

already signed on the dotted line and paid the dealer in full.

Republicans in the House were so worried about how bad the CBO score might be, they rushed TrumpCare through—no hearings, no debate, no score. Never mind that this legislation remakes one-sixth of our Nation's economy. It has life-and-death consequences for millions of American families.

Republicans were haunted by the ghost of CBO scores past, so they went ahead without one.

When the CBO analyzed the first version of TrumpCare earlier this year, it concluded that 24 million fewer Americans would have health insurance if it became law. We also learned the bill would gut Medicaid, crush seniors with higher premiums, and would increase out-of-pocket expenses for Americans of all ages with higher deductibles and copays.

Given that there were few differences between the first and second versions of TrumpCare, we can expect that today's CBO analysis will likely show many of the same grave consequences as the first one. Only now, of course, TrumpCare includes a new amendment that allows States to opt out of the requirement to cover people with pre-existing conditions. It is hard to imagine such an amendment would make CBO's score any better than the last, and it could certainly raise a lot of new questions.

Does the deal the Freedom Caucus got with the second version of TrumpCare violate the rules of reconciliation? Will the House have to change the bill and take yet another vote on TrumpCare? We know they don't want to do that.

We also don't know the answer to these questions, and we may not know the answers even after seeing today's CBO analysis. But all of these open questions demonstrate how reckless it was for Republicans to vote on this bill without properly vetting it first.

I yield the floor to my good friend, the senior Senator from Vermont, the former and hopefully future Senate President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive ses-

sion to resume consideration of the Sullivan nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of John J. Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business.

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

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday, we received President Trump's first budget submission. He calls it "A New Foundation for American Greatness." Well, that might get an award for fiction, but it couldn't be further from the truth.

Instead of building a foundation for the American people, it pulls the rug out from under them. This budget has to be understood as something more than just a photo op with a slogan.

The President's budget displays a fundamental lack of understanding of the role of government of, by, and for the people in supporting the middle class, lifting up the most vulnerable among us and serving our values and interests as a Nation. It proposes to cut nondefense discretionary spending by over \$1.5 trillion; that is, \$1,500,000,000 over 10 years, including a \$54 billion cut in fiscal year 2018 and a \$260 billion cut by 2027. This would be a 40-percent cut to nondefense programs in 10 years.

This is not only shortsighted, it is irresponsible and unrealistic. We should be supporting opportunity, and we should be creating jobs, not eliminating them. What this country needs is jobs. We should be caring for our veterans. We should promote our health and the environment. These are important to all people. It doesn't make any difference what political party you belong to. We shouldn't be recklessly slashing vital lifelines to the American people.

Sequestration has had devastating consequences for both defense and non-defense programs. These consequences are going to last a generation. The Trump budget would only extend and deepen those problems.

We are nearing the Memorial Day break, and I ask Members of both sides of the aisle: Let's sit down, and let's have Republicans and Democrats work together, as the Senate is supposed to, and negotiate a budget deal based on parity. We did this in 2013; we did it in 2015. It worked well. Such a deal would allow the Senate to provide appropriations bills that reflect our true, enduring values as a nation.

The Trump budget proposes over \$1.7 trillion in cruel and unsustainable cuts to important mandatory programs that provide a safety net of health and nutrition programs to those who are struggling most in our communities. Can you imagine, in the wealthiest

most powerful Nation on Earth, we are going to cut out programs to help the people most in need?

Many of the cuts in the Trump budget come from the Medicaid Program, where the President doubles down on the dangerous programmatic changes and cuts included in the TrumpCare bill. Not only would enacting this budget make it harder for low-income families to receive health coverage through Medicaid, but the proposal also cuts nearly \$6 billion from the Children's Health Insurance Program, which would force near-poverty children off health insurance.

I know in my own State of Vermont—it is not a wealthy State; it is a small State. But when we started a program to make sure children had healthcare, it was costly at first. In the long run, it saved us all a great deal of money. We were rated every year as the first or second healthiest State in the Nation. You have to have people healthy from the time they are children. You cannot suddenly say: Oh, we are going to spend a fortune when you are adults on illnesses that could have been taken care of when you were children.

The President's budget proposes significant cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which supports food assistance for individuals and families in need. How does the President expect to make America great again if there are hungry children in our schools? Every parent knows a hungry child cannot learn. How can we be the greatest country in the world if we do not offer a helping hand to the most vulnerable among us?

It has been and continues to be my goal that we complete the appropriations process in the Senate the way it is supposed to be done. Each of the 12 appropriations bills deserves debate and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. All Republicans and Democrats vote for the things they support and vote against the things they oppose. That is in the best interest of this country, and I know Chairman COCHRAN shares this goal. As vice chairman, I will work with him to do this.

This budget is an obstacle and not a pathway to this goal. The President's budget proposal is not bipartisan. In fact, I am willing to bet that, if you put the President's budget on the floor today and asked for a vote up or down, even though the Republicans are in the majority in the Senate, it would not pass because it does not make a hint of a gesture toward true bipartisanship. The appropriations process works best when you have bipartisan cooperation. This budget is not in the best interest of the country or of the real priorities of the American people. That is why it would not get even enough Republican votes to pass. It is unbalanced, needlessly provocative, and appallingly shortsighted.

Rural America, including rural States like Vermont, is missing in action in the President's budget. His

budget eliminates key investments in rural communities and leaves them without Federal partnership support for everything from infrastructure development and affordable housing to programs that preserve the environment and provide food for the elderly.

It is a compilation of broken promises to working men and women and struggling families, and it frays the lifelines that help vulnerable families lift themselves into the middle class. This Vermonter does not find that acceptable, and I doubt others do.

Eliminating the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which we call LIHEAP, would leave thousands of Vermonters and thousands throughout this country out in the cold. The government should not be in the business of saying to families: OK, you have a choice. It is 10 degrees outside. You can either have heat, or you can eat. You can either have enough warmth so that you do not freeze to death, or you can have food so that you do not starve to death, but you cannot have both.

We are the most powerful, wealthy Nation on Earth. What a choice to force on people.

From LIHEAP, in my own State, Vermont received nearly \$19 million to help more than 21,000 households in all 14 counties last year. This is a vital lifeline, and it is especially important in rural communities. We cannot slash investments in our rural communities.

We cannot abandon Federal support for cleaning up Lake Champlain. Eliminating the Sea Grant and Geographic programs would be foolish, as it would waste the investments we have already made. It would mean that the money we have put in to clean our lake would end up being lost, and we would have to start all over again.

The large and dynamic ecosystem in Lake Champlain is the largest body of freshwater in the United States outside of the Great Lakes. It borders Vermont, New York, and Canada and is a treasure, but we cannot stand still. We do not want it to become polluted like other bodies of water throughout our country. You either advance or you slip behind, and once you start slipping behind, it becomes an escalating matter.

The budget is full of cuts that advance the administration's antiscience, know-nothing-ism agenda. It eliminates thousands of scientists and shuts off funding for research into cures for everything from Alzheimer's to cancer. You cannot say to people who are trying to find a cure for cancer and so many other diseases: Oh, we are going to cut your money for a few years, turn everything off, send the scientists home, and maybe in a few years we might give you money again.

You cannot do that with medical research. The University of Vermont would lose millions of dollars for valuable research—research that you cannot pause and hope to resume. We are so close to finding a cure for most kinds of cancer, just as we did years

ago with polio. Are we going to turn that off? Are we going to say to the American people: We want to have a sloganizing budget. Sorry. When your grandchildren come along, maybe someday, somebody will restore this science and will find a cure for cancer.

This budget not only denies the reality of climate change, but it eliminates all of the Environmental Protection Agency's climate programs, from voluntary incentives to programs that seek to prevent further damage to public health and environmental quality. Climate change is very real, and we are at a critical moment. Now is not the time to turn back the progress we have been making.

The President has promised jobs, jobs, jobs. I would love to see jobs, jobs, jobs in this country, but under his budget, an estimated 4 million people, including veterans, would lose access to employment and training services next year. Four million Americans would lose that promise of a job. He would eliminate almost \$4 billion from Pell grants. You do not create jobs by denying young people access to affordable higher education or by slashing job training.

Cutting the State Department's budget by more than 30 percent shows a clear lack of understanding of the vital role of soft power in our national security. The Secretary of Defense said: If you are going to cut the State Department's budget this way, you had better give me money to buy more bullets, because I am going to need them.

The budget would eliminate life-saving nutrition programs. It would impede our ability to promote stability in increasingly volatile regions of the world. America is not made safer by failing to feed the hungry.

As Defense Secretary Mattis has said, soft power is fundamental to our national security, which has been said by Secretaries of Defense and military leaders in both Republican and Democratic administrations.

The Trump budget would have serious and harmful consequences for our economy, for working families, for those who are struggling, for our environment, for health, for the seed corn of cutting-edge scientific and technological research, and for our national security. This is foolish, and it is not acceptable. You do not turn these things on and off to make a sound bite. Sound bites do not make America strong, and sound bites do not continue the greatness of America. Tough choices keep America great and help the American people.

I would remind the White House that the power of the purse rests with Congress. As vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I intend to exercise that power, and I will work with Chairman COCHRAN in laying out a bipartisan path forward.

Mr. President, there are far too many illogical, arbitrary, and harmful cuts in spending and wholly unbalanced priorities in the President's proposed fis-

cal year 2018 budget to list at one time. I will have plenty more to say about that in the weeks and months ahead, but I do want to take a moment to highlight one, as it illustrates the foolhardy way this Administration has sought to appease right-wing ideologues rather than do what is truly in the national interest.

For fiscal year 2017, the Congress—Republicans and Democrats—agreed to appropriate \$607.5 million for international family planning programs. Under our law, none of those funds can be used for abortion. They are for contraceptives and services like education and counseling to promote voluntary family planning in the world's poorest countries and, by doing so, to reduce reliance on abortion, reduce child mortality, improve maternal and child health, and increase opportunities for women and girls.

These programs have a long track record. There is abundant, indisputable data to show they are effective and they save lives, and they illustrate that, while we may have fundamental differences about whether women should have the right to abortion, there is broad agreement about the importance of family planning.

For fiscal year 2018, the Trump Administration proposes to eliminate funding for international family planning as a way to "protect life." That may be an appealing sound bite, but that's all it is. For every \$10 million reduction in funding for family planning and reproductive health programs, the data shows that approximately 440,000 fewer women and couples receive contraceptive services and supplies, resulting in 95,000 additional unintended pregnancies, including 44,000 more unplanned births, 38,000 more abortions, and 200 more pregnancy-related deaths.

How does that protect life? The evidence is overwhelming that the absence of family planning not only means more unsafe abortions but higher birth rates, 95 percent of which occur in the poorest countries that cannot feed or provide jobs for their people today.

I would say to the ideologues in the White House who think that the way to protect life is to cut off funding for family planning: They don't know what they are talking about. These are the same people who support vastly expanding the Mexico City Policy beyond President Ronald Reagan and both President George H.W. Bush and President George W. Bush, to all global health funding. In fact, they will be responsible for more abortions, higher rates of child mortality, higher rates of maternal death, and greater suffering.

This is a shocking proposal. They either don't realize how much harm and suffering it would cause, or they don't care. Can you imagine if our government, in addition to trying to outlaw abortion, tried to take away the contraceptives Americans rely on to prevent unwanted pregnancies? Tens of millions of Americans depend on access

to modern family planning services every day. The outcry would be immediate, and it would be deafening.

I am confident that the Congress will reject this unwise and cruel proposal. It would be unconstitutional in this country, and it should not be imposed on millions of impoverished people in the developing countries who depend on our assistance.

I would note the importance of it. We had a man whom I admired greatly in this body, a Republican chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Mark Hatfield. He was strongly anti-abortion but was an honest and good man who said that we had to have these family planning programs because without them, the number of abortions would skyrocket, that the number of deaths at birth would skyrocket, and that we would have higher birth rates, 95 percent of which would occur in the poorest countries that could not feed or provide jobs for their people.

Let's not do that again. Let's not make policy by sound bite. Let's make policy as to what is best for our country and that best respects the values of America—values that we have tried to demonstrate throughout the world. We also try to demonstrate that to our own country no matter where you are, whether you are Republican or Democrat or Independent, whether you are poor or rich, rural or urban. Let's work on what is the best for America, not on a budget that tries to polarize America and pits one group against another.

Mr. President, on this table I have on the floor, I note that it shows how we, at the Pentagon, have money to put into a border wall at the cost of the Department of Agriculture, clean energy, climate change, the environment, education, foreign aid, infrastructure, healthcare, the middle class, civil rights, labor unions, nutrition programs, child nutrition, and community investments. If we want to spend \$40 billion on a wall that will make no sense and have the taxpayers pay for it—easy—let's vote it up or down. I do not think the American people want it. They would rather see that money be spent on programs that educate people, that create jobs, that improve science and find cures for cancer and others, not for a wall that we will pay for and that nobody else will pay for.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postclosure time on the Sullivan nomination expire at 3 p.m. today and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider

be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise to discuss problems that affect almost every aspect of our everyday life no matter who we are, where we live, our level of income, or any other distinction that might be possible to make. These problems have to do with America's surface transportation system.

Like most Nebraskans, I believe infrastructure is a core duty of the Federal Government. It represents investment in our economy, public safety, and national security. In the Senate, much of my work has been focused on removing unnecessary obstacles to the flow of goods, materials, and, most importantly, people along our Nation's surface transportation networks. Through legislation and with Executive orders, we did lower the coefficient of friction on these systems. We can lower that enough that people and products can get where they need to go quicker and at a lower cost. I have been proud to support several pieces of legislation to do just that.

In 2015, Congress passed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act—the FAST Act. It was our first long-term highway bill in more than a decade. As chairman of the Surface Transportation Subcommittee in the Senate, I was glad to help steer it to final passage.

I am also proud to have authored a significant number of its provisions. For example, the bill includes a new national strategic freight program that provides every State with annual guaranteed funding. Because of the freight program, States will have greater flexibility to work with key stakeholders and local officials to develop strategic investments in transportation. The program funnels transportation funds to States and allows them to decide on their terms how to use it. By dedicating funding for rural and urban freight corridors, the program enhances the flow of commercial traffic, and it increases safety on our Nation's roads.

The true beauty of this program is that it offers States the opportunity to make critical investments to best meet their specific geographic and their specific infrastructure needs. Nebraska can elect to invest in a rail grade crossing or a truck parking lot along a rural

road. California could choose to invest in ondock rail projects at our Nation's largest port complex located just outside of Los Angeles. It works for all States without leaving any behind.

The FAST Act was an important first step, but there is more to be done. President Trump has spoken frequently about the need to invest in our transportation infrastructure. Just yesterday, the administration released a set of principles for reexamining how we do that. I am encouraged to see these proposals that will give States greater flexibility to develop our infrastructure as well as reduce unnecessary regulations that delay these very important projects.

The proposal also talks about providing long-term solutions, which is something I have long supported. This is critical for States to develop, construct, and maintain infrastructure. Last week, at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing, we heard an update from Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao. She committed to working closely with Congress as we continue to develop commonsense solutions for our infrastructure needs. She outlined some of the proposals the Department of Transportation is reviewing to include in this infrastructure package. During that hearing—the Presiding Officer was there as well—the Secretary told me she is committed to working closely with my colleagues and me to develop a national infrastructure policy.

I also brought up the issue of delays due to burdensome regulations like the National Environmental Policy Act permitting process that directly affects Nebraska projects. To address these delays, the Nebraska Unicameral unanimously passed legislation that would allow the Nebraska Department of Roads to assume the NEPA permitting process. NDOR has sent a letter to the Federal Highway Administration to begin the implementation of this program, and that could take up to 18 months to complete.

I asked the Secretary for an update on the progress of the application, and she assured me the Department is following it closely. She said: "We know the issue, we are tracking it, and we will continue to pay attention." Furthermore, Secretary Chao explained that the administration "will not specify any list of projects" in an infrastructure plan. States know their transportation needs best, not the Federal Government. The larger the role States have from start to finish in developing their own infrastructure, the more they can direct funding to the projects that directly affect their citizens.

For the benefit of families across America in both our urban and our rural areas, we need to look for out-of-the-box solutions to ensure that our infrastructure is up to date. That is why I have introduced the Build USA Infrastructure Act, which looks to solve two major challenges to our transportation