

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 194 to amendment No. 193.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike “1 day” and insert “2 days”.

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

RUSSIA AND TRUMP CAMPAIGN INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon on a few topics. First, on the investigation into the Trump campaign’s potential ties to Russia, this is a matter of such gravity, we need to get it right. There should be no doubt about the integrity and impartiality of the investigation, either in the executive branch, where the FBI and Department of Justice are looking into it, or in Congress, where the Intelligence Committees of both Chambers are conducting an investigation.

Unfortunately, the House Intelligence Committee has come under a cloud of suspicion and partisanship. A few months ago, Chairman NUNES spoke to reporters at the request of the White House to tamp down stories on the links between the Trump campaign and Russia, which is exactly what his committee now must investigate. This past week, Chairman NUNES broke with the committee process and tradition to brief the President on information he had learned but hadn’t yet shared with the committee. We have learned this morning that Chairman NUNES was at the White House the day before that event—doing what? We don’t know. It could very well be the case that Chairman NUNES was briefing members of the administration about an investigation of which they are the subject.

Chairman NUNES is falling down on the job and seems to be more interested in protecting the President than in seeking the truth. You cannot have the person in charge of an impartial investigation be partial to one side. It is an inherent contradiction, and it undermines decades of bipartisan cooperation on the Intelligence Committee, which handles such sensitive information paramount to national security. It undermines Congress as a co-equal branch of government meant to hold the executive branch accountable for its actions, and it corrodes the

American people’s confidence in our government.

If Speaker RYAN wants the House to have a credible investigation, he needs to replace Chairman NUNES. Congress was meant by the Framers to be separate and equal, and I sincerely worry that under his direction, Mr. NUNES is pushing the committee into a direction of obsequiousness and not one that is asking the hard questions and getting the important answers.

There has always been a grand tradition of bipartisanship on the Intelligence Committee. When Members go into the SCIF, the room where they get secure briefings, they check their partisanship at the door. Chairman NUNES is right on the edge of doing permanent damage to that grand tradition of bipartisanship. Chairman NUNES seems to be more of a partisan for the President than an impartial actor. He has not been cooperating like someone who is interested in getting to the unvarnished truth. His actions look like those of someone who is interested in protecting the President and his party, and that doesn’t work when the goal of the committee is to investigate Russia and its connection to the President and his campaign.

Without further ado, Speaker RYAN should replace Chairman NUNES.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. President, on another matter, the failure of TrumpCare this past Friday was a good day for the American people. We can finally put to bed the disaster of a bill that was TrumpCare, which would have resulted in spottier coverage, 24 million fewer Americans with health coverage, and higher costs, premiums, and deductibles for the middle class, the working poor, and older Americans, all to finance close to \$600 billion in tax breaks for wealthy Americans. Americans should breathe a sigh of relief that TrumpCare will not become law. We are happy that it is gone. We can finally move on.

As I have said many times, we Democrats, provided our Republican colleagues drop “replace” and stop undermining the ACA, are willing to work with our Republican friends to improve the existing law. No one ever said the Affordable Care Act was perfect. We have ideas to improve it; hopefully, our colleagues on the Republican side do as well. I hope once “replace” is dropped and the ACA is no longer undermined by the administration, we can sit down and talk about it.

Unfortunately, the administration has already done several things that undermine the law and hurt the people. During the final weeks of open enrollment, the Trump administration discontinued the public advertising campaigns that encouraged people to sign up for insurance. The administration is working behind the scenes to give insurers flexibility to offer Americans less coverage for the healthcare they need, and the Executive order that President Trump issued directing agencies to facilitate the repeal and re-

placement of the ACA has destabilized the marketplace. Now that TrumpCare is off the table, the President should rescind the Executive order.

Today, I am urging the President and his entire administration to immediately cease all efforts to undermine the ACA. People’s lives are at stake.

The President should not hope that the healthcare system for tens of millions explodes. He should not want premiums to go up on his watch. He should not hope that Americans lose treatment for opioid addiction on his watch. This approach is wrong, and wrong in two ways: First and foremost, it is wrong because it hurts people. The President must be a leader. It is not leadership for the President to hurt people and actively work to undermine our Nation’s healthcare system simply because he is angry that he didn’t get his way on repealing the ACA. That is not Presidential, that is petulance.

Secondly, this approach will not work politically. Donald Trump is no longer an outsider; he is President. The American people are looking to him to help solve their problems. If he doesn’t, it is going to hurt him and his party. Pointing the finger of blame isn’t going to solve anyone’s problems. That strategy is not only bad for the American people and beneath the Presidency, it will backfire politically. He is in charge. People want him to make their lives better, not make them worse because of some political anger or vendetta.

I know many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle do care deeply about fixing the Nation’s healthcare problems, and we are ready to do that with them in a bipartisan way. But, of course, repeal must be taken off the table, and the President must stop hurting citizens by undermining the Affordable Care Act.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, finally, on tax issues, now that the jig is finally up on healthcare, our Republican friends have signaled they will turn to taxes. I hope they have learned the lessons of TrumpCare. One of the reasons TrumpCare failed so spectacularly was that Republicans tried to rush and ram it through via a reconciliation process, even though it was deeply unpopular with the public. The last poll showed only 17 percent of Americans supported TrumpCare, so that means a large number even of Trump supporters were opposed to it.

Why was it so unpopular? Probably because TrumpCare would have given the wealthiest among us a monster tax cut while hammering older Americans and the middle class with higher costs for less care.

So I say to my friends on the other side of the aisle: If you try to pass a Republican tax plan using the same reconciliation method in order to get a huge tax break for the wealthy and already profitable and powerful corporations, it will fail. The American people are not crying out for tax breaks on

the wealthiest Americans. God bless the wealthy. They are doing just fine without the tax breaks, but thus far it seems our Republican colleagues are headed in that direction.

Even though the President campaigned as a populist, his administration has been all hard-right, pro-corporate, pro-special interests, totally against the working people. If the President and Republicans in Congress continue in that direction, proposing policies that shift burdens off the wealthy and powerful, not aiming to help the middle class and working families, their efforts will continue to fail, and it will turn tax reform into a partisan issue. The White House says tax reform isn't partisan, but it surely will be if they propose massive tax cuts only for the wealthy. My prediction: If Republicans go down that road, the Republican tax scheme will meet the same fate as TrumpCare. I hope they will not go down that road; I hope they will not.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BORDER ADJUSTMENT TAX

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, last week TrumpCare died, and lots of people are trying to figure out exactly what happened. In my view, it was not a lack of strategy; it was not a lack of effort; it was not a lack of personal relationship between the Speaker and the President. It died because the policy stank. It died because people actually—left, right, and center—decided that cutting Medicaid by \$900 billion in order to provide a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans of the exact same amount was just not a good idea in policy or in politics.

Now that TrumpCare has crashed and burned, Republicans are essentially going to try to do the same thing—tax cuts for the rich. Yet, this time, instead of funding it by cutting Medicaid, they are going to charge people more for groceries. Here is their proposal: They want to cut taxes for corporations again. That is what they want to do. Whether one is talking about infrastructure or whether one is talking about healthcare or whether one is talking about so-called tax reform, their solution to everything is to cut taxes for corporations. They want to cut taxes for corporations again, but this time American families will pay for it through taxes on groceries and the other stuff they have to buy on a day-to-day basis.

We have seen this before. It is a giveaway for corporations and the wealthiest among us, but, as usual, they have to find a pay-for, a way to make the arithmetic work, a way to pay for it.

They are going to keep proposing so-called solutions for healthcare, infrastructure, or in this case tax reform, but they are basically the same proposal. It is a subsidy for Wall Street. It is because they cannot help themselves.

This particular giveaway will cost the average American family thousands of dollars. Families will have to pay more for gas, medicine, clothes, cars, food. That is how a so-called border adjustment tax works. Everything one buys in the United States will be taxed, and everything outside of the United States will not be taxed. The sort of principle behind that is that somehow we are going to stimulate exports and disincentivize imports. It is not just that you are paying more on the stuff that is imported; it is that everything in the United States that you purchase you will have to pay more for in order to incentivize exports. But all you are doing is charging the American people more. This is essentially a sales tax.

I talked to members of my staff, and they were trying to get into the sort of technocratic, legal details about whether it is technically a sales tax or a value-added tax or a border adjustment tax that fits into some other legal category. But for a regular person, it does not matter what you call it; if you pay more and the government is collecting it, it is an increase in taxes.

They are going to dazzle you with complexity, and I think some in the House Republican leadership are very skillful at trying to make this more complicated than it is. They are trying to dazzle you with complexity so you do not know what they are doing. They are raising taxes on groceries and all of the stuff you buy. That is their version of tax reform.

I can understand. The Tax Code is awful, it is a mess, and we have been trying to do tax reform for I think 30 years. It is not unreasonable for the average American to say “Yes, you ought to reform the Tax Code,” but, remember, when they talk tax reform, they want you to have to go to the store and buy a steak, a hotdog, a head of lettuce, gasoline, pillows, diapers, paper—whatever you need—and it is going to cost more with so-called tax reform. If they succeed, the average American family could pay up to \$1,700 more per year in order that corporations can get their tax cuts. Think about what \$1,700 means for families across the country. For a family of four, with two kids in middle school, \$1,700 pays for a few months' worth of groceries. In Hawaii, \$1,700 will cover rent for a month, and in lots of other places, it will cover rent for 4 or 5 months. For some people, it pays a year's worth of an electric bill. In the State of Hawaii, it will pay for 4 or 5 months of your electric bill.

We know for certain this will hurt consumers, but on a macroeconomic level—in other words, for the entire

country—we have no idea what a border adjustment tax would actually do in terms of our international relationships.

I understand. I voted against the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the trade promotion authority. I have been very, very concerned about the extent to which we have not been getting the better of these trade deals, especially when it comes to people who are in unions across the country. But we do not want to engage in a trade war. We do not want to screw up American manufacturing, American farming. We have no idea what the impact would be. Even if one is willing to accept increasing the cost of goods in the United States for some theoretical possibility that this will incentivize exports, we have no idea what it is going to do to the American economy overall. Even in the best-case scenario, entire industries will fall apart.

Take tourism. In 2016 alone, tourism supported nearly 5.5 million American jobs directly and almost 10 million more in industries like restaurants and retail. The tourism industry pumps \$2.6 billion into our economy every day. That is more than \$30,000 per second.

I will say one other thing about tourism. As we worry about automation, as we worry about artificial intelligence, as we worry about a global economy that is going to eviscerate some of our core industries, tourism is one thing that cannot be taken away from us. If people want to go to Los Angeles, if people want to go to Cleveland, if people want to go to Hawaii, if people want to go to St. Louis, MO, or Kansas City, MO, or Florida, these are jobs that cannot be taken away. So if you want to infuse cash into an economy, create a tourism economy—all of these jobs and all of this revenue will be under threat if this works out the way they want it to work out because the dollar will be so strong that Americans will want to travel abroad and foreigners will want to travel far, far away from us.

Why are we punishing consumers and small businesses? Why are we putting entire industries at risk? House Republicans will tell you it is because they think the corporate tax is too high, but here is the truth: Right now, major corporations have huge teams of tax lawyers who set up fake shell companies so that they get around paying Federal taxes at all, or they abuse loopholes to drastically lower what they owe to the U.S. Government. That is why we see some corporations that end up paying zero dollars in Federal income tax year after year even though they are making a healthy profit in the United States.

Together, Republicans and Democrats should be going after these tax dodgers. Instead of just getting rid of loopholes, they have decided to tax consumers. This makes no sense, and that is why we have to stop it.

Last week, we saved healthcare for 24 million Americans because people