

come to grips with it. . . . And we are going to insist—and the American people are going to insist—that it be done in a transparent, fair, and open way.

Is 5 or 6 days enough time for the American people and the Members of the Senate to come to grips with a bill that affects one-sixth of the economy and the lives of every American in this country? I don't think so, neither do the American people and neither do a whole bunch of Republican Senators.

Senator CASSIDY: Would I have preferred a more open process? The answer is yes.

Senator COLLINS: I don't think it gives enough time to thoroughly analyze the bill, but we will see when it comes out.

Member after Member—RAND PAUL, LINDSEY GRAHAM, JERRY MORAN, MARCO RUBIO, BOB CORKER—has repeatedly said that this process—in their words and now in mine—is unfair, it is truncated, and it is rushed.

For my dear friend the majority leader to say we are going to have an open amendment process is turning truth upside down. I would ask our leader, rhetorically, because I know the answer: Can we allow at least 1 hour on each amendment, not 2 minutes? Will we have more time than 10 hours to debate the bill? I hope so. But, if not, please don't call this an open and fair process. If you want to rush it through, admit the consequences.

The debate over healthcare has been fierce. We know that Republicans and Democrats had differences when we debated the Affordable Care Act. At least we had a debate. At least we had committee hearings and a process. More broadly than that, at least we Democrats were trying to pass a healthcare bill that helped more Americans afford insurance and tried to bring costs down and end some of the most egregious practices of the healthcare industry.

What is this bill—TrumpCare—trying to achieve? It seems designed to slash support for healthcare programs in order to give tax breaks to the very wealthy.

When the CBO score comes out, I believe it will verify that millions of Americans in this great country will be unable to afford insurance or the insurance they can afford won't cover the services they need.

Somewhere in America there is a family who takes a trip each Friday to visit grandma or grandpa at a nursing home, who sacrificed all of their savings to pay for their healthcare until they had no more savings and now rely on Medicaid to help pay the cost of long-term care in a nursing home.

Somewhere in America there is a father who is eaten up inside watching his son struggle with opioid addiction, who knows in his heart that his son will be able to go on and live a healthy and fulfilling life if he could only afford treatment to get him out from under this devastating addiction.

Somewhere in America there is a parent whose child has cancer, a mother

and father who stay up late at night worried that their insurance will either not be available or run out when the family needs it most.

In the America that my Republican friends envision with this healthcare bill, those Americans, and many more besides, might not get the coverage and care they need.

We live in the wealthiest country on Earth. Surely, surely, we can do better than what the Republican healthcare bill promises.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—H.R. 1628

Now I have a unanimous consent request. I am going to have to delay my friend from asking questions until we finish our unanimous consent requests.

I ask unanimous consent that any substitute or perfecting amendment offered to Calendar No. 120, H.R. 1628, not be in order if the text of the amendment has not been filed at the desk and made available on a public website for at least 72 hours, along with an analysis by the Congressional Budget Office of the bill's budgetary, coverage, and cost implications.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, my colleague Senator CORNYN was going to ask a question, which I will answer, which was that the minority leader is referring to a bill that he hasn't seen a copy of because it hasn't yet been released. So the speech we just heard was about a bill that he hasn't seen.

With regard to his unanimous consent request, I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, leader time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has the floor.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 142 pages thus far of this supposed bill have been printed online, and that is what I have used.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, several weeks ago the House of Representatives passed a bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act and to replace it. It was passed without hearings. It was passed without an amendment process, and it was passed before the Congressional Budget Office provided the traditional analysis that we count on before we take up a measure of such magnitude.

The measure passed with a party-line vote—all Republicans. Had two Republicans voted the other way, it would not have moved forward.

After it passed, the President of the United States decided to have a celebration at the White House. We saw him on television, gathering the Republican Members of the House of Representatives and celebrating the fact that this measure had passed and that, finally, they were going to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

But then the American people took a close look and the Congressional Budg-

et Office issued its analysis, and it turns out that 23 million Americans would lose their health insurance because of this Republican measure that passed the House of Representatives.

It turns out as well that there would be a dramatic increase in health insurance premiums for people between the ages of 50 and 64.

It turns out that in my State and many other States hospitals were in danger. The Illinois Health and Hospital Association says they would lose 60,000 jobs in Illinois with the dramatic cutbacks in Medicaid, endangering hospitals in rural areas and inner-city areas.

The facts started coming out about this repeal bill passed by the House of Representatives, and the President of the United States had a change of heart and announced to the American people that it was a mean bill—a mean bill. The President was right. It was mean legislation—mean to the millions who lost their healthcare, mean to seniors who would find their premiums going up dramatically, and mean to the people living in rural areas and small towns who count on those hospitals.

The President was right. It was mean.

Then, the responsibility shifts to the Senate. The majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, and his Republican followers had a chance to do a bill that was not mean. They had a chance to sit down on a bipartisan basis and to have the same process we used to create the Affordable Care Act.

That would have involved public hearings. We had 50 public hearings on the Affordable Care Act. It would have involved a real amendment process. The Affordable Care Act had 300 amendments. How many were offered by the Republicans? There were over 150 offered and adopted in a bipartisan process when we passed the Affordable Care Act. The American people got a good look at the bill. The Congressional Budget Office issued their analysis before we voted on it. We passed it, and I am glad we did, and I am proud of that vote.

But what happened in the Senate when it came to the Republicans? They went into secrecy. Thirteen chosen Republican Senators all sat in a room and wrote the alternative, or so we are told. They met in secret and never once had a public hearing, never once disclosed to the American people what was being debated, never once gave an opportunity for real bipartisan cooperation to strengthen our existing healthcare system—not at all.

So all we have at this moment is truly press accounts of what has been announced to the Republican Senate caucus, what they are going to get a chance to read and see. But it is enough to see that when it comes down to the basics, there is not much of a change between the House of Representatives' effort and the Senate effort.

You can put a lace collar on a pit bull, and it is still a mean dog.

What we have here with the Republicans in the Senate is an attempt to dust off the edges of the House bill and say: This is not as mean. I will tell you, at the end of the day, from the reports we have, this is still a mean dog, and one the people of the United States don't want to see happen.

There isn't a single medical advocacy group—not one in my State, and I don't know of any nationwide—that endorses what the Republicans in the House have accomplished with the passage of their bill, and this bill mirrors it, as well, and we can expect the same result.

So the only thing we can offer the American people is a chance to be part of the conversation on a bill that will literally change healthcare for millions of Americans. If they are going to be part of the conversation, there has to be a chance for amendment and debate, at least, and a chance for the American people to see what is in the Senate Republican measure.

So I ask unanimous consent that any substitute or perfecting amendment offered to Calendar No. 120, H.R. 1628, be subject to a point of order if the text of the amendment has not been filed at the desk and made available on a public website for at least 72 hours, along with an analysis by the Congressional Budget Office of the bill's budgetary, coverage, and cost implications; and that a motion to waive the point of order be in order, and if a motion to waive is made, an affirmative three-fifths vote of those duly chosen and sworn is required to waive the point of order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I want to thank my friend the assistant Democratic leader for confirming that the majority leader's remarks obviously were made on the basis of news accounts. The bill has only been posted online for the last 20 minutes.

Mr. SCHUMER. Would the majority leader yield?

I am the minority leader, at this point.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I will yield for a question.

Mr. SCHUMER. The question is, Does the majority leader know that a half hour before we came to the floor were 142 pages of the bill listed online? That is what we used in our report.

I would ask the majority leader a further question: If there is anything I said—anything I said—that is not going to be in the bill, could he clarify?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, what we are seeing here today is just the latest broken promise from President Trump and his Republican Party. After weeks of secret negotiations, back-room deals, shutting out patients, families, and Democrats and even many

Republicans from this process, Senate Republican leaders are now just days away from putting a bill on the floor that could not be more impactful or more devastating to families' bank accounts and their health. As even Republicans are pointing out, there has not been a single hearing, no robust debate, no opportunity for the people who will really suffer under this bill to see exactly how bad it would be.

This disastrous TrumpCare bill deserves full scrutiny under an open process, like the process that Democrats conducted when we passed the Affordable Care Act. We held hearings, we took amendments from both sides, and we certainly didn't leave the fate of women's healthcare up to a few Republican men.

Senate Republicans are right to be ashamed of this mean and heartless legislation. Just like the House TrumpCare bill, it will increase premiums, it will undermine protections for people with preexisting conditions, it will defund Planned Parenthood, and it will allow insurance companies—insurance companies—to charge women more. It is going to gut Medicaid. It will take away care for our seniors, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and it will take health insurance coverage away from millions of people across the country—and for what? To give another massive tax cut to the wealthy and well-connected.

I would be ashamed, too, if I had to defend a bill that is cruel. I can certainly understand why Republican leaders do not want to give people time to see what is in this bill and why they don't even want to give their own Members time to see how much their constituents hate it, but that is the bed Senate Republicans have now made. If they are going to try to pass this disastrous version of TrumpCare, at the very least they shouldn't get to jam it through without the public knowing good and well what they are up to.

Mr. President, I ask a parliamentary inquiry: Is the Chair able to confirm that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions considered S. 1679, the Affordable Health Choices Act, which was ultimately incorporated into the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, in executive session on 13 calendar days prior to reporting the bill favorably?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Secretary of the Senate's Office through the Senate Library can confirm that.

Mrs. MURRAY. That is confirmed.

So I ask unanimous consent today that any substitute or perfecting amendment offered to Calendar No. 120, H.R. 1628, not be in order if the text of the amendment has not been the subject of a hearing, subject of executive session, during which amendments from both the majority and minority were considered and reported favorably by the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

None of these Senators have read the bill.

I have the floor.

The bill is 142 pages long compared to the 2,700-page ObamaCare bill. They can read the bill; if they have objections to the provisions, we can debate them, but what they are talking about is a bill that does not exist, which they have not read.

I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The minority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, would my dear colleague from Texas yield for a question?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas does not have the floor. You have the floor.

Mr. SCHUMER. I would like to just then tell my friend from Texas: This is the bill. It was posted online a half hour before we came in. I would ask a page to come over and bring it to my dear friend and ask him if this is the bill which we have read.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, all Senators have a copy of the discussion draft bill. It is a discussion draft which will be open to an amendment process, with unlimited amendments which can be offered by both sides, before which we will have a fulsome debate.

Our colleagues here are complaining about secrecy that doesn't exist. This bill is online. The American people can read it. You can read it. I would suggest that they do read it before they start criticizing it.

Mr. SCHUMER. I would ask my friend from Texas to yield for another question.

Mr. CORNYN. I will.

Mr. SCHUMER. Will we get more than 2 minutes to debate each amendment we ask for or will we be under the reconciliation process, where we have 10 hours of debate and then every amendment only gets 2 minutes? Does he consider that—2 minutes, if that is the case—a full and fair debate on each amendment?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would say, in response to my friend from New York, the fact that we are having to conduct this under the reconciliation rules is a result of their refusal to participate in the process, thus necessitating Republicans doing this under budget reconciliation rules.

If they would do this in a true bipartisan way, where we can get 60 votes to get on the bill and open to an amendment process, we could have a better bill, but given the refusal of our Democratic colleagues to participate in the process, this is the only way we can come to the rescue of the people who are being hurt by the meltdown of ObamaCare today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Just to clarify, did the Senator

from Texas object to the request of the Senator from Washington?

Mr. CORNYN. I do object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I heard the objection.

I just have to say, the exchange we just heard is exactly what we have been objecting to. We were told the bill would be online at 9:30 this morning. It was online at 11. I have a copy of it, but we are hearing from the other side now that this isn't the bill. This is a discussion draft. We aren't going to see the bill. We will not see the real bill, apparently, until next week, even though we were told we would see it this morning.

This has been the problem we have had since this discussion started. We started in January with a process which cut us out of this under reconciliation. Thirteen men in a private room wrote this "discussion draft," which is not a bill, that we are supposed to now look at and decide whether we like it—and the American public—a discussion draft, a bill even the other side doesn't know what we have. That is what we are objecting to.

We are asking that the American people—who have a right to know what is going to impact every one of their lives, every one of their families, every one of their communities, every one of their businesses—have more than a discussion draft, more than 10 hours of debate, time to look at it, and know how we are going to do an amendment process next week.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, would the Senator yield for a question?

Mrs. MURRAY. I would be happy to.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would ask the Senator from Washington if she is aware of the fact that under the budget reconciliation process, there will be an unlimited number of amendments that could be offered by either side to the bill which is ultimately filed?

Mrs. MURRAY. Oh, Mr. President, I am well aware of that; and I will remind our colleagues and everybody in this country what will happen: There will be 10 hours of debate, where we hopefully have more than a discussion draft that we will be allowed to offer amendments on, and there will be no debate on those amendments. No one will know what it is. It will be a chaotic process on this floor. The American public will not know. We will be able to tell them days later, after this gets undone.

That is not an amendment process. That is not what we went through when we passed the Affordable Care Act. The American public deserves better.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I would ask my colleague a question.

What would be wrong with 1 hour of debate on every amendment to this

bill? What is the objection to that, since the majority is proposing no debate on amendments, and then saying it is an open process? What is wrong with 1 hour of debate on every amendment offered to this bill?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would say, in response to my friend the minority leader, that it is as a result of their refusal to participate in the usual process of passing legislation through the regular order—

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will be in order.

Mr. CORNYN.—that we have to resort to the budget reconciliation process which has a set of statutory provisions and rules.

There will be a fulsome debate. There has already been a debate on a bill you haven't read. I suggest you take the time to read it, and then we can talk about the details.

This bill—142 pages compared to 2,700 pages of ObamaCare—doesn't take that long to read. This is a start. This is not the finish. This is called the normal legislative process. I suggest colleagues, rather than criticize a bill they haven't read, they read it, and then let's have a credible debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I would ask my friend, the majority whip from Texas, a series of questions.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. What was the date that reconciliation was added to the budget resolution which said we don't need any Democratic votes? Was it May, was it April, was it March, or was it the very beginning of this session?

I would ask him another question. Where were the meetings held to discuss this bill, and were any Democrats invited?

I would ask him another question. Why did the majority leader not accept our offer to go into the Old Senate Chamber—100 Senators, no press, no anything else—and debate the bill?

How can my good friend—and he is a good friend; we are on the bikes in the morning together—my good friend from Texas say there was a bipartisan process when, at the outset—at the outset—our Republican colleagues said the only thing we will debate is repeal and then replace? There was no discussion of whether repeal was the right thing to do or the wrong thing to do. Now, overwhelmingly the American people prefer fixing ObamaCare—which we offered to do—than repeal and replace.

It is no wonder, I would say to my colleague as he answers these questions, that this bill is being brought in the dark of night. It is because my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are ashamed of the bill—because, believe you me, if they liked this bill, they would have brass bands down

every Main Street in America talking about it, but they are trying to sneak it through because mainly their goal is a tax cut for the rich.

I would ask my colleague to answer those three questions, and then he can respond to my rhetoric.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am really taken aback by the characterization of the minority leader here.

The minority has made it clear they don't want to participate in the process of rescuing the American people from the failures of ObamaCare.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will be in order.

Mr. CORNYN. It has been made clear to us that you don't want to participate in the process, and you are turning a blind eye to the millions of people being hurt today by outrageous premiums, deductibles they can't afford, and a loss of choices because insurance companies have pulled out of the individual market. Your response to them is: We don't care.

We care, and we are doing our best to deal with this.

This is like going by a car accident with somebody seriously injured, and rather than stopping and rendering aid, just driving on by. That is what our colleagues on the other side are doing. They are turning a blind eye, driving right on by a seriously injured person in a car accident. We are coming to the rescue of the millions of people who are being hurt by ObamaCare today.

We would love to have our Democratic friends join us and do something truly sustainable, but you have to remember, my friends, how this started: Democrats jammed ObamaCare through on a party-line vote and Republicans weren't able to participate in that process.

What we are trying to do is we are trying to save the people who are currently being hurt and whose healthcare has become unaffordable. If you would like to join us in this process, we would love to have you, but failing that, we are going to get it done, and you can just drive by the car wreck.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, here is the correct analogy: Yes, there has been an accident. Yes, someone needs help. Someone who is not a doctor, not a physician, doesn't know how to help the patient—our Republicans friends go by the side of the road, but they don't know what to do.

So the Democrats come by. We are doctors. We say: We know how to fix this system. We know how to fix this patient, and the Republicans say: No, don't help with us. We will drive right by. Now the patient is ailing.

I would ask my colleagues, let's forget the past for the moment because we have a much better argument than you. We had hundreds of amendments offered by Republicans that became part of our bill. I doubt there will be a

single Democratic amendment that will be—we had hours of hearings, hours of debate. You didn't. So you may not have thought the process was perfect, but it was a lot more open than yours.

I have a proposal to my friend. Let us forget this draft bill. Let us right now, Democrats and Republicans, sit down and try to come up with a bipartisan bill. We are willing to do it today, now, this minute. Will you accept that offer?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will be in order.

MR. CORNYN. Mr. President, if I thought that was a sincere offer, I would take it in a minute—in a New York minute, but it is not.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will be in order.

MR. CORNYN. The fact is, insurance companies are having to go to the State regulators as we speak to get insurance rates approved for 2018. That is the urgency we are experiencing here.

Unless we act—and act in an expedited fashion—here, very soon, we will see millions of people have their insurance rates raised by another double digits. It has been 105 percent since 2013—105 percent. ObamaCare was sold under the premise that families of four would see a reduction of \$2,500. If you like your policy, you can keep your policy. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. All of that is false. False. This is a failed experiment.

They may not be willing to help, but we will, and we will get it done and help the American people who are being hurt by the failure of ObamaCare today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

MR. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am struck by this conversation as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee. My colleague and distinguished Senator from Texas is on the Finance Committee. He knows I know something about writing bipartisan healthcare reform bills. I have written them. They have become law. I could tell my colleague, I have not once—not once—been asked to be part of any bipartisan effort with respect to this legislation.

I think, colleagues, it is real clear what is going on here. Senate Republicans are going to keep telling Americans they are fixing their healthcare right up until the second it gets taken away.

Now, as the ranking member of the Finance Committee, I find it bizarre that a health bill of this importance was hidden for so long behind closed doors, denying the American people the opportunity to see it in an open debate.

There have been no hearings on this dangerous, destructive proposal, not one hearing on whether Medicaid should be slashed to pay for tax cuts for the fortunate few, not one hearing on whether the bedrock protections for those with preexisting conditions ought to be shattered, not one hearing on whether Americans should face

higher costs, along with annual and lifetime limits, on insurance coverage.

This secretive process of concealing and rushing this bill, which until today had been seen by nobody—nobody outside of the Republican leadership and their lobbyist allies who dwell on K Street—the secretive process stands in sharp contrast to the process that led to the Affordable Care Act.

I now put forward a parliamentary inquiry. Is the Chair able to confirm that the Committee on Finance considered S. 1796, the America's Healthy Future Act, which was ultimately incorporated into H.R. 3590, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, in executive session on 8 separate calendar days prior to reporting the bill favorably?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Secretary of the Senate's office, through the Senate Library, confirms that.

MR. WYDEN. I have information that indicates that 135 amendments were considered in the committee and that of those, 14 amendments offered by Republican members of the committee or offered in a bipartisan manner were adopted during the consideration of S. 1796. Is the Chair able to confirm that?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Secretary of the Senate's office, through the Senate Library, confirms that.

MR. WYDEN. Therefore, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that no motion to proceed to Calendar No. 120, H.R. 1628, be in order until the bill has been the subject of executive session meetings in the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, during which amendments from the majority and the minority received votes and the bill has been favorably reported from those committees.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

The majority whip.

MR. CORNYN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, our colleagues are coming here today and saying they want to participate in the process to fix what is broken in the Affordable Care Act. Yet I have in my hand a newspaper article about a letter that the Democratic leader and his colleagues sent saying they refused to participate in the process unless we drop all of our plans to repeal and replace ObamaCare. They refused to participate in the process.

I would point out that the failures of ObamaCare didn't just start today; it has been failing over 7 years. They did nothing—nothing—nothing to help the millions of people who are being hurt, who had to move from full-time work to part-time work because their employer didn't want to pay the employer penalty for not providing ObamaCare coverage. We know that many people have been hurt by it and not the least of whom are the people who are finding their premiums skyrocketing. They will do so again next year unless we

come to their rescue. They have seen their deductibles so high, they effectively have been denied the value of their insurance.

I had a conversation a couple of days ago—I won't name the Democratic Senator because it was done in confidence. The Senator confided to me that his own son had effectively seen his premiums go up so high that he had—it cost roughly \$12,500 out-of-pocket to deal with his deductible and to pay his premiums—\$12,500. That is not affordable to anybody, certainly in the middle class.

I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

MS. STABENOW. Mr. President, I want to indicate before the distinguished majority whip leaves that what is being talked about here is like having a hole in the roof of your house. Instead of patching it, they want to burn down the house. What we are not willing to participate in is burning down the house. We are more than happy and, in fact, have proposals and are anxious to work with the majority to improve healthcare—not rip it apart, not take tens of millions of people's healthcare away, but improve it.

Before asking a question of the majority whip, I also want to indicate for all those listening that we have the bill. We can actually read pretty quickly, and it has been out. Even though it is considered a discussion draft—we don't know what it is at this point—we have it. We are analyzing it.

What our leader, the Democratic leader, indicated is what we have been able to read in this discussion draft, which is not only more of the same but is worse for seniors, those in nursing homes, and children in Michigan and across the country. That is what is in this, which we now have, whatever it is called.

I would ask the majority whip, instead of burning down the house at this point in terms of ripping apart the healthcare system, would you join with us in putting forward a bill that would allow Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices for seniors, which my hospitals and insurance companies tell me are one of the driving forces that are raising the costs of healthcare? Would you be willing to work with us on a bill to lower prescription drug prices and allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices on behalf of America's seniors?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

MR. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would say to the Senator from Michigan that we would be happy to work with you on high drug prices. That is a serious problem and one of the primary cost drivers of healthcare costs today. But this bill doesn't touch Medicare at all. We leave intact the healthcare for seniors, and it is not touched by this at all. When the time comes for us to deal with Medicare, I think that is a debate we should have and we would welcome.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, to the distinguished leader, I simply would say I am proposing that instead of this, which is essentially burning down the house in America in terms of healthcare, that you instead join with us in what you have admitted is one of the top drivers of healthcare costs in this country, which is what we want to tackle. We want to bring down the costs. We want to bring down the cost of prescription drugs, the out-of-pocket costs for everyone whose copays and premiums are too high. That is what we want to do. Taking away nursing home care, taking away the ability for a parent to take their child to the doctor or someone with cancer to get the treatment they need or a small business owner being blocked from getting healthcare because of a preexisting condition—we consider that burning down the house. We are opposed to that.

Frankly, we would love to have a ceremony and light this on fire and come back together and work together on the No. 1 driver, which is the cost of prescription drugs.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, maybe I misunderstood the question initially. I would suggest to the Senator from Michigan that it is the Democrats, under ObamaCare, who burned down the house because the individual market for healthcare has been decimated—decimated. And we are coming to the rescue of those millions of people who don't have employer-provided insurance. They don't get their coverage under Medicare or any other government program. They get it from the individual market. We are talking about individuals and small businesses. Right now people have almost no choices in many parts of the country, and for those who have choices, it is simply unaffordable.

It is an important conversation to have on drug prices and Medicare, and I am happy to do that. That would do nothing—zip, zero, nada—to help the people who are hurting now as a result of the failures of ObamaCare, and that is whom we are determined to help by passing this legislation after an open amendment process and fulsome debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, in conclusion, I wish to make one other comment, and that is, the people in Michigan who are purchasing on the private exchange—over half of whom are able to get a policy today for their families for less than \$100—I would say they would have a different perspective.

We need to fix those things that are not working, but for the 97 percent of the children in Michigan who can now see a doctor because of what has been done; for the hospitals that now see 50

percent fewer people walking into the emergency room without insurance, raising the costs for all policies; for the savings the State of Michigan is going to have in its budget next year of \$432 million in savings to taxpayers because they did the right thing by allowing children to go to a doctor instead of getting sick and going to the emergency room, I would suggest this is the wrong direction.

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MARKEY. 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.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, last week, President Trump reportedly told several of our Republican colleagues that the House-passed version of TrumpCare's healthcare repeal of the Affordable Care Act was mean. This week, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said that the President would like to see a healthcare bill from the Senate that "has heart in it." What did we get? We got a bill from my Senate Republican colleagues that is identical to and in some cases even worse than the disastrous House-passed American Health Care Act that would rip coverage away from 23 million Americans and gut Medicaid by more than \$800 billion.

Nothing changes the fact that this undemocratic, secretive process has resulted in legislation that is so mean-spirited, it would make the Wicked Witch of the West cringe. The Senate Republican bill will rip away economic security from young families, make grandma and grandpa pay more for health insurance simply because they are old, tear away coverage for opioid addiction patients desperate for treatment, and punish Americans with pre-existing conditions such as cancer, diabetes, and Alzheimer's. For once, I agree with President Trump. This bill is mean.

Let's take a closer look about what is really inside of the Senate GOP's proposal on healthcare. Let's start by looking at the lower quality coverage. First, this bill will roll back the clock to the days before the Affordable Care Act, when an insurance card did not guarantee comprehensive coverage.

Because of the Affordable Care Act, there are certain things an insurance plan just has to cover—things like emergency services, maternity care, prescription drugs, mental health services. There is security in knowing that if you pay your premiums, this sort of basic minimum coverage is in place when you need it. But Republicans want to rip that away. They want to give States and insurance companies the option to not cover these things.

This would make it so that a consumer could easily be faced with an unexpected medical bill for services they had assumed were covered with their healthcare plan.

Independent analysis from the Congressional Budget Office estimates that out-of-pocket costs for maternity care or mental health or substance abuse disorder services could increase by thousands of dollars in a given year under TrumpCare. That is not increasing quality, as President Trump promised; that is lower quality. And that just increases inequality between the healthy wealthy, who can pay out of pocket for their care, and providing lower quality coverage for everyone else. That is mean.

Second, an age tax. Since the Affordable Care Act became law, the uninsured rate for Americans ages 50 to 64 decreased by one-half. Those are the baby boomers, and it is estimated that more than 28 million of these baby boomers will develop Alzheimer's disease between now and the year 2050. This reduction in the uninsured rates came about because the Affordable Care Act expanded Medicaid and put protections in place to prevent insurers from charging exorbitant prices just because of age. But instead of caring for our family and friends as they age and ensuring they can afford quality coverage on what may be a dwindling income, TrumpCare punishes you for achieving your milestone 50th birthday.

Under the Republican healthcare proposal, insurance companies can charge older Americans five times more than younger Americans for the same coverage. That is unconscionable. It doesn't matter if you are a 50-year-old marathoner in the best shape of your life; you will still be paying at least five times more for your insurance than your 40-year-old neighbor who smokes. As a result, Americans over the age of 60 could see their premiums increase by an average of \$3,200 or 22 percent. That might not sound like a lot to some people, but for those with decreasing incomes and fewer job opportunities, it is the difference between being able to eat and being kicked out on the street.

To add insult to injury, the subsidies in TrumpCare to help individuals purchase insurance are far less generous than what is currently available under the Affordable Care Act. Because that will result in premiums that are higher, the tax credits will not keep pace to help pay for more expensive insurance, and, as a result, this age tax is going to be mean to those who are older in our country.

No. 3, Medicaid cuts. Medicaid is a lifeline for families across our country. More than 70 million Americans—nearly half of whom are children—depend upon it. But it is clear that with TrumpCare's cuts to the program, Republicans want Medicaid to flatline. For a program that covers more than one-fifth of the Nation's population, including the sickest, the oldest, and the