rowan with a firefighter's hat on. Of course, he is fascinated, as we all are, by the heroic work of firefighters. Her story—I will not go through her whole letter, but she got news a couple

of years ago that many parents get in the course of the lives of their children. She got news in March of 2015 that her son Rowan was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. The diagnosis was made by a psychologist who worked for the Intermediate Unit—meaning the institution that works for the school districts and helps to provide special education. Rowan continued in the preschool program and daycare program before and after school, but then Pam goes on to say:

I was never able to find a daycare suitable for all of Rowan's needs. In late January of 2016, I applied for [Medical Assistance].

I will stop there for a moment to explain. Medical Assistance is the State share of the State end of the Medicare Program. We call it Medical Assistance. Other States have a different name for it.

Pam said she applied for Medical Assistance:

After Rowan was awarded this assistance we were able to obtain wrap-around services, which included a Behavioral Specialist Consultant . . . and a Therapeutic Staff Support worker.

Pam goes on to say, and I am quoting her again:

Without Medical Assistance, I am confident that I could not work full time to support our family. . . . [We] would be bankrupt and my son would go without the therapies he needs.

These are the therapies I just mentioned. Then Pam goes on to say, urging me as one of her two Senators to focus on her son, focus on her family when we are casting votes and having debates about policies that relate to healthcare and Medicaid. Here is what Pam asked me to do as her Senator:

Please think of Rowan. . . . My 9-month-old Luna, who smiles and laughs at her brother, she will have to care for Rowan late in her life after we are gone. We are desperately in need of Rowan's Medical Assistance and would be devastated if we lost these benefits.

So said Pam about her son and about the importance of the Medical Assistance Program, which is known on the national level as Medicaid. I would hope that those in the House, as they are quickly marking up legislation that would have a huge impact on families like Pam's and many more—I would hope they would think of Rowan, think of his little sister Luna and what her challenges might be years from now when she would likely have to care for Rowan and answer some of Pam's questions.

There are a lot of questions that we have about policy and numbers and budget impacts, and they are all appropriate. But some of the most important questions we have to answer for those who are asking them are questions that our constituents are asking. And one of those is Pam. We have to be responsive to her concerns about her son and the challenges her son faces.

I hope, in the midst of debate, in the midst of very rapid consideration of a complicated subject on a bill that has

been slapped together—in my judgment, too quickly—that Pam's concerns would be an uppermost priority in the minds of those who are working on this legislation.

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

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

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this is my "Time to Wake Up" speech No. 159. In giving these speeches, I have come to realize that some of my colleagues seem to have a hard time wrapping their heads around the basic understanding of climate change. Some of President Trump's Cabinet nominees seem to have the same problem.

They say the scientific community is split on the issue. It is not.

They say the climate has always been changing. Not like this, it hasn't.

They say we can't trust projections and complex computer models. But overall, they have actually been right.

And, of course, they have the notorious "I'm not a scientist" dodge. Well, if a colleague doesn't understand this, then perhaps he ought to trust the scientists at NOAA and at NASA, at our National Labs, and at universities in Rhode Island and across the country—the scientists whose job it is to understand this.

I must say, in addition to trusting the scientists, I also trust Rhode Island fishermen who see the changes in their traps and nets and our shoreline homeowners watching the sea steadily rising toward their homes. You don't need fancy computer models to see the ocean changes already taking place; you just need a thermometer to measure rising temperatures, basically a yardstick to measure sea level rise or a simple pH kit to measure the acidification of our oceans.

Let's look at ocean acidification. The oceans have absorbed about one-third of all the excess carbon dioxide produced by humans since the industrial revolution, around 600 gigatons' worth. When that carbon dioxide dissolves into the ocean, chemistry happens, and it makes the oceans more acidic.

Carbon dioxide reacts with water to form carbonic acid. Carbonic acid isn't stable in ocean water, so it breaks down into bicarbonate ions, a base, and hydrogen ions, an acid. The increase in acidic hydrogen ions is the crux of the chemistry of ocean acidification. More hydrogen ions lower the water's pH,

and the lower the pH, the higher the acidity.

Regular viewers of my “Time to Wake Up” speeches or people who spent the night up with us while we objected to Administrator Pruitt’s nomination may remember that I demonstrated this in a simple experiment on the Senate floor just a few weeks ago. I took the glass of water on my desk, and I used the carbon dioxide in my own breath. Blowing through an aquarium stone, I was able to show, with the help of a little pH dye, how easy it is to actually measure the effect of CO₂ on the acidity of water. With just a few breaths into the water, I was able to visibly make this glass of drinking water more acidic.

That little experiment is a microcosm of what is happening in our oceans right now, except, instead of bubbles blown through a straw, it is a transfer of excess CO₂ from the atmosphere into the surface waters of the ocean all around the globe.

Scientific observations confirm that what the laws of chemistry tell us should happen is actually happening. Massive carbon pollution resulting from burning fossil fuels is changing ocean acidity faster than ever in the past 50 million years.

Now, you start talking in big numbers, and it all goes into a blur—50 million years, compared to how long the human species has been on the planet, which is about 200,000 years. So 50 million years is, what, 250 times the length of time that our species has inhabited the Earth.

This chart shows measurements of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere taken at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii. That is the redline of climbing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. And it shows carbon dioxide in the ocean, which is the green measure, which is also climbing in tandem with the rise of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Finally, it shows the pH of ocean water in the sea. Of course, as the chemistry would tell us, as the carbon dioxide goes up, the pH comes down, and the acidity rises; the water becomes more acidic.

We measure that surface seawater on the Earth’s oceans has, since the industrial revolution, become roughly 30 percent more acidic. NOAA predicts that oceans will be 150 percent more acidic than now by the end of the century. Coastal States, like Rhode Island and Florida, will feel the hit.

Ocean acidification disrupts life in the sea when those loose hydrogen ions we talked about latch onto free carbonate ions. Usually that carbonate is plentiful in ocean water. Shell-forming marine creatures, like oysters and clams, use this loose carbonate to help form their shells. But if the carbonate they need is bound up by hydrogen ions, they can’t get enough carbonate to build their shells.

We have even seen acidification scenarios in which shells start to dissolve in the water. Shellfish hatcheries on

the west coast have already seen devastating losses of larval oysters due to acidic waters. When ocean pH fell too low, baby oysters couldn’t form their shells, and they quickly died off. Dr. Julia Ekstrom, the lead researcher for Nature Climate Change’s 2015 study on ocean acidification, told PBS that it has cost the Pacific Northwest oyster industry more than \$100 million and jeopardized thousands of jobs. Her research flagged 15 States where the shellfish industry would be hardest hit, from Alaska to Florida, to my home State of Rhode Island.

Toward the bottom of the oceanic food web is the humble pteropod. Pteropods are sometimes called sea butterflies because their tiny snail foot has evolved into an oceanic wing. In 2014 NOAA found that more than half of pteropods sampled off the west coast were suffering from severely dissolved shells due to ocean acidification, and it is worsening.

This is a pteropod shell degrading over time in acidified water.

Of course, we are here in “Mammon Hall,” where it feels laughable to care about anything that can’t be monetized. We talk a good game here in the Senate about God’s Earth and God’s creation and God’s creatures, but what we really care about is the money. So let’s monetize this.

Who cares about this humble species? Salmon do. As the west coast loses its pteropods, that collapse reverberates up the food chain, and the salmon care because many of them feed on the pteropods. The west coast salmon fishery is a big deal, so salmon fishermen care about this.

Another foundational marine species, krill, is also affected by ocean acidification. In the Southern Ocean, nearly all marine animals can thank krill for their survival. From penguin diets to whale diets, krill is king.

A 2013 study in Nature Climate Change found ocean acidification inhibiting the hatching of krill eggs and the normal development of larvae. The researchers note that unless we cut emissions, collapse of the krill population in the Southern Ocean portends “dire consequences for the entire ecosystem.”

Closer to home, the University of Alaska’s Ocean Acidification Research Center—yes, ocean acidification is serious enough that the University of Alaska has an Ocean Acidification Research Center, and it warns that ocean acidification “has the potential to disrupt [Alaska’s fishing] industry from top to bottom.”

Turning to warmer waters, coral reefs are also highly susceptible to ocean acidification. A healthy coral reef is one of the most productive and diverse ecosystems on Earth, home to 25 percent of the world’s fish biodiversity. Those reef-building corals rely on calcium carbonate to build their skeletons.

Since the Presiding Officer is from Florida, I know how important coral

reefs are to the tourism industry in his State.

Coral depends on a symbiotic relationship with tiny photosynthetic algae, called zooxanthellae, that live in the surface tissue of the coral. There is a range of pH, as well as temperature, salinity, and water clarity, within which this symbiosis between the coral and the zooxanthellae thrives. Outside that comfort range, the corals get stressed, and they begin to evict the algae. This is called coral bleaching because corals shed their colorful algae. Without these algae, corals soon die.

The effects of acidification on sea life are far-reaching. Studies have found ocean acidification disrupts everything from the sensory systems of clownfish—those are little Nemos, for those who have seen the movie—to phytoplankton populations, to sea urchin reproduction, to the Dungeness crab, another valuable west coast specialty.

I asked Scott Pruitt, our ethically challenged Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, about ocean acidification. He gave these answers: “The oceans are alkaline and are projected to remain so,” and two, “The degree of alkalinity in the ocean is highly variable and therefore it is difficult to attribute that variability to any single cause.”

Let’s look at those answers.

The first answer is plain and simple nonsense because the harm to ocean creatures from acidification comes from the dramatic shift in ocean acidity, not from where along the acid-based spectrum the shift takes place. The observation he made is irrelevant to the question.

His second answer is no better. It exhibits purposeful ignorance of the role humans’ carbon pollution plays in damaging the ocean, because the chemical principles at issue here are indisputable. You can replicate them in a middle school laboratory in any Florida school. As I showed in my little demonstration, you can replicate them even here on the Senate floor. Like its carbon cousin, climate change, ocean acidification doesn’t care whether you believe in chemistry. It doesn’t matter to chemistry if you swallow the propaganda pumped out by the fossil fuel lobby. The principles of science operate notwithstanding. The chemical interactions take place by law of nature whether you believe them or not. If you believe in God, then you have to acknowledge that these laws of nature are God’s laws, the basic operating principles He established in His creation. But, of course, here at Mammon Hall, it is always about the money.

Any decent EPA Administrator is obliged to trust in real science and to take action to protect human health and the environment. I am deeply unconvinced that Administrator Pruitt will live up in any respect to those obligations, but I would welcome being proven wrong. Likewise, I similarly challenge my colleagues here in the Senate.

This Chamber and our Nation will be judged harshly by our descendants, both for our pigheaded disregard for the basic truths, the basic operating systems of the world we live in, and for the shameful reason why we disregard them. Mammon Hall indeed.

Mr. President, it is time for the Senate to wake up before it is too late.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

REPUBLICAN HEALTHCARE BILL

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, the House's plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act is dangerous and irresponsible. Just listen to Governor John Kasich, Republican Governor of my State, who says we should not be throwing 500, 600, 700,000 Medicaid beneficiaries—mostly people who have jobs and work in low-income jobs—we shouldn't throw them off their insurance. In fact, in Ohio there are 900,000 people—700,000 on Medicaid, 100,000 on their parents' healthcare plan, and another 100,000 on the exchanges—who would lose their insurance if the House succeeds and the Senate goes along in changing dramatically or repealing the Affordable Care Act.

My office is flooded with letters and calls from Ohioans begging us not to take away their care. Let me share some of those letters.

A woman from Beachwood, OH, in Northeast Ohio wrote to me on January 11 terrified of possible changes to the Medicaid system that helps fund nursing homes like the one where she lives. She writes:

I strongly believe changes would drastically diminish my quality of life and many other residents' in the nursing home setting. My care needs are currently well managed by qualified and caring staff members. I am a 2-person assist with dressing, bathing, and getting to the bathroom. I also require two people with getting dressed every morning.

Medicaid cuts would decrease the number of staff members. . . . Without adequate staff, I am afraid of extensive wait periods and frequent bathing accidents. . . . It would be very difficult to endure, cause embarrassment, while destroying my dignity in the process.

I am not as strong as I used to be. I have children who love and care for me and placed me in a safe environment. Living in the nursing home has allowed me to live a little better, smile a little longer, and enjoy my days with family members.

"Please consider," she writes, "the people who will be affected the most."

Understand that most Medicaid dollars—dollars that unfortunately Republicans want to block-grant or capitate in some way, whatever terms they want to use here, send to the States, shrink those dollars, and people like this lady from Beachwood will be the losers as a result. Understand again that most Medicaid dollars—two-thirds of them—go to nursing home care. "Please consider the people who will be affected the most," she writes.

Another woman from Mount Vernon, OH, a part of the State where I grew up in Mansfield, wrote to urge us not to rip coverage away from individuals

who are currently receiving mental health and addiction services. She writes:

As a constituent concerned about preserving access to lifesaving mental health and addiction services, I am writing today to urge and request your support in protecting the Affordable Care Act and preserving Medicaid expansion.

I work as a substance abuse counselor in Knox County and work with adolescents and women with co-occurring disorders. Without the Medicaid expansion, many of our clients would not be able to get the help they need.

Without ObamaCare, without the Affordable Care Act.

Without the Medicaid expansion, many of our clients would not be able to get the help they need.

Today in Ohio, 200,000 people are in the midst of opioid addiction treatment, and 200,000 of them have insurance so they could get that treatment delivered in the right way and have insurance because of the Affordable Care Act. This House proposal would just rip it away from them.

She goes on to write:

Knowing that they can receive help and healthcare often is one of the motivating factors for our clients to begin to make change. Their ability to access medications such as Vivitrol through Medicaid has been a strengthening point in the recovery process of many. With our teens, I have seen them be able to change substance use with the resources that Medicaid provides.

In other words, some of them are breaking their addiction and some of them are being cured because of the Affordable Care Act, because they have Medicaid.

Medicaid allows our rural and low-income teens—

And of the 88 counties in Ohio, 70 or so are classified as small town or rural, like the county I grew up in, Richland County—

many of whom otherwise would not be able to attend treatment due to transportation barriers—to attend treatment through public transportation. Working with these clients, you learn their stories. So many have been through unimaginable trauma, losses, and emotional/physical pain. Many have never had the support to help them begin to work through these issues underlying the substance use.

She is worried. The lady in Mount Vernon, OH, is worried, with very good reason, that these repeal plans would "leave millions of Americans without access to needed mental health and addictions treatment in our state and communities."

Most recently, a woman in Butler County—the congressional district of former Speaker John Boehner and some members of my staff, past and present—writes:

I am extremely concerned about the cuts President Trump and the Republican-led Congress propose to make in the Medicaid program and services for the developmentally disabled.

Her son is 14 years old. He was diagnosed with a specific type of autism. He is nonverbal, with severe cognitive and physical challenges. She wrote to my office how Medicaid has been "a

godsend" for her and her family. Before her son received a waiver under the Medicaid Program, her family was spending \$100 a month in copays for psychiatric medications alone. That is in addition to all the extra medical costs in caring for a severely challenged child. They couldn't afford the physical therapy he needs, despite having insurance coverage through her husband's employer. She wrote that Medicaid "more than anything else, improved the quality of my son's life, and by extension, the life of our whole family."

Understand that health challenges—especially mental health challenges but health challenges overall—in one member of a family afflict the whole family. That is something we should remember as this Congress seems to rush pell-mell into trying to repeal Medicare, trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

These three letters are three of hundreds of thousands that we received—hundreds of thousands of letters and calls that Members of the Senate are receiving. I don't understand how, when 20 million people will lose their insurance, so many Members of Congress, who themselves have government-financed health insurance—we have health insurance in this body paid for by taxpayers, most of us. Yet we think it is appropriate to pass legislation in part giving tax cuts to the richest Americans and at the same time stripping away Medicare benefits, taking 22 million people who now have insurance off of that insurance and proposing minor insurance for some of them but not nearly all of them. If we are people of God, if we are people who care about our constituents, how we can do that is just beyond me.

I go back to the quote from one of the people I read about today from Beachwood. She writes: "Please consider the people who will be affected the most."

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

Mr. President, President Trump declared this week Consumer Protection Week, but his proclamation has gaping holes. It ignores the many ways large corporations cheat consumers and the biggest tool Americans have to fight back.

Not once did the proclamation mention the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which has returned \$12 billion to 29 million consumers. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau was created under Dodd-Frank 8 or 9 years ago. Not once does it talk about the unscrupulous lenders who targeted Americans with predatory mortgages before blowing up the economy in 2007 and 2008. Not once does the President's Consumer Protection Week proclamation mention the millions of fake accounts opened by Wells Fargo. Not once does it mention the shady outfits that set up shop outside the gates of our military bases and the payday

lenders and other unscrupulous lenders who set up shop outside the gates of the military bases because they aren't allowed on the military bases as they try to exploit our service men and women and their families.

Not only did the President ignore some of the most pressing consumer protection issues, his administration is attacking the most important consumer advocate indeed—the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Last week, President Trump's Department of Justice filed papers in Federal court signaling that it will argue that the CFPB shouldn't be independent. The President and White House want the CFPB under their control so they can weaken it, so they can help Wall Street, so they can take away some of its power. They think the President should have the power to fire the head of the agency for any reason.

The whole reason we wrote it to be independent was to protect it from a President who chose Wall Street over Main Street. It was Presidential Candidate Trump who sounded pretty good standing up to Wall Street and helping Main Street. If you look at the nominees, his appointments, and his actions so far, it has been exactly the opposite. He has been the president of Wall Street and at the same time exploiting Main Street. It means that what the President has proposed is that the President can fire his director for doing his job: stepping on the toes of special interests.

The CFPB works in part because it has an independent Director. The current Director of the CFPB, Richard Cordray from Ohio, has protected consumers, has returned billions to Americans who were cheated and who were taken advantage of by big companies.

The CFPB has an independent budget. Banks can't kill it by lobbying it and cutting off its budget. That is the point. People whom he has in many cases recovered money from because he represents consumers—those banks, those large Wall Street banks and other financial institutions, because of the way it is set up, can't lobby Congress to take money away from it and put it out of business. Special interests have relentlessly attacked the CFPB since the day we created it.

President Trump ran on the promise of protecting the little guy, but he hasn't followed through on the promise of protecting ordinary Americans from some of the wealthiest, most privileged special interests in this town.

If you are one of the 29 million Americans who received help from CFPB, you might know how important saving it is, but you might not know how important it is to especially protecting one group of people, and that is protecting our veterans and our servicemembers. The CFPB has an entire office that is dedicated to helping men and women who have served in uniform—the Office of Servicemember Affairs.

A couple of weeks ago, my Rhode Island Senator friend, JACK REED, was in

the Armed Services Committee with the senior enlisted advisers of military services—the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines. Their job is to make sure our servicemembers and their families are getting the support they need. Every one of them had great things to say about the CFPB's Office of Servicemember Affairs—of the value it provides and the support it provides to the men and women who sacrifice so much for our country.

Senator REED brought up an alarming figure. A recent report estimated that thousands of servicemembers are forced out of service every year because of financial hardships—problems with their mortgages, with payday loans, with credit card debt. One will remember earlier in the presentation that I talked about how many of these financial groups set up right outside military bases. That causes a tragedy for these men and women who want to serve their country, and it causes tragedy for their families. It costs taxpayers \$57,000 every time someone is forced out of service. Many other servicemembers lose their security clearances because of financial trouble, which directly affects the mission readiness that is brought on by shady business practices.

The CFPB is stepping in to protect these heroes who are often taken advantage of. The CFPB's Office of Servicemember Affairs is led by men and women who have served in the military and know what kind of help servicemembers need. They visit 145 military facilities across the country in order to help servicemembers get their finances straightened out and to hear about their concerns. They have handled 70,000 complaints from servicemembers and veterans about abusive practices by financial institutions. They have returned \$130 million back to servicemembers and their families simply by enforcing the law and protecting those consumers.

The CFPB protects the men and women who protect our country. It protects all of us. The best way to celebrate Consumer Protection Week is not through words and proclamations, it is through actions.

We need to combat cyber crimes and identity theft, as the President mentioned, but we also need to combat all kinds of tricks and traps—loans with outrageous interest rates, for-profit colleges that promise far more than they deliver, lenders who discriminate based on race. The list goes on and on.

I urge my colleagues to join me in working to ensure that the CFPB remains a strong, active ally in the cause of consumer protection this week, next week, every week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

SILENCING OF POLITICAL DEBATE

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I am truly saddened that I must address what I fear is a growing threat to our Republic—the silencing of political debate by

totalitarian mob violence on college campuses.

I was not in Burlington, VT, last Thursday to witness what happened at Middlebury College, but I would like to read from accounts that have been provided by two people who were, in fact, there and who saw these things unfold. They were the targets of the mob's violence. Their names are Allison Stanger, professor of political science at Middlebury College, and Charles Murray, the author of several groundbreaking books, including the work "The Bell Curve" and a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. America deserves and needs to hear their stories.

On Saturday, 2 days after the incident, Professor Stanger wrote on her Facebook page as follows:

I agreed to participate in the event with Charles Murray because several of my students asked me to do so. They are smart and good people—all of them—and this was their big event of the year.

I, actually, welcomed the opportunity to be involved because, while my students may know I am a Democrat, all of my courses are nonpartisan, and this was a chance to demonstrate publicly my commitment to a free and fair exchange of views in my classroom.

As the campus uproar about his visit built, I was genuinely surprised and troubled to learn that some of my faculty colleagues had rendered judgment on Dr. Murray's work and character while openly admitting that they had not read anything he had written. With the best of intentions, they offered their leadership to enraged students, and we all know what the results were.

I want you to know what it feels like to look out at a sea of students yelling obscenities at other members of my beloved community. . . . I saw some of my faculty colleagues, who had publicly acknowledged that they had not read anything Dr. Murray had written, join the effort to shut down the lecture. All of this was deeply unsettling to me.

What alarmed me most, however, was what I saw in student eyes from up on that stage. Those who wanted the event to take place made eye contact with me. Those intent on disrupting it steadfastly refused to do so. It was clear to me that they had effectively dehumanized me. They couldn't look me in the eye because, if they had, they would have seen another human being. There is a lot to be angry about in America today, but nothing good ever comes from demonizing our brothers and sisters.

When the event ended and it was time to leave the building, I breathed a sigh of relief. We had made it. I was ready for dinner and conversation with faculty and students in a tranquil setting. What transpired instead felt like a scene from [the TV show] "Hemlock" rather than an evening at an institution of higher learning. We confronted an angry mob as we tried to exit the building.

Most of the hatred was focused on Dr. Murray, but when I took his right arm both to shield him from the attack and to make sure we stayed together so I could reach the car, too, that's when the hatred turned on me.

One thug grabbed me by the hair, and another shoved me in a different direction. I noticed signs with expletives and my name on them. . . . For those of you who marched in Washington the day after the inauguration, imagine being in a crowd like that, only being surrounded by hatred rather than love. I feared for my life.

The next day, on Sunday, the American Enterprise Institute's website published this account from Dr. Charles Murray.

Dr. Murray wrote:

If it hadn't been for Allison and Bill Burger [Middlebury's Vice President for Communications] keeping hold of me and the security guards pulling people off me, I would have been pushed to the ground. That much is sure. What would have happened after that I don't know, but I do recall thinking that being on the ground was a really bad idea, and I should try really hard to avoid that. Unlike Allison, I wasn't actually hurt at all. . . .

In the 23 years since "The Bell Curve" was published, I have had considerable experience with campus protests. Until last Thursday, all of the ones involving me have been as carefully scripted as kabuki: The college administration meets with the organizers of the protest, and ground rules are agreed upon. The protesters have so many minutes to do such and such. It is agreed that, after the allotted time, they will leave or desist. These negotiated agreements have always worked. At least a couple of dozen times, I have been able to give my lecture to an attentive or, at least, quiet audience despite an organized protest.

Middlebury tried to negotiate such an agreement with the protesters, but for the first time in my experience, the protesters would not accept any time limits. If this becomes the new normal, the number of colleges willing to let themselves in for an experience like Middlebury's will plunge to near zero. Academia is already largely sequestered in an ideological bubble, but at least it's translucent. That bubble will become opaque.

Worse yet, the intellectual thugs will take over many campuses. In the mid-1990s, I could count on students who had wanted to listen to start yelling at the protesters after a certain point, "Sit down and shut up. We want to hear what he has to say." That kind of pushback had an effect. It reminded the protesters that they were a minority.

I am assured [he continues] by people at Middlebury that their protesters are a minority as well, but they are a minority that has intimidated the majority. The people in the audience who wanted to hear me speak were completely cowed. That cannot be allowed to stand. A campus where a majority of students are fearful to speak openly because they know a minority will jump on them is no longer an intellectually free campus in any meaningful sense.

I suspect that most of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle may not necessarily be fans of Dr. Charles Murray. There is nothing wrong with that, but I am confident they at least would be honest enough and self-respecting enough not to condemn any scholar's work without ever having read it, like many of Middlebury's faculty members apparently did. More importantly, I am confident my Democratic colleagues would join me in denouncing the violence of the Middlebury campus protesters who sought to silence Dr. Murray. On countless occasions, I have heard my Democratic colleagues come to the Senate floor to condemn violence in all of its forms. Why would this time be any different?

We do not agree on everything, but I am confident that if Dr. Murray were invited to testify here on Capitol Hill—perhaps at a committee of the United

States Senate—my Democratic colleagues would eagerly join in an open and respectful debate that would ensue as a result of that visit. I am confident they would reject any effort to silence or to do harm to those with whom they might disagree. In fact, I am confident that if any outburst like that happened, whoever was chairing that committee and the ranking personnel associated with that committee would immediately bring the disruption to a close so an open, honest, respectful discussion could occur within that meeting.

I know tensions are high in America today, and I know what it is like to be on the losing side of a bitterly fought Presidential election as we, as Republicans, found ourselves in just a few years ago in the wake of the 2012 election cycle and in the wake of the previous Presidential election cycle before that in 2008, but that does not and cannot give anyone the license to shout down a fellow American, let alone to physically assault him just because he holds a different opinion.

Democracy and freedom—the republican form of government—depend on open, tolerant, and civil political discourse, and sustaining our democratic freedoms is, perhaps, the sole reason the government subsidizes institutions of higher education in this country.

It is embarrassing that teachers and students at an elite college like Middlebury should need reminding, but speech is not violence, and violence is not speech. Totalitarians who fail to recognize this core fact of decency and tolerance are goose-stepping into some of the darkest corners of the human heart.

If there is anything that should unite us in these polarized times, it is that the kind of violence we saw on Middlebury's campus last week must not be tolerated. That is why I commend the 44 Middlebury College professors who have signed a "Statement of Principles" on "Free Inquiry on Campus." I hope more Middlebury professors will join them. In any event, I hope all Americans will join them in standing up for free, open, honest, respectful debate.

Thank you, Mr. President.
I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES THOMAS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to take a few moments to acknowledge Charles Thomas, a veteran broadcast journalist and political reporter. Last week, after a career spanning four decades, Charles Thomas appeared in his final newscast at ABC 7 Chicago.

Born in Webster Groves, MO, Charles grew up in the St. Louis area and graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism. Shortly after graduation, Charles began his career as a radio reporter at KCMO in Kansas City. He has also worked in news stations in San Francisco and Philadelphia before becoming the ABC News bureau Midwest correspondent in St. Louis. In 1991, Charles was hired as a general assignment reporter at ABC 7 Chicago and later named to the coveted position of political reporter in 2009.

Since joining ABC 7's "Eyewitness News" in 1991, its newscast was and remains the most watched TV news in Chicago. On Charles's 25th anniversary at the station, he said: "I am very blessed to have worked here and like to think that my efforts have had something to do with that success." As an avid viewer, I am here to say it has. His unique perspective and keen ability to tell stories make him invaluable to any newsroom. Let me tell you, Charles asks the tough questions and holds us all accountable. As the politician often in the crosshairs, I can tell you I knew Charles was always prepared and ready to challenge any weak response. I speak for all of Chicago when I say Charles Thomas will be missed.

For more than a quarter century, Charles has covered the biggest stories in the country—the OJ Simpson Trial, Oklahoma City bombing, Rodney King trials, Great Chicago Flood, and the election of the first African-American President, to name just a few. He truly had a front row seat to history. He even joined then-Senator Barack Obama on a trip to Africa in 2006. His remarkable career has taken him to every State in America and five continents, and he leaves with no regrets. Reflecting on his years covering national, State, and local politics, he said: "Without a moment's hesitation, I can look back and say I had the best TV reporting job in America."

Charles Thomas has had an amazing career. His work earned him two Emmy awards for reporting in 1983 and 1992. Although he is retiring, Charles is not done telling stories. He plans to explore digital storytelling focusing on the African-American community, celebrating positive stories often missing in local and national broadcasts—what a noble and necessary endeavor. I am heartened that Charles will remain an inspirational voice in the community.

I want to congratulate Charles Thomas on his distinguished career and thank him for his outstanding service to the people of Chicago. I especially want to thank Charles's wife, Maria, and their three children for sharing so much of their husband and father with our community. I wish him and his family all the best in their next chapter.