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

and diplomats. It would damage our standing on the world stage and allow China to take the high moral ground and the economic upper hand in combatting climate change. Most importantly, a great step forward made by President Obama to get the entire world community to work in a coordinated and concerted effort to reduce carbon pollution so that the United States does not have to bear the burden and so that China would do much more than it has done—all that would be undone in one fell swoop.

Europe and other countries have warned the Trump administration that abandoning the Paris Agreement could lead to carbon tariffs on U.S. goods, stymying access to global markets for our companies and undercutting our trade position. That is why hundreds of American companies, including 28 Fortune 100 CEOs representing 9 million jobs, support the climate agreement.

There is a giant difference between putting America first and making America an international pariah. The latter approach only undermines our power and erodes our standing in the world. Right now, there are only two countries in the world that are not parties to the Paris Agreement—Syria and Nicaragua, the latter of which objects because they feel the agreement is not strong enough.

Climate change is real. It is driven by human activity. It is happening right now. These are facts. They are not in dispute. Our scientists know it, our businesses know it, the world knows it, and the American people who have experienced such changes in weather and climate know it too. The United States needs to have a seat at the table as the world works together to solve this existential challenge.

I strongly encourage the administration to rethink its position and remain in the agreement.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

REPUBLICAN HEALTHCARE BILL

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to talk as well about the Republican healthcare plan and point out why it is moving on very treacherous territory when it will affect the funding of Medicaid by lessening the amount of Medicaid money that will be spent in the States, because so much of that Medicaid money is going to address the opioid crisis.

The opioid crisis, we found last year—you know, there was a lot of talk about it being in New Hampshire when the eyes of America were on New Hampshire in the New Hampshire primary. But the fact is, it is in every State now. It is particularly so in my State of Florida. There are something like 2,600 deaths that have occurred in Florida as a result of opioid overdoses. So the seriousness with which we are addressing this issue ought to be of extreme concern, and we ought to be doing something about it. Yet a bill just passed by the House of Representa-

tives is doing exactly the opposite. It is going to cut Medicaid. It is a fancy term, cutting Medicaid with a block grant. What it means is that it is going to be capped. That means a State is not going to get any more Medicaid once that cap has been hit, unless the State responds. So, in essence, it is going to cost the States more money. I don't think you will find many States that are in such a fiscal condition that, in fact, they could do that.

So what are we doing? We are harming poor people and the disabled who get their healthcare from Medicare and Medicaid. In fact, we are not only harming all of them, but addressing the opioid crisis will be particularly hurt.

What I want to talk about today is the Republican healthcare plan that passed out of the House last week. This plan is going to increase costs for older Americans. Remember, it is going to go on a ratio. Instead of 1 to 3, or older Americans being charged three times as much in health insurance as younger Americans, it is going to go up to a ratio of at least 1 to 5, and maybe more. So it is going to increase costs for older Americans. It is going to cut Medicaid, and it is going to take healthcare coverage away from tens of millions of people.

Right now as a result of the ACA, there are 24 million people who have health insurance coverage who did not have it before this law was passed in 2010. It is going to reverse that. Do we want to take away healthcare from people who can now have healthcare through Medicaid and/or health insurance because they can now afford health insurance? Is that really a goal the United States wants to do—to take away healthcare through private health insurance? I don't think that is what we want to do, but that is what the House of Representatives' Republican healthcare bill has done.

If we just look at my State of Florida, there are almost 8 million people who have a so-called preexisting condition. This includes something as common as asthma. That is a preexisting condition. As a former elected insurance commissioner of Florida, I can tell you that some insurance companies would use as an excuse as a preexisting condition something as simple as a rash and say: Because you have a preexisting condition, we are not going to insure you. Under the existing law, the Affordable Care Act, an insurance company cannot deny you with a preexisting condition. Just in my State alone, there are almost 8 million people who have a preexisting condition. Are we going to turn them out on the streets because their insurance company says they are not going to carry them anymore? I don't think that is what we want to do.

The bill allows insurers to charge older Americans at least five times more than what they charge younger adults. Is that what we want to do?

What is the principle of insurance? The principle of insurance is that you

spread the risk. You get as many people in the pool as you can—young, old, sick, healthy—and you spread that risk.

If you get fire insurance on your home, you are paying a premium every month and the insurance company has calculated in an actuarial calculation what it is going to cost you to insure, and you are part of hundreds of thousands of people in that pool who are also insuring against fire damaging their house. It is the same principle with health insurance. So you get young and old, sick and well, and some people with preexisting conditions, and you spread that risk over a lot of people. One of the fallacies we hear is that we can create this by creating a high-risk pool. In other words, we are going to set up some money for people who have really sick conditions, and we are going to take care of them. That is the most inefficient way to do it because insurance is about spreading risk, not concentrating risk, which is what a high-risk pool exactly is. So the House of Representatives, which has concocted this thing called the Republican healthcare plan, has come up with exactly the opposite idea of funding—instead of spreading the risk, concentrating the risk, and then saying that they are going out and getting $8 billion and that is going to pay for it. It is not even going to touch it. It is the most inefficient way to approach the subject of spreading risk, because they don't spread the risk. They concentrate the risk.

What this bill does is that over 10 years it cuts over $800 billion out of Medicaid. You start doing that, and you are going to lose what we know of as Medicaid, a healthcare program primarily for the poor and the disabled.

By the way, isn't it interesting that they cut over $800 billion and save it out of Medicaid, and what did they do in the same bill? They give upwards of $600 billion in tax breaks to those who are at the highest income levels. Let me get this right. It is kind of a reversed Robin Hood. I am going to take from the poor by cutting $800 billion, and I am going to give to the rich by tax breaks for the highest income folks. Is that what we want to do? I don't think so.

Medicaid is a program that guarantees healthcare for millions of Americans, including children, people with disabilities, pregnant women, and seniors on long-term care. Think about that. What am I talking about? It is seniors in long-term care, seniors in nursing homes, who don't have enough resources or enough assets in order to pay for their care in their twilight years. Therefore, they are being paid by Medicaid, and that is the only source of income to take care of them. Is that what we want to cut in order to give a tax break for the highest income group? It ought to be the reverse. That is upside-down thinking.

Last week the Florida Medical Examiners Commission released new data