

Identifies and reduces tax regulatory burdens; "Hire America, Buy America"; Establishes a collection and enforcement of antidumping and countervailing duties and violations of Trade and Customs laws; Creates an order of succession within DOJ; Revokes federal contracting executive orders.

Mr. INHOFE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, this weekend we will mark the beginning of the Memorial Day remembrances that we do every year. Memorial Day, of course, is on Monday, but many activities will begin even today and tomorrow to honor those who have died in the defense of our country. These men and women had families, they had dreams for the future, and they had their whole lives ahead of them. But they did something extraordinary.

I remember that a few years ago I had the opportunity to be at the American cemetery in Normandy. At the end of the tour of that cemetery, the guide had us sit down on a ledge with the English Channel to our back and those 8,000 graves in front of us that we had just looked at and had talked about the sacrifices made. Then he flipped open his computer and, at that exact same spot, on the 20th anniversary of the D-day, General Eisenhower—former President Eisenhower—in 1964 was talking to Walter Cronkite. He said to Walter Cronkite: You know, Walter, my son John graduated from West Point on D-day, and over the last 20 years, I have watched him and his wife raise their family and have the experiences they have had, and, he said, many times I have thought about these young men and the life they didn't get to lead because of what they were asked to do.

Particularly, you had the person sitting there 20 years later who ultimately was the person who asked them to do what they were asked to do, and you understand that that is the kind of decision he thought about. It is the kind of sacrifice we should think about as we think about those who didn't get to pursue their dreams and didn't get to see the family they had grown up with or have the family they would have liked to have had because they laid down their lives so that we could take care of our families, so that we could realize our dreams, so that we could enjoy the freedoms that our Nation is truly blessed with and that make us truly extraordinary in our belief and our defense of freedom, not only for ourselves but for people everywhere.

We are grateful for all that these people have done, and this is a time of year that we particularly set aside to honor those fallen heroes—the soldiers, the sailors, the airmen, the marines, the people in the National Guard and the Coast Guard and the Reserve—called up and losing their lives in that cause.

Also, it is good for us to remember those who served and who were willing to make that sacrifice, if necessary, and often have their own burdens they carry from their service. Maybe that burden was just simply losing those years when others were already at a civilian job that they would only be able to go to later.

I am honored to represent nearly 500,000 Missouri veterans. As a member of the bipartisan Congressional Veterans Jobs Caucus, I am committed to helping our veterans find good-paying jobs as civilians. We took an important step in that direction recently when President Trump signed the Honoring Investment in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans Act, or the HIRE Vets Act. I believe it may have been the first bill the Senate passed. I was pleased to be the principal sponsor of that bill, and it was the underlying bill on the continuing resolution that funded the government on April 17, and so it became law.

It addresses the fact that transferring from military to civilian life represents a number of challenges. It represents challenges for our servicemembers, and that transfer can be a difficult personal decision to make, but it is also difficult to navigate the civilian employment market and to find out who is recognizing the skills and the lessons learned by veterans and who may not be quite at the forefront of that.

The HIRE Vets Act helps to facilitate that transition by providing veterans more information on employers that offer benefits and opportunities geared toward hiring veterans. Many employers say they are veteran friendly, and many employers are veteran friendly, but there has really been no standard that anyone could look at to determine whether that was true or not—no standard for what employers aspire to do at their workplace or no standard that future veterans and employees can seek out.

This would be much like a LEED standard on energy efficiency. If you have that standard on your building or at your workplace, people know exactly what that means. This bill asks the Department of Labor to establish a similar kind of standard for those who are the best, for those who are nearly as good, and for those who are almost as good as them to see what people are doing—a tiered recognition of employers to see what they are doing to welcome, encourage, recognize, and promote veterans.

Some of the criteria that could go into that evaluation would include the percentage of new hires at your company who are veterans, the percentage of the overall workforce that is made up of veterans, what type of training and leadership activities are made available that are designed to maximize what a veteran uniquely has learned as a veteran, and what other benefits and resources are offered—things such as tuition assistance,

things that encourage veterans to go ahead and get one other category of training or more.

Creating a national standard will help veterans narrow down their employment options and focus their job search efforts on the companies that recognize the value of their military service and what that value will bring to their new workplace, and also companies that will provide a long-term career path where those skills are used and appreciated. So this is a step in the right direction.

I have talked to the Secretary of Labor just this week, who said they intend to have this plan up and running by the end of this year, quicker than they were required to do but certainly not quicker than we hoped they would be able to do. So this is going to be a priority at the office of the Secretary of Labor, as veterans should be a priority for our society.

Today, we have the most powerful military in the world, but we really need to recognize—and I think we do recognize—that behind that military stands supporting families. Families are the backbone of the military today. They provide the kind of support that servicemembers need. They provide the encouragement for the difficult challenges of going from one post to another and one job to another. I think there are ways we can recognize those families and what they do in a better way.

I was able this year again to introduce the Military Family Stability Act. Military families have changed over the years. Our military stays in service longer. The skill levels they acquire are more valuable than might have been the case in the past. As the military gets more technical, having invested the time and training on someone in service is a more significant investment than it may have been at another time. Our policies that affect military families haven't kept pace with our investment in people who are serving.

According to a study by the Military Officers Association of America, 90 percent of military spouses who are women are either unemployed or underemployed. More than half of those people cite concerns about their spouse's service as a deterrent to their prospective employers: having to leave quickly without notice, not getting the ability to transfer from one State to another, or when their training or licensing has happened in the State they were living in.

Too often, military spouses have to end up sacrificing their own career. I think, in any case, we would understand there is some sacrifice here when you are moving from place to place, but there doesn't need to be a needless sacrifice.

So the Military Family Stability Act would allow families to address a problem. I consistently hear from military spouses and people serving in the military who talk about the challenges

their spouses face in Missouri and across the Nation.

An ill-timed move takes a child needlessly out of school a month early or makes a child start a school year a month late or prevents a husband or wife from being able to commit to a 9-month teaching contract or start a graduate program on time because the move they had anticipated happening is delayed. I have had people come and testify on exactly those two specific things and others that made a big difference in their family and their family's enthusiasm about the service they were jointly giving to the country.

For many families, if you make that move early, the family has to absorb the move. I think there is a better way to do this. I think we can increase stability in military families. This bill enables the servicemember or family to either move early or remain at their current duty station for up to 6 months while the spouse or the serving parent begins a new assignment. Now, for that to happen—the spouse moving early to the new assignment—the servicemember moving early or staying a little bit later has to absorb their single service-person expenses for staying. But as to the much more significant expenses, the family goes at a reasonable time when it is better for the family to go.

I am proud that this bill has garnered widespread support from numerous military family and veteran service organizations, including the National Military Family Association, the Military Officers Association of America, and others.

I am also pleased that at this moment, as we reintroduce the bill, Senator GILLIBRAND and I, Secretary Mattis—a former marine and decorated General, one of our most distinguished officers, who has seen the impact on families as he served—staff members at the Department of Defense, Senator MCCAIN, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and his staff have been working with us to iron out the details on a bill that they all support and agree will help our military men and women and their families.

So the HIRE Vets Act and the Military Family Stability Act are bipartisan. They are commonsense measures that really get us closer to our goal of ensuring that we provide the support for servicemembers and veterans who have defended us.

We will also continue our oversight on the Veterans' Administration to ensure that those who have served receive more choices and that their healthcare benefits and other benefits they have earned are benefits that they will receive. There is really no reason they can't receive many of those benefits where they would prefer to go as opposed to where the government has previously thought were the only options. Veterans' choice is important. They chose to serve. We can now give them more choice than we have in the past to decide what works for them and their families.

So as we approach Memorial Day, I know that all the Members of the Senate are appreciative of those who served and the families who served alongside them. I look forward not only to honoring veterans between now and next Monday but between next Monday and a year from next Monday, continuing to do those things we can to be sure that those who serve and those who have served are fully appreciated for their service.

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

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

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, there has been a rare outburst of bipartisanship in the Senate this week. It is somewhat amazing, and I think it should be celebrated because Democrats and Republicans agree that the administration's new budget is a complete disaster. It has fallen with a bipartisan thud here in our Chamber.

I think there is a reason for that. Throughout the campaign and now as President, President Trump has made a lot of promises. He has promised a balanced budget. He has promised no cuts to Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. He has promised the best healthcare for everyone at the lowest cost. He has promised massive new tax cuts. He has promised a great wall paid for by Mexico.

Skeptics, including myself, have awaited this budget to see the hard choices, the details, and the math that could make sense of those promises. After all of those words—and there were a lot of them—and all of those promises, we now have a budget, and it makes no sense.

Let's walk through a few of the numbers. Every year, our country collects on average about 18 percent of our gross domestic product in taxes—the equivalent of about 18 percent of our gross domestic product in taxes, and every year we spend just over 21 percent of the GDP. That gap is why our national debt continues to grow. Instead of closing the gap, where you have spending here and revenue here—instead of closing that gap, the President's budget proposes further tax cuts, bringing down the share of the GDP we are collecting and increasing defense spending while promising to balance the budget.

Just this morning, President Trump sent his Secretary of the Treasury to Congress to explain how all this adds up. He couldn't do it. He couldn't do it. The only way the math in this budget works, the only way that the gap closes, is by assuming that magically our economy will grow faster than any

serious economist in the country predicts and that, as a result of that outside growth, the government would take in an extra \$2 trillion in taxes. That is the plan. That is the \$2 trillion assumption about the finances of our country and the potential burden of the next generation of Americans, some of whom are sitting here with us today.

Even if you accept that math—which I don't—but even if you accept that math, we have another problem. The administration's budget also proposes massive tax cuts that it claims will not add to our debt because of the same \$2 trillion in new tax revenues. As has been pointed out, that is double-counting, plain and simple, the kind that would cause any college freshman in America to fail his or her accounting exam. This would be like depositing the same paycheck at two different banks and claiming that your salary had doubled, then increasing your spending on groceries, travel, housing, and everything else as if it were actually true that your income would be double. You would go broke, and that is what is going to happen here.

It is no wonder that a Republican Congressman said that this budget was like building a house on what he called "a sandy foundation." The administration's only hope of getting this through is if Americans, including some of the President's strongest supporters, ignore the math and ignore the fact that his proposal actually grows our national debt, cuts Social Security, cuts Medicaid, and savages countless programs that protect vulnerable Americans and invest in our future.

On Medicaid in particular, a lot of us are scratching our heads at the math, let alone the real world pain that would result, should this proposal become law.

The healthcare bill, which passed on the floor of the House—and I said about that bill that even if I think about the townhall meetings I have had in Colorado, where people object most strenuously and most strongly to what is called ObamaCare or the Affordable Care Act, if you set out to design a bill less responsive to the people in my townhall who opposed ObamaCare—if you set out to draft a bill less responsive, you couldn't do a better job than they did in the House of Representatives.

I thank the Presiding Officer for his work on healthcare because I can actually recognize the concerns of my constituents in his fine work as opposed to what we have seen in the House.

One of the things that are so disturbing about that bill is that they are slashing Medicaid by around \$830 billion. That is 20 percent of the Medicaid Program that has been cut in that House budget. This new budget would gut the program by another \$600 billion. Combined, that would cut Medicaid nearly in half by 2026—in half. That means millions more Americans. This is why the CBO—the Congressional Budget Office—told us that 23