

S. RES. 196

Whereas the stability of Lebanon, a pluralistic democracy in the Middle East, is in the interests of the United States and United States allies in the region;

Whereas the United States has provided more than \$2,000,000,000 in assistance to Lebanon in the past decade, including training and equipment for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF);

Whereas the conflict in Syria threatens stability in Lebanon as a result of violent attacks against Lebanese citizens perpetrated by combatants active in Syria, as well as a massive influx of refugees fleeing the conflict;

Whereas the United States has contributed more than \$6,500,000,000 in humanitarian assistance for victims of the conflict in Syria, including for refugees in Lebanon;

Whereas the people of Lebanon have shown great generosity in welcoming more than 1,500,000 refugees from Syria, a refugee population equal to ¼ of its native population;

Whereas Lebanon is hosting more refugees proportionally than any nation in the world;

Whereas the refugee crisis has challenged Lebanon's economy, which faces a national debt that is approximately 140 percent of gross domestic product and underperforming economic growth;

Whereas the LAF have been called into direct conflict with the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) as a result of attacks carried out by the terrorist group in Lebanon;

Whereas the Syrian conflict has placed additional strains on the Government of Lebanon as it continues to confront political deadlock that has kept the presidency vacant for more than two years;

Whereas the unique political constitution of Lebanon hinges on that nation's distinct demographic and social equilibrium;

Whereas the prolongation of the Syrian conflict has the potential to upset the precarious social and political balance in Lebanon;

Whereas the constitution of Lebanon is further undermined by undue foreign influence, particularly by the Islamic Republic of Iran through its terrorist proxy Hizbollah;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1701 in 2006, which calls for the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon and stresses the importance of full control over Lebanon by the Government of Lebanon; and

Whereas Hizbollah continues to violate United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, including by replenishing its stock of rockets and missiles in South Lebanon: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the importance of bilateral United States assistance to the Government of Lebanon in building its capacity to provide services and security for Lebanese citizens and curbing the influence of Hizbollah;

(2) encourages continued coordination between the Department of State, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and humanitarian organizations to ensure that refugees from the conflict in Syria, including those in Lebanon, are supported in such a way as to mitigate any potentially adverse effect on their host countries;

(3) recognizes that it is in the interests of the United States to seek a negotiated end to the conflict in Syria that includes the ultimate departure of Bashar al-Assad, which would allow for the eventual return of the millions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and other countries around the world;

(4) supports full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701; and

(5) recognizes the LAF as the sole institution entrusted with the defense of Lebanon's sovereignty and supports United States partnerships with the LAF, particularly through the global coalition to defeat the terrorist group ISIS.

SENATE RESOLUTION 197—TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT TIME FOR LEGISLATION TO BE READ

Mr. PAUL submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 197

Resolved, That (a) it shall not be in order for the Senate to consider any bill, resolution, message, conference report, amendment between the Houses, amendment, treaty, or any other measure or matter until 1 session day has passed since introduction for every 20 pages included in the measure or matter in the usual form plus 1 session day for any number of remaining pages less than 20 in the usual form.

(b)(1) Any Senator may raise a point of order that consideration of any bill, resolution, message, conference report, amendment, treaty, or any other measure or matter is not in order under subsection (a). No motion to table the point of order shall be in order.

(2) Paragraph (1) may be waived or suspended only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. All motions to waive under this paragraph shall be debatable collectively for not to exceed 3 hours equally divided between the Senator raising the point of order and the Senator moving to waive the point of order or their designees. A motion to waive the point of order shall not be amendable.

(3) This resolution is enacted pursuant to the power granted to each House of Congress to determine the Rules of its Proceedings in clause 2 of section 5 of article I of the Constitution of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 198—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT ANY SWEEPING HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION MUST BE DRAFTED IN PUBLIC UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. TESTER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 198

Whereas the people of the United States deserve and demand that legislation be created through a transparent, bipartisan process to ensure that they can hold their elected representatives accountable;

Whereas the proper functioning of representative democracy requires full transparency in the legislative process;

Whereas it has been widely reported that a group of Senators is working privately in a partisan fashion to craft national health care legislation in the Senate;

Whereas this group is secretly gathering in closed-door meetings that exclude the public and press;

Whereas Senate leadership has refused to commit to holding a single public hearing on this legislation before going directly to the Senate floor for a vote;

Whereas the draft health care legislation under consideration by a secretive group is

one of the largest public policy reforms taken up by Congress in generations;

Whereas this legislation will affect the lives of all people in the United States;

Whereas health care constitutes ⅓ of the gross domestic product of the United States; and

Whereas Congress is elected by the people to serve the people: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the creation of any sweeping health care legislation must be done in a transparent, bipartisan manner in full view of the people of the United States and not behind closed doors.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 11 a.m. on Thursday, June 22; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Billingslea nomination postcloture; finally, that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Billingslea nomination.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of our Democratic colleagues.

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

The Senator from Washington.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, since the first day of this administration, I have heard from women in my home State and nationwide who are fearful of what President Trump will do to their health and rights—from appointing a Supreme Court Justice who has made clear that he opposes the historic ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, to trying at every turn to undermine women's access to safe, legal abortion here in the United States and abroad, to proposing a budget that would defund Planned Parenthood and devastate investments in women's health. I know from letters, calls, emails, tweets, rallies—you name it—that across the country women feel under attack because of this administration's policies and the willingness of Republicans in Congress to make sure they are carried out.

Women are worried and, unfortunately, they have a right to be, especially in this moment. In a matter of

days, Senate Republicans could bring their version of TrumpCare to this floor. As many of us have said, this is the worst bill for women in a generation. It will cut off access to critical healthcare services at Planned Parenthood, our Nation's largest provider of women's healthcare. It will allow our insurance companies to go back to charging women more and interfere with women's constitutionally protected reproductive rights. In fact, at literally every stage of life, TrumpCare would stand in the way of women's access to the healthcare they need.

Under this bill, young girls nationwide would lose Medicaid coverage. College students across the country who go to Planned Parenthood for contraception would find the centers they rely on shuttered. Women would pay \$1,000 more a month for maternity care, and women battling cancer and women who are survivors would have to look ahead to being discriminated against for having a preexisting condition. Senior women would watch their premiums spike by as much as 850 percent because of the age tax Republicans have inexplicitly chosen to include in this bill.

I could go on, but let me just say that since President Trump and Republicans first began trying to jam this bill through, I have heard from countless women who would be impacted by the cruel policies I have just described.

One of them is Kelly. Her son has a developmental disability and he gets Medicaid coverage. There is Jennifer, who is fighting cancer tooth and nail and is now worrying about what is going to happen if the Medicaid expansion goes away. There is Tammy, whose congenital heart disease made pregnancy life threatening and who was able to afford safe and effective contraception because of her insurance coverage. Those are just a few examples. I am so grateful to them and to the many, many others who have spoken out and shared their stories.

We might think that with so many women thinking about how this bill would impact them, with so much at stake for women's health, rights, and financial security should TrumpCare be signed into law, Senate Republicans would want to see what women thought of their version of TrumpCare. But they have made it abundantly and offensively clear that they do not.

They put together a working group of 13 men to draft their version. They negotiated in secret. They wrote this bill in back rooms. Now Senate Republicans are keeping it under lock and key until the very last minute so that women have as little time as possible to see just how badly this bill could harm them and their families. Women aren't going to put up with that, and Democrats aren't either.

I am proud to be here this evening with a number of my Democratic colleagues to call on Senate Republicans to stop hiding their bill from women and bring it out in the light for the scrutiny it deserves.

My Republican colleagues are right, I think, to be ashamed of this version of TrumpCare. But that doesn't mean it should be hidden from view, and we are not going to stop until women across the country get to read the fine print, instead of taking 13 male Republican Senators' word for it.

While this is a truly difficult and frightening time for anyone who believes that women should be able to make their own decisions about their own healthcare and who think politicians should not be able to interfere with those decisions, I have also been truly inspired by the response I have seen to the extreme agenda President Trump and Republicans are pursuing.

Since the first days of this administration, when I was so proud to march with millions of women across this country and the world to stand up for women's health and women's rights, women have continued to lead the fight against this administration's constant efforts to take our country backward. That is exactly what TrumpCare would do.

So let me be very clear. If Senate Republicans continue down this path, if they choose to jam a secret bill through Congress and get it signed into law instead of listening to people in this country and to us and working with us on real solutions to fix our healthcare system, you can be sure that women across the country—who will be forced to pay more for their care or lose it altogether—are going to be ready to make sure Republicans own every ounce of the harm they cause.

So I am here tonight to urge Republicans to make the right choice, and I will join women across the country in holding them fully accountable if they don't.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President I join my colleagues, Senator MURRAY and others, and I thank Senator MURRAY for her leadership on this important issue.

Right now, 13 of our male colleagues are sequestered away somewhere, plotting—and I use that word, and that is an accurate word because that is what it feels like to those of us who are shut out of the process of putting together the Senate bill. These 13 men are plotting how to deprive millions of women across our country access to essential healthcare—women all over our country. That is half of our population. Frankly, it is sad that we are having this debate about the need for openness and transparency that impacts half of our population and that is one-sixth of our economy.

Sadly, it isn't surprising. Republicans in Congress have fought to deny women access to healthcare for decades. Now they have a willing and complicit ally in this crusade—Donald Trump. In their zeal to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the President and his allies in Congress don't appear to be concerned about the collateral damage they leave behind.

For women, this means facing a return to a time when our gender—our very gender—was considered a pre-existing condition. Before the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies could discriminate against women of child-bearing age. They could charge outrageous rates for birth control and contraceptives. Under the ACA, women have secure access to care before, during, and after their pregnancies. They can no longer be charged outrageous rates simply for having a child or be denied access to mental health services if they suffer from postpartum depression. Women can now receive free contraceptive care, like birth control pills and IUDs. But now the President and Republicans in Congress are determined to drag us backward, all in the name of giving the richest Americans a huge tax cut.

Let's be really clear on this. The poorest, oldest, and the most sick people in our country are going to suffer so that the richest people in our country can get a huge tax cut under this bill. We need to do everything we can to fight against all these misguided efforts.

Although we haven't seen the likely monstrosity currently being hatched in secret, we have a pretty good idea of what is going to be in this bill. In the House version of TrumpCare, States have the ability to opt out of the Affordable Care Act's essential health benefits, which include access to birth control, pregnancy, and mental health coverage.

One Republican Congressman even had the audacity to say he shouldn't have to subsidize pregnancy care because he can't get pregnant. How the heck do you think he even arrived on this Earth? I really think this is outrageous. This is an outrageous statement that speaks for itself.

The bill also makes good on a long-standing Republican promise to defund Planned Parenthood, regardless of the cost in lives. Over the past few years, Republicans in Congress have tried everything they could think of to defund Planned Parenthood—passing standalone bills, attaching poison pills to must-pass bills, threatening a government shutdown, and passing TrumpCare in the House. In March, the majority leader held the floor open for over an hour to allow the Vice President time to travel to the Capitol to break a tie to repeal a regulation on title X funding meant to preserve access to Federal family planning services.

I understand that many of my friends on the other side of the aisle have strong feelings about abortion, but I have never been able to understand how this translates into attacking an organization that uses no Federal funds to provide abortions. In fact, Planned Parenthood uses its Federal funding to provide low-cost healthcare to the people in our country who need it most but who can't afford it.

In 2014 alone, Planned Parenthood provided over 600,000 cancer screenings

and over 4 million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted infections. These are real facts, not alternative facts.

I have heard from hundreds of my constituents over the past 6 months about how important Planned Parenthood is to them, and I would like to share a few of their stories.

Tiffany from Honolulu made her first visit to Planned Parenthood when she was 21, under unexpected circumstances during a pregnancy scare. She felt that having a child at that time in her life would be extremely difficult and would have negatively impacted her ability to finish school. During her visit to the clinic, Tiffany took a pregnancy test and discovered she wasn't pregnant. Her caregivers were then able to counsel Tiffany about her sexual health without judgment. They walked her through the different options she had and administered an STD test. She left the clinic with a prescription for birth control.

Kim, a young attorney from my State, recently wrote to my office to tell her story about turning to Planned Parenthood when she faced an unexpected pregnancy. After having a safe and open conversation with the staff at her local Planned Parenthood, Kim decided she was not ready to have a baby and ended her pregnancy. Planned Parenthood gave her the space and opportunity to make the best decision for her. As she recounted to us, "You don't have to like someone's choice, but you don't get to take away their freedom to make it."

The fight against TrumpCare continues, but I am going to do everything I can to protect women's health and their right to control their bodies—to control our bodies.

I urge my colleagues to oppose any measure in TrumpCare that takes women back to the days when our very gender was considered a preexisting condition.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Hawaii for her words and Senator MURRAY for organizing this group of speakers.

I rise today to join my colleagues in making clear that TrumpCare would be a disaster for women in New Hampshire and across the Nation.

Right now Senate Republicans continue to meet behind closed doors on their TrumpCare bill, and the reason they have not been transparent is because they know they can't defend this dangerous bill to their constituents. Throughout the process in the Senate, it has been a group of 13 men—no women—writing a bill that will impact the healthcare of millions of American women. It is not just that a small group has been writing the bill behind closed doors. It is also that once we do eventually see the bill, it is going to be rushed to the floor without a hearing. So we will not have the benefit of feed-

back from our constituents, from stakeholders, from people who understand what the impact of this bill will be. This is simply unacceptable.

To compete economically on a level playing field, women must be able to make their own healthcare decisions. They shouldn't have to pay more than men do for their healthcare. They should be able to visit providers of their own choice who understand and have expertise in women's healthcare needs. The health insurance that is available to women should be equal to that of their male colleagues. That means it should cover their basic healthcare needs.

To fully participate not only in our economy but also in our democracy, women have to be recognized for their capacity to make their own healthcare decisions—just as men are.

I have heard from many constituents whose lives have been changed by being able to get the healthcare they need from the providers they trust. One of those people is Carla from Newfields, NH. As a college student, Carla suffered from significant pain. She needed immediate medical care, so she went to her local Planned Parenthood.

It turned out that her pain was caused by ovarian cysts, and the treatment for those cysts was birth control. As a college student on a limited budget, before the Affordable Care Act had passed, Carla couldn't afford birth control. Because she went to Planned Parenthood, though, she got the treatment she needed at a price she could afford. Her pain went away. She was able to graduate college and eventually start a family—something she might not have been able to do if her underlying condition had not been treated, caught when it was. That was the power of access to appropriate and affordable health care in her life at the right time.

Carla's story is the story of the thousands of New Hampshire women who received primary and preventive healthcare services from Planned Parenthood.

TrumpCare is a disaster for women. TrumpCare defunds Planned Parenthood, which would take away a critical source of care for women. This care includes birth control and breast and cervical cancer screenings. Defunding Planned Parenthood would leave many women in the Granite State and throughout the country without access to care, plain and simple. There aren't enough other providers, as I heard from medical providers throughout my State when I was Governor there, to absorb all of the patients Planned Parenthood cares for now.

TrumpCare also includes harmful language that restricts women's constitutionally protected rights to access abortion services. Additionally, under TrumpCare, if you are a mother, giving birth could now be considered a preexisting condition that insurance companies could use to discriminate against you and charge you more.

TrumpCare would increase the cost to women from maternity care in two ways:

First, it would undermine the requirement that insurance companies must cover essential health benefits, including maternity care. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office says that the House-passed TrumpCare bill would increase out-of-pocket spending for maternity care for women who have private insurance by thousands of dollars per year.

Second, TrumpCare slashes Medicaid funding. Medicaid pays for nearly one-half of all births in the United States, meaning, with the 25-percent cut in expenditures over the next decade that is called for in the TrumpCare bill, that at least some of this maternity coverage would also be cut.

Any cut to Medicaid would disproportionately affect Granite State women, as 62 percent of Medicaid recipients in New Hampshire are women. These cuts would also strain at-risk families because Medicaid covers nearly one in three children across our country and nearly 30 percent of the children in my State of New Hampshire.

It is clear that TrumpCare would continue efforts to play partisan games with a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions and control her own destiny.

It is critical that people in New Hampshire and across our Nation continue to speak out and share their stories about how TrumpCare would impact their lives, and I am going to continue to work with my colleagues to defeat this bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am very pleased to follow my colleague from New Hampshire, Senator HASSAN. She said it very well. This is an extraordinarily important part of the debate.

A Senate vote on TrumpCare is now days away, and that is the case even though the bill remains hidden in the Senate shadows. I am here tonight with my colleagues to try to shine some light on the extraordinary harm TrumpCare is going to do to women's health across the country and also to call on the American people to stand up and say, and say loudly, that this is wrong—wrong because it would be a partisan process that takes away important healthcare rights from women across this country.

First, TrumpCare says that health insurance in America ought to be based on what men need and what women need ought to cost extra. You look back a few years to when the Affordable Care Act set in stone guaranteed insurance benefits to protect everybody who shops on the open market, the private open market, regardless of their gender, no price gouging women just because they are women. Now, however, the Republican plan lets States hack away at those essential

health benefits, and it always seems that maternity care is the first benefit that then gets cut.

If TrumpCare goes through, what will happen in America is insurance companies will carve maternity care out of the plans they offer on the open market. It would, in effect, become an add-on—an add-on that would come with a higher price, as if a pregnant women's healthcare is a luxury item like a sunroof on a new car.

Let's set aside the fact that every man in the country was born to a woman. My colleagues on the other side have spent 7 years telling Americans that they were laser-focused on bringing costs down for everybody. Apparently, that notion of "everybody" that we are hearing from Republican Senators doesn't include mothers because their costs are going to be going up in a number of instances.

Second, the public has heard time and time again that nobody would be hurt under TrumpCare and that repeal and replace is all about putting the patient at the center of care. Tell that to the hundreds of thousands of women who will lose their right to see the doctor of their choosing as a result of TrumpCare defunding Planned Parenthood. Just unpack that for a moment. I think one basic, almost sacred principle for women is that they ought to be able to make the choice of the physician they trust for their healthcare. Yet what we are talking about here—apparently tomorrow—is a real prospect that women will lose the right to see the doctor they trust.

This ideological campaign against Planned Parenthood ignores the fact that there are already laws on the books that prevent tax dollars from funding abortions. It ignores the fact that Planned Parenthood doesn't get a dime of taxpayer funding above what is available to other comparable healthcare providers. It ignores the fact that women rely on Planned Parenthood to get routine medical care from the doctors they know and trust—basic checkups, cancer screenings, preventive care, HIV tests.

It is long past time to end this crusade against Planned Parenthood, which is taking away from women in this country the ability to make their own judgments about whom they want to see and the doctors they trust.

Finally, the TrumpCare plan would significantly slash Medicaid, and this is a special threat to women. Medicaid is at the heart of women's healthcare in the country. Women live longer than men on average, and Medicaid helps pay for two out of three seniors living in nursing homes. Women are more likely than men to have a disability, and Medicaid is the key to helping millions of Americans with disabilities live successful, independent lives in their communities. The Republican healthcare plan would slash Medicaid so deeply year after year that States would be forced to cut benefits and access to care. Women would be hit the hardest by those cuts.

The public needs to know that right now, it is go time in America on healthcare. This vote is right around the corner. And because my colleagues on the other side have in effect locked into this "our way or the highway" approach—the Washington word for it is "reconciliation," and my guess is that in a lot of coffee shops in North Carolina and Oregon and points in between, people aren't that up on Washington lingo like reconciliation, but they really want Democrats and Republicans to work together. That has been the cornerstone of my work with respect to healthcare. That is what Chairman HATCH and I have done with respect to the transformation of Medicare, to update the Medicare guarantee. I have worked with my colleagues in a bipartisan way in terms of independence at home, more care for older people at home, and on a host of issues, particularly with respect to holding down pharmaceutical costs in a bipartisan way. The reality is, that is the only way you come up with approaches that are sustainable—build on principles that both sides feel strongly about and lock it into a bipartisan agreement.

What we are looking at, again, not in 6 weeks but tomorrow, is the Senate Republicans saying: We are going to use this reconciliation—not the bipartisan approaches that I think yield the real dividends but a partisan approach. It is called reconciliation. It means "It is our way or the highway." And then what you are going to do is you are going to have one of the most consequential debates about domestic policy in decades. It is going to fly through the Senate with hardly any public input and debate.

A big part of what I wanted to do tonight is come to the floor of the Senate to say to Americans that this is the time to get loud, to get very loud and to tell your friends and your neighbors and your relatives to get out there and be loud with you. This isn't some mundane debate where the two sides couldn't square their differences, the kind most people choose to ignore; this is an out-and-out attack on the healthcare of millions of Americans and especially women.

I think that when the facts get out to women in this country, they are going to say this is wrong, and they are going to say this is personal. The people in Washington, DC, talk about lots of things and throw around lots of Washington lingo like "reconciliation," but I think they are going to see through exactly what these proposals mean for them. It is a significant rollback of their rights on matters like being able to choose the doctor they trust.

I will close with this, and I have felt this way since the days when I was co-director of the senior citizens at home in Oregon. Political change hardly ever is top-down—top being it comes from government buildings and then trickles down to people—it is almost always bottoms-up, where the voices of Americans are heard and they tell their

elected officials when they are off base, when they are doing something that will hurt them rather than help them.

I close by way of saying that I hope this has provided at least some useful information so Americans—particularly women—can get engaged, get loud, and do it now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I note my colleague is prepared to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am proud and honored to follow my colleague from Oregon who has been such a steadfast leader when it comes to our Nation's healthcare and insurance and particularly when it comes to women's healthcare. I have been really proud to stand side by side with him, Senator MURRAY, and other colleagues who have been here today.

I must say, sometimes on the floor of the Senate, at this hour of the day or night, we can feel alone, as though no one is listening, but I know millions of Americans are listening because of the voices like my colleague Senator WYDEN. I would join him in urging our fellow Americans to make their voices heard, to be loud, and we are going to be loud in Connecticut this Friday, at 1:30 in the afternoon, when I continue the emergency field hearing we began on Monday, giving the people of Connecticut an opportunity to make their voices and their faces known, seen, and heard because, unfortunately, that opportunity has been denied by a process that has been secretive and hasty. Secrecy and speed are a toxic recipe for any democracy. They can disguise deception and mistakes.

I am here to call attention to one of the profoundly mistaken courses that this new bill is expected to take. There is no doubt in my mind that the Republican bill will contain language to defund one of the most respected and accessible and significant of our healthcare providers in the United States; namely, Planned Parenthood.

I have been an advocate of women's healthcare and reproductive rights and choice since my days as a law clerk for Justice Blackmun in the 1970s. Our Nation has made progress—halting and sometimes it steps back—but Planned Parenthood has helped to improve, enduringly and profoundly, women's healthcare.

In my home State of Connecticut, Planned Parenthood has 17 sites and services for more than 60,000 women and men, and they have been covered by the Medicaid Program. That coverage will be decimated under the measure we expect to see. Defunding these clinics could do irreparable damage to the communities that Planned Parenthood clinics serve.

As a nurse practitioner at Planned Parenthood in Southern Connecticut told me, patients trust the services they receive at Planned Parenthood because they rely on them, and they know Planned Parenthood clinics have

one interest and only one interest in mind, which is the well-being of their patients and clients. Planned Parenthood has, therefore, expanded into primary care. Not only does Amina provide family planning services and STI and cancer screenings, she now screens for and treats patients for chronic medical conditions that disproportionately impact low-income patients, such as depression, diabetes, asthma, and hypertension.

In her clinic, my friend who is a nurse practitioner there, Amina, has seen her primary care practice grow from 8 patients initially to 112 a few months later. Her clinic offers these services, in addition to the contraceptive services that are so important to many patients. Patients who will simply go unseen and uncared for have this care at Planned Parenthood, but they will not have it if Planned Parenthood is defunded.

In Connecticut, other kinds of healthcare providers, like health centers and hospitals, would need to increase their capacity to provide contraceptive care, and they would have to increase it by 228 percent to overcome the care deficit left by defunding Planned Parenthood. With these craven attempts to immediately and completely defund Planned Parenthood as a part of TrumpCare—really TrumpCare 2.0—it will be even more challenging for so many women to get the healthcare they need and deserve.

Defunding of Planned Parenthood also jeopardizes gains our Nation made for women of color and patients who are served in areas where there are few, if any, other options.

Planned Parenthood centers and clinics are nothing short of a lifeline for quality healthcare in the underserved communities. The fact is, the Affordable Care Act has worked for women and particularly women of color. Planned Parenthood and other women's healthcare providers are an integral part of that success story, but it isn't only women of color, it isn't only women in underserved communities, and it isn't only women. It is families who have benefited—men, women, and children—because the quality of healthcare and preventive healthcare, particularly, has been raised immeasurably.

To decimate that network of care would be profoundly destructive to our Nation. I hope my colleagues will think again before they side with the forces of degrading and demeaning women who seek those protections. We need a national effort and appreciation to make sure our conscience prevails because the repeal of these provisions would mean they are gone, and all women—including healthy women—will see insurance costs rise. It is absolutely clear to me that the Affordable Care Act repeal would be cruel. It would be mean and most particularly to the women who depend on Planned Parenthood for so many of the services that help them and their families.

I hope my Republican colleagues will cease to ignore and deny these benefits. We stand ready to work with them to improve the Affordable Care Act, not to repeal it, not to decimate or destroy it, to improve it, to mend its defects, to preserve Planned Parenthood, to make sure the women of America and their families have the healthcare they need and deserve.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am joining my colleagues on the floor this afternoon because I share their concerns about what will happen to women's healthcare. I am concerned about what will happen to everyone's healthcare, but particularly this afternoon we are talking about our concerns with respect to healthcare for women.

If the Senate passes legislation like the House passed recently—the American Health Care Act—that legislation has been widely described as cruel and poorly crafted. Just last week, President Trump described it simply as mean. Republican leaders in the Senate are now writing a companion bill that reportedly makes mostly cosmetic changes to the House bill. By some accounts, it would make the House bill even more extreme.

Obviously, any legislation that, by design, takes health insurance away from tens of millions of Americans, I believe, is deeply misguided. I am particularly concerned about the harmful effects this legislation would have on women's health. Indeed, I received countless emails and letters from women who are offended that, once again, powerful men are meeting behind closed doors to make critical decisions regarding women's health, and we have been excluded from the room.

This Republican bill would take us back to the days before the Affordable Care Act, when insurers could charge women more just for being women, with no other reason needed. It would take away the Federal protections against discrimination based on pre-existing conditions. Bear in mind, some of these conditions apply mostly or exclusively to women.

In the days before the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies treated pregnancies, sexual assault, domestic violence, and cesarean sections as pre-existing conditions. Insurers routinely charged higher premiums to women with these “preexisting conditions” or they denied coverage all together. For example, more than 30 percent of mothers have a cesarean section. Once again, if this House-passed bill passes, and if we see something out of the Senate that does the same, women would face discrimination, mothers would face discrimination from insurance companies.

The American Health Care Act would also harm women by allowing insurers to opt out of the 10 essential health benefits that all insurance plans must cover under the Affordable Care Act.

These benefits are called essential because that is exactly what they are. They are essential, not only to good health but, in some cases, to actually staying alive. A number of these essential health benefits apply exclusively to women, including contraception, maternity and newborn care, mammograms, and cervical cancer screenings.

Several months ago on Facebook, I asked people across New Hampshire to tell me their stories—stories about how the Affordable Care Act has made life-saving difference or otherwise improved their lives. I heard from many women across New Hampshire who have written about how the Affordable Care Act has ended discrimination against them by the health insurance industry because of their gender. In particular, they are grateful that the Affordable Care Act includes maternity care and contraception.

This is a picture of Maura Fay, of Exeter, NH. She writes:

My husband and I are self-employed. Before the ACA we were paying rates that were simply unsustainable for a middle-class family like ours. When I was pregnant in 2013, we were forced to pay a maternity rider of an additional \$822 a month.

That is in addition to her premium. She says:

I'm worried about the rollbacks in regulations around Essential Health Benefits, especially since so many of them impact women. Maternity coverage shouldn't come with an additional \$800 a month price tag.

Well, I appreciate that letter from Maura, but I am worried she may actually be underestimating the cost of maternity care coverage if the Affordable Care Act is repealed. According to one analysis, women who seek maternity care under the American Health Care Act—the legislation passed by the House—could pay up to \$17,000 in surcharges to their insurance company.

The American Health Care Act that the House passed also makes draconian cuts to Medicaid, and this will disproportionately harm women—nearly 40 million women—who make up the majority of Medicaid beneficiaries. Medicaid provides healthcare for nearly half of all pregnant women in the United States, supporting them through their pregnancies and ensuring that their babies get a healthy start in life. This coverage is directly threatened by the Republican legislation.

The American Health Care Act the House passed, if we combine that with the administration's budget proposal, it would cut Medicaid by a staggering \$1.4 trillion by the year 2027—so, in 10 years, a \$1.4 trillion cut. This would reduce Medicaid funding by nearly half and mean that tens of millions of people would lose coverage, including many women of reproductive age.

Let me also point out that both the American Health Care Act passed by the House and the President's budget terminate all Federal funding for Planned Parenthood, and we just heard Senator BLUMENTHAL speak eloquently about the importance of Planned Parenthood. This would leave millions of

women and families with fewer healthcare options. In New Hampshire, it would mean that between 12,000 and 13,000 women and men would lose access to basic primary and preventive health services, including lifesaving cancer screenings and HIV testing.

According to poll after poll, the American people all across the political spectrum strongly support Planned Parenthood and oppose efforts to defund it. Despite efforts by Republican leaders in the House and Senate to misrepresent the facts, Planned Parenthood does not use taxpayer dollars to fund abortions. Indeed, Federal law expressly forbids the use of Federal funds to pay for abortions except under extremely narrow circumstances that have been agreed to by Congress, so the real issue here is not abortion. This is about ensuring that American women have access to the basic healthcare they need where they want to receive it. Remember that Planned Parenthood plays an especially important role in delivering essential health services to low-income, uninsured, and vulnerable individuals, including in rural areas.

Earlier this year I received a letter from Samantha Fox of Bow, NH, and she writes:

In 2007, I was a 19-year-old just barely starting out when I was denied health insurance due to a preexisting condition. Had I been able to access affordable coverage, my preexisting condition, a reproductive system

disorder, would have been easily manageable. . . . [A]t that time, I was able to access care through Planned Parenthood which likely preserved my ability to conceive in the future. Flash forward 10 years: I am expecting my first child and I have coverage which, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, includes prenatal care.

Now, here in Washington, some people think that repealing the Affordable Care Act is all about politics and notching a win on their scoreboard. But for ordinary people in New Hampshire and across the country, including millions of women, repealing the Affordable Care Act isn't about politics, it is about life and death. We need to listen to the women and men in each of our States whose lives and finances would be turned upside down if the Affordable Care Act is repealed.

Furthermore, it is just wrong to exclude women, to exclude their colleagues, to exclude Democrats, to exclude the public and to pursue a strictly partisan approach to healthcare—the same approach that produced a terrible bill in the House. And it is deeply misguided to bring legislation to the floor that we all know would hurt tens of millions of Americans and do particular harm to women.

There is a better way forward in the Senate. Let's put ideology and partisanship aside. Let's work together. Let's strengthen the elements of the Affordable Care Act that are working

in the real world, including Medicaid expansion, and let's fix what is not working. It doesn't matter what we call this. It doesn't have to be called ObamaCare. We can call it whatever we want. The important thing is to have legislation that would provide access to healthcare for Americans, healthcare they can afford, that is quality, that is there when people need it. This is what the great majority of the American people want us to do. It is time now to respect their wishes. Let's strengthen the Affordable Care Act so that it works even better for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 11 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:49 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, June 22, 2017, at 11 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate Wednesday, June 21, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

SIGAL MANDELKER, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR TERRORISM AND FINANCIAL CRIMES.