

Tampa, a place called Lutz. She also has a preexisting condition. She told me that she uses the essential health benefits guaranteed by the existing law. She is scared that insurance companies would take away the coverage of treatments for her disability and also reinstate annual and lifetime limits on coverage.

Let me tell you about this young lady. She is just amazing. She was born without arms. She uses her feet and her toes to be able to function in the place of hands and fingers. She had to have a total knee replacement in one leg by the time she turned 30. She works as a community organizer. She doesn't qualify for Medicaid in Florida because her income is considered too high. She actually has an income. Olivia purchased health insurance through healthcare.gov with the help of tax credits to help her afford health insurance.

This young lady, now in her mid-thirties, is just amazing. With no arms, she uses her feet and her toes, and she is capable of getting around in her wheelchair. She is capable of driving a car. She has a business. She has an income, and she is paying taxes. She is able to function because she has health insurance.

Now, thanks to the ACA, people like Olivia benefit because there are bans on lifetime limits in insurance policies, and, thanks to the ACA, she lives an active life. She goes snorkeling, hiking, and even skydiving. Her legs are good, except for the knee replacement that she had so that she can walk. Then, when she has to do the normal functions with hands and arms, she sits down, and she uses her legs, her feet, and her toes. She told me that, without the ACA, she is trapped.

I told you about this unnamed Republican Senator who was in an airport in another State—that of the Republican Senator's. What happened to that Republican Senator happens to me back in Florida with people coming up and begging me: Please do not take away my healthcare.

We should not continue to waste our time with this healthcare bill that only takes away healthcare and charges more for less coverage. We have said—so many of us out here on this floor—that we should be looking for ways to improve the existing law, the Affordable Care Act, not to undo all of the good that it has done. We have Floridians and folks across the country who are grateful for it. They want us to fix it, not repeal it, and they say that over and over: Why can't you guys get together in a bipartisan way and fix it?

These are the personal stories of Olivia, Michael, Regina, and Elizabeth, along with the hundreds of people who have come up to me in the street or in the airport and have begged me: Do not take it away. They do not want us to get rid of this. As you have heard, several of them claim that they would not be alive today without the ACA. Alternatively, they would be bankrupt if it were not for Medicaid in the ACA.

In order to truly improve our healthcare system, why don't we work together to make it better? We need to look at real solutions. I am happy to say that this Senator has been talking to Republican Senators, and we have talked about specific things. I told some of these Senators about my experiences as the formerly elected insurance commissioner of Florida.

When I had a problem after the monster Hurricane Andrew in the early 1990s and we had a paralyzed marketplace in which you could not get homeowner's insurance in Florida from insurance companies because they were scared to death that the next big one was coming and that the losses were going to be so great that they would have to price the premiums so high, what did we do? We created a reinsurance fund called the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund, which builds up the reserves that would reinsure the companies if they were to have a catastrophic loss.

The same principle with hurricanes can apply to health insurance, which is that of creating a reinsurance fund that will insure the health insurance companies against catastrophic loss, which, occasionally, they will have. Do you know something? I costed that out in Florida, and it would reduce the premiums from the marketplace in Florida by 13 percent. Now, that is a real savings, and that is just one solution for a fix. We ought to be looking at approaches like this.

I welcome all of our colleagues on this side and on that side—and I have been talking to some on that side—to join together and do something productive, like getting behind ideas just like the one that I suggested.

I heard our colleague this morning. One of our favorite colleagues out here is JOE MANCHIN from West Virginia, and I heard him being interviewed on one of the morning shows. He was terrific. He said: We need to be working together. We should not be divided by party over this, and we should not be divided ideologically on this. We ought to be openly trying to work together to figure out how to drive down healthcare costs and increase coverage for more Americans.

That is what those folks in Tampa, FL, told me last week with whom I met. That is what those hundreds of folks are telling me who come up to me in the airport, on the airplane, on the street corner, in the public buildings, in the hospitals—wherever I am: Please, get together, and work it out. They are asking us to fix what needs fixing. That is what the American people are asking us today, and that is what I beg of the Senate.

As the good Lord says: Come. Let us reason together. Let us use some of our common sense.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

THANKING THE SENATOR FROM FLORIDA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, I thank my good friend from Florida for his inspiring words. He is always trying to work together on bipartisan solutions. He represents one of the largest and most diverse States in the country—a State that very much depends on having good healthcare. I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will heed his words.

MISSISSIPPI PLANE CRASH

Mr. President, first, I send my sincere condolences to the Marine Corps, which lost 15 of its finest today, as well as 1 Navy corpsman, in a plane crash in Mississippi. It was the deadliest crash in the Marine Corps family since 2005. According to reports, the aircraft that crashed this morning was based at Stewart Air National Guard Base in my home State of New York.

Our hearts break for the families of these sailors and marines. We mourn their loss and wish comfort to their families and their loved ones in this time of tragedy.

May they rest in peace.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, the majority leader said today that we are going to stay in an extra 2 weeks during the August break. We Democrats are willing to stay 2 weeks, 2 months, 2 years to get a good healthcare bill, but in all due respect to my good friend, the majority leader from Kentucky, it is not time that is the problem here. Our Republican colleagues for 7 years said: Repeal ObamaCare. But they had nothing to put in its place. Then President Trump was elected with a Republican majority in the House and the Senate. Since January 4, when they deliberately excluded us from all discussions by enacting a reconciliation bill, they have been trying to put together a healthcare bill. They cannot. It is not because of a lack of time. Two weeks is not going to help. The problem is the substance of the bill.

The bill provides massive tax cuts for the wealthy, and, just as bad, if not worse, it puts a dagger in the heart of the Medicaid Program, which has become a program that affects so many Americans. With kids—poor kids—is where it started, but now it affects people who have Mom and Dad in a nursing home and who might face thousands of dollars of expenses, those on opioid treatment, those who have kids with disabilities, and many, many, many with preexisting conditions. Those are all helped by Medicaid, and our Republican colleagues here want to slash it.

Just like my colleague from Florida, I was in some very conservative parts in New York State, places that voted for Trump by over 60 percent. The revulsion—"revulsion" is the word—and the fear that this healthcare bill has put in the hearts of those folks in Republican areas are dramatic.

So I would say to my good friend the leader that we are willing to stay as

long as he wants, but he is not going to solve his problem until he abandons tax cuts on the rich, abandons the decimation of Medicaid, and works with us to improve the existing law. His problem and our Republican colleagues' problem is not time. It is the substance of the bill.

I will say one more thing. If I were a Republican, I would not want to go home either. Every time they go home, they are lambasted because the American people have such a negative feeling about the bill. So, of course, they would want to stay here, but that is not the answer. The answer is to change the bill. Work with us. We have been begging, pleading, asking, cajoling for a month or two, when it was clear their bill was going to fail. I would say that is very important.

Mr. President, I heard the majority leader complain about the slow pace of nominations.

Our Republican friends, when they are worried about the slow pace of nominations, ought to look in the mirror. This President has nominated fewer nominees than has anyone else, and seven of the major nominees had to withdraw their nominations. Many of them were brought here to the Senate without the necessary documentation—the paperwork, the ethics reports, the FBI reports. The chaos in the White House is now spreading to the Republican Senate. Our President seems to blame somebody else when his administration makes a mess. Let's not do that here.

Again, the number of nominees that this President has submitted is lower than that of any President's in recent memory. My colleague complained about this nominee from Idaho. He was outraged that he had to file cloture. I would remind the majority leader that this district judge was nominated by President Obama in the last Congress and that he was the majority leader in the last Congress, which was responsible for putting nominees on the Senate calendar. The district court judge is only one of many nominees who the Republicans failed to move in the last Congress—a Congress which confirmed the fewest number of judges of any Congress since the Eisenhower administration. That goes to show how desperate our Republican leadership is to shift blame and attention away from its healthcare bill to hypocritical and preposterous complaints on nominations. It is in order to distract from the healthcare bill. They can try other tactics.

On one more point, I would remind my colleagues that it is the majority leader who has the power to put nominees on the floor. In the Department of Defense, we have been asked about three nominees. Leader MCCONNELL has the power to put them on the floor—instead of this judge from Idaho, instead of the nominee for OMB, and instead of the Ambassador to Japan—tomorrow, if he chose. It is his choice. If he puts them on the floor—these Defense nomi-

nees—in regular order next week, they will be approved.

So, again, to deflect from healthcare and the mess our poor Republican colleagues are in, to point falsely at the nomination process, which has been slow-walked by President Trump and many of the committees, is not going to succeed.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, from the moment President Trump and Republicans began trying to jam TrumpCare through Congress, I heard from family after family in my home State about the damage their efforts to undermine families' healthcare would do, and this last week was no different. Again and again, my constituents told me what a difference it makes to have affordable insurance, to know that benefits like substance abuse treatment are covered, or to worry about how they would manage if TrumpCare ever became law.

I heard some of my Republican colleagues went out of their way to avoid those kinds of stories when they were home, so I wanted to make sure they heard a few examples now that they are back in town. And I appreciate that many of my Democratic colleagues will also be sharing stories they heard from their constituents over the past few days.

Like many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I come from a State in which the opioid epidemic has had a devastating impact. It has been both heartbreaking and inspiring to talk with patients and families who are doing everything they can to fight back. Right now, the message I am getting from them loud and clear is that they do not want TrumpCare.

Daniel, one of my constituents, was injured in the military. He was given a prescription for painkillers. He was on them for 8 years, and he told me that during that time, his three daughters wondered why he wouldn't play with them. Eventually, Daniel changed doctors and was prescribed Suboxone, which made all the difference for him. He is now able to work again. He manages a grocery store. He relies on Medicaid for healthcare coverage, which covers the hundreds of dollars a month his prescriptions cost. Daniel told me that if he loses Medicaid under TrumpCare, he will not be able to make ends meet and all of the progress he has made will be threatened.

I heard from a constituent named Rachel of Seattle who was addicted to opioids and living in her car when she found out she was eligible for Medicaid. She got connected with Swedish Medical Center in Seattle, where she received wraparound health services, in-

cluding mental healthcare and primary healthcare. Now she and her husband are successfully in recovery. They are raising a family, and Rachel is going to school. But, just like Daniel, they do not know what they will do if TrumpCare becomes law and the Medicaid coverage that is keeping them going is taken away.

Those are just two of the countless stories I heard from patients and families and doctors in my home State and nationwide. I have heard from cancer survivors who have fought back as hard as they can and are worried that TrumpCare will allow insurance companies to price them out of care because they are now labeled with a pre-existing condition. I heard from young parents of medically fragile children who stay up at night worrying about how to afford care for their toddler if lifetime caps on coverage are imposed under TrumpCare. I heard from seniors who simply don't have the savings to cover the premium spikes TrumpCare would cost. I heard from women and men who are furious, and rightly so, that a group of 13 men wrote a bill in secret to defund Planned Parenthood—the Nation's largest provider of women's healthcare—removing a quality, affordable provider from communities in which it is now very difficult to get care.

These stories are powerful. They make it undeniably clear just how much TrumpCare would hurt people. So it is no wonder that Senate Republicans spent the last week lying low and avoiding defending, oddly, the indefensible. Senate Republicans have read the same independent Congressional Budget Office analysis as we all have. They have heard from countless doctors and nurses and hospitals and nursing homes and patient advocates about all of the ways TrumpCare would raise families' costs and take away coverage. They know that people across the country are completely, resoundingly rejecting TrumpCare. It is the least popular bill in three decades, according to one study.

All in all, TrumpCare shatters every promise President Trump and Republicans made about providing insurance to everybody and making sure no one is worse off. And, incredibly, the extreme rightwing still thinks it leaves too much of the Affordable Care Act intact.

Even though it seems one would be hard-pressed to find anyone who wants to stick up for TrumpCare—including, by the way, President Trump—Senate Republican leaders are still doing everything they can to jam this through Congress as quickly as they can. They are working on backroom deals as we speak and coming up with new ways to sweeten the deal for Senate Republicans who are rightly wary of voting for a bill that would so clearly do so much harm.

In particular, this afternoon I wanted to address the ongoing effort by extreme conservative Senators to double