

To those who suffered enough already, my message is this: We hear you. Congress is acting.

I commend the House and the administration for making this important advance last week. Now the Senate will do its work. The administration will also continue doing its part to deliver relief and stabilize the healthcare markets as best it can. This process will not be quick or simple or easy, but it must be done. It is the least Members of both parties owe to the countless of Americans who continue to suffer under Obamacare, and the countless more who will be hurt if we don't act.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING LEGISLATION

Mr. President, second, let me commend the Senate for voting last Thursday to pass the funding bill. I mentioned last week some of the many important provisions it contained, all of which the President has now signed into law. The largest border-security funding increase in a decade—now law. The critically needed down payment on restoring our military readiness—now law.

The bill also kept in place an important free speech protection. Yet Democrats are now trying to pressure and intimidate the SEC into ignoring something we just passed on a bipartisan basis. For years, Democrats have pressured the SEC rulemaking process to curb and regulate political speech, despite agreement in our funding bills to prevent the Commission from doing just that.

This is not a new page in their playbook. When we first passed this crucial protection in 2015, Democrats appealed to the SEC to actually ignore the law. This time, however, they have gone in an even more extreme direction. Now the Democrats no longer have the administration to stifle speech through the SEC, the IRS, or HHS. They are trying to intimidate private citizens and public companies by telling those citizens and companies what is in their "best interest." This kind of bullying behavior is part of a broader pattern we have seen repeated by the left time and again in similar circumstances—suppression of the viewpoints with which they disagree and forcing Americans into a choice: Tell us your political ideology or be silent.

I have called the left out for intimidation tactics and speech suppression efforts before. I am warning them again today, and I will continue to stay vigilant and defend the First Amendment moving forward.

For now, I would like to highlight a couple of other important provisions in the funding bill that are now law. One is the miners' health provision I was proud to secure, a critical lifeline that will permanently protect healthcare benefits for thousands of retired coal miners in States like Kentucky.

Another is the provision of significant new resources that can be used to combat the prescription opioid and heroin crisis. It is the latest of many significant steps we have taken to tackle this terrible epidemic.

Today, we can take another step forward by advancing the nomination of Scott Gottlieb to head the FDA. I will have more to say on Dr. Gottlieb later, but for now, I will note that he is incredibly qualified for this position, and I am sure he will be an ally for States that continue to struggle with the opioid crisis because the FDA has a critical role to play.

Let's be clear, there is a lot more to be done. States like Kentucky have been hit hard by this crisis, especially our rural communities. In fact, there are a lot of struggles that are particularly pressing in rural America, and several provisions in the government funding bill that can help—provisions to, for instance, advance broadband development, promote safe and clean drinking water, and to help reclaim and develop abandoned mine sites in coal country, among other priorities. Those are just a few of the things that can help rural communities.

There are other actions we can take as well. One is of particular importance to our colleagues from Alaska, Senators MURKOWSKI and SULLIVAN. Majority Whip CORNYN and I have been consulting with them about the Secure Rural Schools Program, which helps rural counties and schools whose economies have been hit hard by steeply declining timber revenues from our public lands. Senators HATCH and WYDEN introduced a bill to reauthorize the program just last week, and it was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, where Senator MURKOWSKI is the chair. This bill is important to Kentucky, as well. I look forward to working with Chairman MURKOWSKI, Senator SULLIVAN, and all the bill's advocates to find a path forward for it this year.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first I want to thank the majority leader for speaking about the agreement that the House and Senate came to on the appropriations bills, the spending bills. We may not agree on emphasis and what the most important things are, but we certainly agree that it was a good effort that moved things forward, and I was proud to be part of it.

#### KENTUCKY DERBY

Mr. President, I note another thing that might tie the majority leader and the minority leader together—pride in Saturday's Kentucky Derby. The majority leader is very proud of the Ken-

tucky Derby. It is one of the leading events in his State. I know he attends religiously.

I am particularly proud because the horse that won was owned and trained and guided by two Brooklynites. I salute them for their success. Vinnie Viola, one of the two, is a close friend of mine. I have known him for a long time, and I know him well. As many of you know, he was being considered for Secretary of the Army. He would have been a good one. He withdrew because of the financial issues that he was too involved in with companies he owned, but he is a good man. He comes from St. Cecilia's Parish on the Greenpoint-Williamsburg border of Brooklyn. We are all proud and hope that his horse goes all the way. Maybe I can be at Belmont and see him win the Triple Crown. Anyway, that is a nice link between the majority leader and the minority leader.

#### FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Mr. President, yesterday, the people of France took part in a time-honored tradition of a democratic people: the election of a new President. We here in the Senate congratulate Emmanuel Macron on his win and look forward to the continuing deep and longstanding friendship between our two countries.

Unfortunately, the elections in France were victim to a malicious attempt to distort the results through a coordinated cyber attack on one of the candidates, much as Hillary Clinton's campaign was targeted in our elections. In the waning days of the French election, according to reports, Macron's emails were hacked and leaked to the public, potentially with some altered information included, by agents believed to originate in Russia. The hack was then promoted and spread by far-right activists around the globe, some of whom reside here in the United States. It was *deja vu* all over again. Russia elevated old school propaganda tactics and techniques using new school methods, spreading misinformation with an army of paid "trolls" and computer bots, aided and abetted by far-right activists here in the United States.

It seems that Putin and the international far right have formed an unholy alliance. The goal of this alliance is not necessarily to promote one candidate over another, one party over another, though that is part of it. Their true goal is to destabilize and subvert democratic societies, to cast doubt on the outcome of free and fair elections, to hobble democratically elected leaders before they even take office, and to degrade the alliances and international regimes that have created so much stability, strength, and shared prosperity in the post-World War II era.

Despite Macron's win yesterday, we would be foolish to think that this unholy alliance will not use the same tactics again in upcoming European elections and, even more important to those of us in this country, in upcoming American elections.

Make no mistake about it—Mr. Putin has no loyalty to any one person or President. Whatever is good for Russia at the moment, whatever hurts the United States the most, that is what he will pursue. This is an issue that should provoke grave concern in both parties. He may favor one party one day and another party the next. It should compel us, together—Democrats and Republicans—to take action against this new threat.

This afternoon, the Judiciary Committee will hear from former Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates and former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper. Later this week, the Intelligence Committee will hold its annual worldwide threats hearing. I sincerely hope these two committees will cover these issues in their hearings and beyond.

We should begin an extended bipartisan discussion about how to combat foreign information operations campaigns and safeguard the integrity of democratic elections all over the world and, most importantly, in our own country. It is no less serious than this: The integrity of our democracy, which has thrived, blessedly, for over 240 years could well be at stake.

#### TRUMPCARE

Now, Mr. President, on healthcare, last week House Republicans passed the latest version of TrumpCare after a failed attempt earlier this year. When they see this version, the majority of Americans will think it is even worse than the first version.

This partisan bill will dramatically increase the cost of health insurance for those who need it most, including older Americans, and lower the quality of coverage.

TrumpCare would mean 24 million fewer Americans will be without health insurance.

It would hike premiums by 20 percent in the first few years, and average costs for the middle class could go up by more than \$1,500 a year. Middle-class people can't afford that kind of money. If you are struggling to make it into the middle class, TrumpCare could raise your costs by up to \$4,000, putting you in an even worse pickle.

It makes it possible for insurers to charge older Americans as much as five times the amount they charge younger people, and States could make this ratio even greater if they wanted. Under the first TrumpCare bill, someone making about \$20,000 could have his or her—someone who is 63 years old—premiums go up from something like \$1,500 or \$2,000 all the way to over \$10,000 a year. This will be devastating for senior citizens, those 50 to 65. At 65, they get Medicare. They are in decent shape. But when they are older and not under Medicare, they could get clobbered by this bill after working so hard. And that is the time when you start getting susceptible to so many serious illnesses.

TrumpCare would devastate our rural areas by decimating Medicaid, which

rural areas rely on. Limiting subsidies to lower income Americans, many of whom live in rural areas, TrumpCare would put insurance for rural Americans even further out of reach.

Many rural hospitals are the largest employers in their areas. We have many in New York State, in Upstate New York. They would be shortchanged by this bill. These hospitals—often the largest employers in our rural counties and the only providers of healthcare for scores and sometimes hundreds of miles around—might be forced to lay off thousands of workers. Many of these rural hospital leaders say that if TrumpCare passed, they would have to close. There would be hundreds out of work in an area where it is not easy to find work, and for those who don't work in the hospitals, it would be harder to get to the hospitals. We all know how important it is to get there quickly when, God forbid, a stroke or some other serious illness occurs.

Maybe most troubling of all, TrumpCare would now eliminate crucial consumer protections in our healthcare system, including the ones that protect Americans with pre-existing conditions. Every family in this country knows someone who has a preexisting condition. That sounds like a fancy word. What does it mean? Diabetes, chronic asthma, cancer, things like that. If you live in a State that opts out of this requirement, you will have to jump through so many hoops to maintain access to care, and even then it likely won't be affordable. It is unimaginable. You are a parent. Let's say you are 40 years old, husband and wife, and your child gets cancer. You can't get the coverage that under present law the insurance company has to give you or keep with you, and you watch your child suffer. That is inhumane.

How, for ideological purposes, the folks in the House could have first eliminated it and now made it almost unattainable for so many millions of Americans—unfathomable. We fixed the problem in our healthcare system because we had heard so many horrible stories. The Republican bill brings it back from the dead.

The way the House bill was put together in such a secretive and slapdash way, it is barely legislation. It well could be a menace to millions of American families. It means that the Senate should not even come close to passing a bill like this. It makes healthcare for working families, rural Americans, older Americans, and veterans much poorer and at the same time gives massive tax breaks to the wealthy. Some say that is the motivation of some in the House. To pay for these tax breaks for people making over \$250,000 a year—and they get a big break—cut back healthcare on everybody else or on so many others. That is wrong. That is wrong.

It does, frankly, exactly the opposite of everything President Trump promised he would do on healthcare. He said: Lower costs, better care, insuring

everyone. His words. President Trump said he would not cut Medicare or Medicaid. His bill does both. TrumpCare is a giant broken promise for the working people, the hard-working people of this great country of ours.

House Republicans rushed it through without hearings and without much debate or even a final CBO score. The final version was posted 8 hours before Members had to vote on it. Some of the very same Republicans who during the ObamaCare debate chanted "Read the bill" didn't even look at the final legislation, let alone study it. That is a breathtakingly irresponsible thing to do on a bill that will affect almost one-fifth of our economy and the healthcare of millions of Americans. I am not surprised our Republican colleagues wanted to rush it through. The more the American people see it, the less they will like it, just like with their first bill, which is why the first bill didn't pass and why the second one is in so much trouble here in the Senate.

To borrow Speaker RYAN's catchphrase, there is a better way to reform our healthcare system. Instead of a partisan process, rushing through bills in the dead of night—no hearings, no debate, no score, no input from the other party—both parties could start working together on improving our healthcare system.

Now that the bill is in the Senate's hands, we hope the Republican majority will pursue a bipartisan approach. If they drop their repeal efforts, which are already causing such uncertainty that insurers are pledging to hike rates on Americans next year, we Democrats are willing to work with our Republican colleagues to improve our healthcare system.

In the last few years, we have made a good deal of progress. We have made major improvements in our healthcare system, expanding coverage for over 20 million Americans, bending the cost curve, and protecting folks with pre-existing conditions. Why don't we keep all the good things we have in the system and work on making it even better in a bipartisan way? We want to improve quality, lower costs, reduce the price of prescription drugs, and expand coverage for all Americans. Unfortunately, the House bill does exactly the opposite.

I hope my Republican friends toss this House bill out the window and resist the temptation to follow the same partisan, rushed process. I hope my friends on the other side of aisle drop repeal, which is hurting our healthcare system right now—just the threat of it—and start working with Democrats to make our healthcare better.

#### PARIS AGREEMENT

Finally, Mr. President, a word on the Paris climate agreement. Reports have indicated that the Trump administration is leaning toward withdrawing the United States from the Paris climate agreement. This would be a historic misstep that would massively disadvantage both American businesses