

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 serviceperson 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

million Americans would lose their health insurance as a result of the bill—because it would mean that the minute all of this happened, people would struggle to get quality healthcare services.

In addition to the 23 million who are going to lose it because of the plan the Republican majority passed in the House, in my home State of Colorado—and I do not think it is very different from a lot of places in this regard—half of the people who are on Medicaid are kids. Are they supposed to go to work, or do we want them in school and having the benefit of a healthcare program?

Do we expect seniors in long-term care to go back to work? There are millions of Americans who are living in nursing homes, having spent their entire life savings for the privilege of being in long-term care or in nursing homes that are paid for by Medicaid. What are they supposed to do? Are we going to empty out the nursing homes in the United States?

I think, to some extent or another—I always get into trouble with my staff every time I say this, but I am going to say this again here—every one of us in this Senate is a conservative if “conservative” means to protect the institutions of our government and to think carefully before we leap. There is nothing conservative about this proposal on Medicaid. It is a radical proposal—a 20-percent Medicaid cut. We have not seen anything like that in our history.

What is amazing about this budget is not just that the math does not add up but that its targets are shockingly clear: rural communities, vulnerable Americans, vital investments in our future. This budget slams communities that are already hurting in our economy. Farmers would face a 21-percent cut to the Department of Agriculture, meaning less help to fight erosion, protect water quality, and improve irrigation. The budget eliminates the TIGER Grant Program entirely, which builds roads, bridges, and train stations all across the country. It cuts the maintenance budget for the U.S. Forest Service by over 70 percent, making it harder to maintain the trails and facilities that support rural outdoor economies.

I invite anybody here and I would welcome anybody to come visit Colorado. That is not a hardship; it is a beautiful place. See the condition that our national forests are in and the work that needs to be done and the conditions under which employees of the Forest Service are being asked to do their jobs. It is not right. It is not fair.

This budget eliminates essential air service which helps connect our most remote areas. Besides water, it is probably the most important lifeblood of our rural communities. It cuts assistance to State and volunteer fire departments, exposing our mountain towns to even greater risk. This is a horrible budget for rural America—horrible.

This budget also turns its back on families who are struggling the most. It eliminates support to heat low-income homes through the winter. That is the reason Democrats and Republicans do not support this budget. It cuts safety inspections for coal miners, while devastating support to fight pollution and clean up toxic sites that disproportionately harm poor communities. It cuts assistance to the homeless and community development block grants—ends it—which promote affordable housing and economic development in low-income areas. It slashes food stamps by 25 percent. It is like the Grinch himself wrote this budget. Nearly half of those who benefit from that program are children—poor children.

This budget not only ignores our duty to ensure that kids in poverty do not go hungry, it also fails to invest in their future. This budget cuts education funding by \$9 billion. It slashes afterschool and summer programs for low-income children. It cuts funds to help teachers become better teachers. It cuts programs to help students work their way through college.

There is not anybody in America who thinks it is right that we are bankrupting families and students because of the high cost of college, which is something that their parents and grandparents did not have to endure because of choices we made then that we are not making today.

Who in his right mind thinks an answer to that is to cut work-study programs? Yet that is in the budget. It takes aim at our next generation. The budget targets next-generation research and technology that we need in order to compete in the 21st century. It slashes funds to the National Science Foundation.

Do you want a reason as to why Republicans and Democrats do not support this budget—why we have bipartisan opposition for it? It is that it cuts the NIH, the National Institutes of Health, by \$8 billion even though its research supported over 330,000 jobs and \$60 billion in economic activity just last year. It cuts research for low-cost, clean energy even though experts predict nearly \$8 trillion of global investment in renewable energy over the next 25 years. It devastates the Department of Energy’s loan program that spurs private investment and pays for itself.

Believe me, I have worked in every level of government. I have been in the private sector, too, and I know there is waste in every level of government. There is waste in the Federal Government. There are programs that make no sense, and there are decisions we make that make no sense. We need to strive every day to become better stewards of taxpayer dollars. I do not think we do a good enough job in this place of oversight, of how taxpayer dollars are being used. Yet this budget does not target waste, and this budget does not target fraud and abuse; it targets who

we are as a nation and what we hope for, for the next generation.

In these times, the American dream is not something we can take for granted. It is the product of choices our forbearers have made and choices we have made—choices to invest in the future, to look out for one another and ensure that all Americans have opportunities to make the most of their God-given potential.

Budgets are more than just dollars and cents; they answer important questions about our vision for the future and our values as Americans. In that sense, it is worth considering how this budget would affect the everyday lives of Americans—of the people who come to our townhalls or the people who are too busy working, trying to provide for their families, to be able to go to our townhalls.

If this budget were to pass, a working mom might lose healthcare for herself and have to worry that her aging mother might not be far behind. She might have to cut back hours at work to pick up her kid whose afterschool program was just canceled. Driving home, she will wonder whether her child’s weeklong cough has anything to do with the air he is breathing or the water he is drinking or whether that dinner was the last of the groceries for the month even though it is only the 25th.

These are the choices our constituents are going to face, and that is not the future we want. It is not an America we would choose for our kids.

(Mr. BLUNT assumed the Chair.)

I am wrapping up here. I know my colleague from Louisiana is here.

The most expensive thing for us to do is to give up on working people, our kids, and on urban and rural communities that are too often forgotten by people in Washington. That, I am afraid, is what this budget does—it gives up. In a sober analysis on real solutions to our problems and our basic commitment to each other, we are as fellow citizens bound by a common destiny, but this does not meet the test.

I look forward to working with Republicans and Democrats, together, to write a budget that actually reflects the will of the American people. I look forward to working with the Presiding Officer and my colleague from Louisiana, who is doing such good work on healthcare.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Colorado for his kind words.

I rise to speak about our Republican effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. I always kind of chuckle when I say the “Affordable Care Act,” as I have a friend back home whose quote for his insurance was \$39,000 for 1 year. That is the un-Affordable Care Act.