

healthcare system. Just as they blamed President Obama when he was in charge, they are going to blame President Trump while he is in charge. He is tweeting away that someone else is to blame when he is in charge, which will not work politically, particularly when it comes to something as near and dear to Americans as healthcare—God's great gift to us, life itself.

It just will not work to say that Democrats are to blame. Believe me, we are not going to stand idly by and shrug our shoulders when American people are suffering because the President is sabotaging our healthcare system for political purposes. We are going to point it out, and the spotlight will be on those whom the American people in November put in charge.

Elections do have consequences, and one of the consequences, Mr. President, one of the consequences, Mr. Trump, is that you are in charge. You have to make things better, not simply point fingers and tweet.

Finally, the President's position is an astonishing failure of Presidential leadership. His own party has failed to pass a bill—his own party, which controls both Houses of Congress, his own party, which has used special rules designed to exclude Democrats from the beginning. President Trump blames Democrats and threatens to hold our Nation's healthcare system hostage out of pique—out of pique.

The President was being petty; the President was being small; the President was not Presidential at all. The President would rather throw up his hands than roll up his sleeves and get to work. He would rather cast blame and point fingers than even try to work with Democrats to make the healthcare system better. That is not what Presidents do. It shows a tremendous lack of leadership. The American people want their President to lead. The American people, when there is a problem, want the President to fix it. The American people know that, when facing a defeatist President, you don't just sit in the corner and pout and get angry. You go on from there and try to make things better, as I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will do. Some of them have indicated they will.

Let's recall another President—President Truman. President Truman famously said: "The buck stops here." He was admired for it. This President's words, shirking responsibility and casting blame, were exactly the opposite of President Truman's. "The buck stops here" made President Truman look tall. President Trump's blame game makes him look small and diminished, and people will begin to totally realize his lack of leadership, and respect for him and the office will diminish.

The President should rise to the incredible responsibility of the office, not quit and take the ball home every time the game isn't going the way he likes. The President of the United States, for better or for worse, is responsible for

the healthcare of the country, for the healthcare of Americans who voted for him and for Americans who voted against him. He took an oath to faithfully execute the laws of this country, not just the ones he likes.

There is no ducking responsibility as President. The buck stops with you, President Trump.

So if the procedural votes fail next week, I sincerely hope that my Republican friends here in Congress reject the premise of the President to let our healthcare system collapse and hurt millions. Instead, I hope they work with us in the areas I mentioned and many others to do what is right for the American people.

Mr. President, a brief word on the circuit court nominee on whom we will be voting for cloture soon. The nominee, Judge Bush, in my view, is not fit for the austere office of circuit court judge. He has made some extremely troubling comments about the rights of women and the rights of the LGBTQ community. He has employed anti-gay slurs in his speeches and writings. He has disparaged a woman's right to choose, drawing an offensive and false moral equivalency between choice and slavery. How can my Republican friends vote to elevate to the Sixth Circuit a man who has said things like this?

He clearly lacks the temperament required of a circuit court judge, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote no on cloture and no on the nomination.

Thank you, Mr. President.  
I yield the floor.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of John Kenneth Bush, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

Dan Sullivan, John Barrasso, John Corry, Orrin G. Hatch, Ron Johnson, Chuck Grassley, Tom Cotton, Richard Burr, James Lankford, Lamar Alexander, John Kennedy, Cory Gardner, James M. Inhofe, Michael B. Enzi, John Thune, Todd Young, Mitch McConnell.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of John Kenneth Bush, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 163 Ex.]

#### YEAS—51

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoover	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Strange
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young

#### NAYS—48

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Bennet	Harris	Nelson
Blumenthal	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Brown	Heitkamp	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Udall
Donnelly	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Franken	Murphy	Wyden

#### NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 48.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess from 1:45 p.m. until 4 p.m.; further, that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and leader remarks count postcloture on the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today's vote to move forward the President's nominee to join the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals is a new low. It is a new low that sets a dangerous standard for judges who have power to make critical decisions that impact the everyday lives of the people we serve.

John Bush has a clear record—think about it. He is going to be a judge if this place moves forward tomorrow. John Bush has a clear record of promoting bigotry and discrimination that have no place in our courts. We can't let this nomination slide through this body.

Mr. Bush advocated to the U.S. Supreme Court that women should be barred from attending our military institutions—in this case, Virginia Military Institute. Think about that. There are people in this body who just voted on the motion to proceed—a very small majority that passed this—they are

voting for a judge who says to the Supreme Court that women should be barred from attending military institutions like VMI. He went so far as to call the legal standard allowing women to attend “destructive.” And we are going to put him on the court? That wasn’t 1950. That wasn’t 1960. That wasn’t in the 1970s. That wasn’t even in the 1980s. It was in the 1990s when he said that. Luckily, our Nation’s Supreme Court disagreed with Bush’s retrograde and sexist opinion by a vote of 7 to 1.

But, alas, Bush wasn’t deterred. To this day, he is still a member of an organization that doesn’t allow women to join. He has been a member of groups that have a history of barring Jews and African Americans. Maybe we see some signs of that at the White House, but we shouldn’t be affirming that on the Senate floor. One of these groups actually changed its street address after the city of Louisville renamed the street where the front entrance sits for the boxing legend Muhammad Ali. Think about that.

Senator McCONNELL himself resigned from that same organization because, according to the Lexington Herald-Leader, the majority leader said he “thought it was no longer appropriate to belong to a club that discriminated, and my impression was that the club did.” But we are bringing to the floor a vote for a judge who still belongs.

Leader McCONNELL went on to reference a commonly accepted Senate standard that Federal judges should not belong to discriminatory organizations, saying: “I thought if it was inappropriate for a federal judge to belong to an all-white club, it certainly was something a United States Senator shouldn’t do.”

So I guess the logic here is that Senators shouldn’t belong to a Whites-only club, but Senators should vote for Federal judges who can belong to a Whites-only club.

I agree with Senator McCONNELL that a Senator shouldn’t belong, but no Federal judge should belong to a group with a history of discrimination, especially a recent history of discrimination.

Bush regularly contributed to a conservative blog using a fake name. There he advocated extreme political views on issues, including healthcare, campaign finance, LGBT rights, climate change—all critical issues that come before this court, the Sixth Circuit serving Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. He even cited White supremacist sources. We are going to vote for this man? He even cited White supremacist sources that pushed the conspiracy theory that President Obama was not born in the United States.

I know the President of the United States—the man who sits in the White House—also subscribed to those birther theories, and only late in his campaign did he say: Well, I do, in fact, believe that the President was born in the

United States. He, at least—the President of the United States, the sitting President, then-Candidate Trump—at least finally retracted that. Mr. Bush seems to continue to say that President Obama wasn’t born in the United States and cited those White supremacy theorists who pushed that conspiracy theory.

He has expressed hostility toward women’s rights to make their own personal, private healthcare decisions. In a 2005 public speech—again, not in 1965 or 1975 or 1985, but in a 2005 public speech, he cavalierly repeated a hateful homophobic slur. I would repeat it, but I don’t think it is proper to use that language on the floor of the Senate. I also don’t think it is proper to vote for a nominee to be a judge who feels cavalierly that he can use that term. He said Speaker of the House NANCY PELOSI should be gagged. He has attacked Senator TED CRUZ, our colleague in this body.

Everyone is entitled to free speech, obviously, even if they choose to do it under a fake name. And Mr. Bush is entitled to his political opinions, no matter how offensive. I, of course, defend his right to say whatever he wants. I think others do too. But those opinions have no place in a Federal court whose job it is to interpret the law fairly and impartially.

Can Mr. Bush be trusted to put aside his personal views when considering the law? Even according to his own words, he can’t. At Mr. Bush’s hearing, my friend from North Carolina, Senator TILLIS, asked Mr. Bush if judicial impartiality is “an aspiration or an absolute expectation.” Bush responded that impartiality is an aspiration—so, in other words, not an expectation. He doesn’t think he needs to be an impartial judge; he just needs to be able to say that he tried.

To administer the law fairly and impartially is the No. 1 job of a judge. The ability to do so is the most basic qualification for the job. Judicial impartiality is a principle of democracy and the backbone of our government. It is the reason African Americans and women can vote, that segregation is part of the past, and that marriage inequality is part of the past.

I saw dozens of Democrats and Republicans last night at the Library of Congress listen to the words of Taylor Branch, perhaps the most noted historian of the civil rights movement, in an interview speaking to us about Dr. King having one foot in the Scriptures and one foot in the Constitution as he advanced and advocated for civil rights. We know what that means for our country. Last night, I saw Republicans and Democrats coming together and celebrating that. Then today on the Senate floor, we are voting for somebody like Mr. Bush, who eschews all of those values we hold dear as a country.

The courts are the reason that women can now attend the Virginia Military Institute. It is the difference

between upholding and oppressing the rights of the people we serve.

Think about this: The Obergefell decision—Obergefell v. Hodges in Ohio—was the decision that guaranteed the right to marriage equality. It came out of the Southern District of Ohio and was initially appealed to the Sixth Circuit in Cincinnati. Imagine if a man who boldly repeated homophobic slurs had heard the Obergefell appeal. Think about that. He thinks it is very acceptable in public to make speeches and use homophobic slurs, and he is now sitting on the court bench making decisions about this.

Imagine if today an LGBT Ohioan or a Michigander or someone from Senator McCONNELL’s home State or Senator ALEXANDER’s home State of Tennessee—if they faced this man, could they be confident that their case would be decided fairly and impartially and that justice would be served? Could we be confident that it would when we have a man who will stand up at an event in a big city, the largest city in Kentucky, and engage in homophobic slurs?

I have heard from both African Americans and Jewish Americans who are absolutely outraged at this nomination, partly because he is unfit to serve and partly because now, as Senator WHITEHOUSE, my friend from Rhode Island, who has one of the best judicial minds in this body, has said, if we confirm Bush, it is going to lower the bar in the future to where it is OK to engage in racist talk or homophobic or misogynist talk; it is OK because Judge Bush did, and he is sitting on the Sixth Circuit, so why not bring some more forward? Is that the standard, that your votes today—the 51 Members of this body who voted for cloture—is that the standard you want to set for the future?

Organizations with a history of fighting for justice and equality have written to me opposing this nomination, including the Human Rights Campaign, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Leadership Conference, and on and on and on.

We have a responsibility to hold judges to the highest standard. The job demands it. The people we serve—the people whose lives can be forever changed by the decisions these judges make—deserve it. We cannot allow the bar to be lowered for what is considered acceptable behavior by members of the Federal bench because as this bar is lowered, the faith of citizens in the courts and in this body falls along with it. That is the tone we are setting. That is the precedent we are setting.

I am not a lawyer. A lot of my colleagues who voted for John Bush to be confirmed are lawyers. They understand what precedent means. They understand what political precedent means in this body. I don’t think they want that bar lowered because they know that if we do, as I said, the faith of citizens in the courts and in this body falls along with it.

I hope my colleagues join me in opposing Mr. Bush and show the American people that the Senate still has high expectations and that we still stand for decency and impartiality in our Federal judiciary.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we are grinding the wheels here in Washington, DC, in the Senate very slowly, too slowly, when it comes to confirming the President's nominees, first to the Cabinet and now to the sub-Cabinet positions.

When the American people elected President Trump on November 8, they knew they were electing not just one person but also his full executive branch team, most certainly when it comes to filling vital national security positions like those in the Department of Defense. But because of unprecedented delay and obstruction from our Democratic colleagues, at the current pace, it would take more than 11 years to fully staff the executive branch—and to what end? Do our Democratic colleagues object to the qualifications of these nominees? Well, the answer is, by and large, no. Most of these nominees have sailed through the relevant committees, and some were even nominated by President Obama, but that doesn't do anything to expedite the confirmation process. So I can only be left to conclude that our Democratic friends are just trying to make it more difficult for President Trump to do his job and, in the process, make it harder for us in the Senate to do ours.

On Monday, we voted to end the filibuster of Patrick Shanahan, the nominee for Deputy Defense Secretary at the Department of Defense. Thankfully, we voted to confirm him, but he was confirmed by a vote of 92 to 7, so there wasn't any good-faith disagreement about his qualifications. There wasn't any real doubt about whether he would be confirmed, but our friends across the aisle insisted on burning as much time as possible, using every procedural objection they could in order to delay it. This is the same person who passed out of the Armed Services Committee by unanimous voice vote, essentially by unanimous consent.

Well, if there is one thing that is indispensable in the Federal Government, it is our national security. The Department of Defense has been facing a critical shortfall in leadership, which is dangerous to the Nation, especially while we are engaged in such a vast array of conflicts around the world. We have seen only 6 of President Trump's 22 nominations confirmed, and by drastically delaying this process, our

Democratic colleagues are promoting not only the waste of taxpayer dollars, but they are putting lives at risk. I recently talked to the commander of a cyber unit who said that it took months for recently appropriated money to make its way out to his unit. In the meantime, he had to make personnel cuts and forgo investing in resources that would strengthen our cyber defenses, all because we couldn't get administrative positions filled at the Pentagon. The type of drastic action this particular commander was forced to take is not unique. It is reprehensible that anyone would play politics and delay for delay's sake, especially when considering the nomination of a person who directly impacts the training and readiness of our troops.

Of the 197 nominations to agencies made by the President so far, the Senate has confirmed only 48. Additionally, the Senate has confirmed only 2 of the 22 judicial nominations. This is one reason the majority leader said that we are going to spend a couple more weeks during the August recess to be here, working to get our work done. I have already heard from some of our Democratic colleagues saying: Why would the majority leader make that decision? I said: All you need to do is look in the mirror and ask that question of the Democratic leader, who is leading this unprecedented effort in obstructing and slow-walking these nominations. I suspect that they are going to come forward and say: Well, let's play nice now. Let's make a deal.

The Department of Justice, for example, has only 3 out of 19 nominations confirmed. This is the Department of Justice. The Department of Health and Human Services—by the way, we have been talking a lot about healthcare. Wouldn't you think we need a full complement of nominees confirmed there? But only 3 out of 11 have been confirmed there.

In November, when the people elected President Trump, they wanted him, certainly by implication, to appoint a Cabinet of qualified individuals to help guide our country and carry out the tasks and policies of the administration. I am left with the unfortunate conclusion that, really, what this is designed to do is to not accept the verdict of the voters on November 8 but to continue to obstruct this President and the executive branch by any means available in order to try to make his job harder. The problem with that is it hurts the American people. It wastes taxpayer money. It makes our country and the world more dangerous, especially when his national security nominees are not considered and not confirmed. So it really does represent, to my experience, an unprecedented unwillingness to accept the outcome of the election, and it shows contempt, I believe, for the will of the American people when it came to the election on November 8.

It is easy to call this what it really is. It is an unwillingness to accept the

outcome of the election, further poisoning the already toxic atmosphere here in Washington, DC, and it doesn't need to be that way. In my experience, even after tough elections, people on both sides of the aisle would generally accept the outcome. I don't know what the alternative might be but to accept the outcome and then try to work together in the best interest of the American people, try to find those areas where we do agree—we don't agree on everything, but there are areas where we do agree—and to move forward and make progress. That doesn't seem to be happening today, and it is too bad. It is unfortunate.

To put this in perspective, there were only eight cloture votes of President Obama's nominees by his first August recess in 2008. For everybody's concern, the term "cloture votes" basically means invoking all of the procedures to delay things and make it harder to confirm nominees. Only eight times was that used when President Obama was President. By the time we reach the August recess this year, we will have had over three times as many cloture votes; that is, unnecessary obstacles placed in the way of timely confirmation of President Trump's nominees, making us jump through more hoops. It is delay for delay's sake. I believe this strategy—and it is a strategy—is simply unconscionable and that the time-consuming parliamentary procedures and slow-walking and needless gridlock advance no interest of the American people.

I can only hope people will change in the way they approach this. Maybe if they hear from their constituents, maybe if the stories are written about it or people hear about it on the news, they will call their elected representatives and say: The election is over. Accept the outcome and try to work together in the best interest of the American people. I think that is what our constituents expect of us.

So this week we will press forward with two important nominations, John Bush to be U.S. circuit judge for the Sixth Circuit and David Bernhardt to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior. These are two additional, highly qualified individuals who are seriously needed in their respective roles, but it shouldn't take a whole week to confirm three nominees. That is what it takes now, given the obstruction and foot-dragging on the other side.

I would urge our colleagues to end their political gamesmanship for the benefit of our country and for the American people so we can move forward doing the people's business.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURR). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

## HEALTHCARE

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, the most important three words in our Constitution are the first three—“We the People”—the mission statement for our Nation, laid out in supersized font so that no one would forget what this document, our Constitution, is all about. Our Founders did not start out by writing “We the privileged.” They did not call for a document or a form of government for “We the powerful.” Indeed, they wanted to make clear that the structure of the government they were founding would be very different from those in Europe that functioned for the privileged and the powerful.

As President Lincoln summarized, we are a Nation of the people, by the people, and for the people. That is the vision. That is the vision that I have been coming to the floor and talking about for the last year and a half—about the importance of a government that responds to the issues that affect the citizens across this country, that listens to the people of this Nation.

It was President Jefferson who said that the mother principle of the United States is that we have a government within which each citizen has an equal voice. Admittedly, we had some deep flaws that had to be corrected in order to reach that objective, but that vision of each citizen’s having an equal voice was the only way that the government would reflect the will of the people and make decisions that would reflect the will of the people. Of course, it is hard to hold onto that vision because the powerful and the privileged do not like that vision. They want a government that is of, by, and for the powerful and the privileged, not of, by, and for the people.

The history of the United States is one battle after another of decisions that make a foundation for families to thrive in the United States of America and decisions that raid the National Treasury for the benefit of the rich. We see that battle time and time and time again, and we have seen it very recently in this battle over healthcare. Today, I come to the floor to say that the people of the United States have had an incredible victory—a resounding victory—over those who were championing government by and for the privileged and the powerful.

It is really all about this bill, this TrumpCare bill, which originated in the House of Representatives. It proceeded to throw millions off of insurance—more than 20 million people off of insurance—in order to give tax breaks to the richest Americans. What did the House’s bill do? The House’s bill said that we will give to the 400 richest Americans \$33 billion—not \$33,000, not \$33 million—and rip healthcare away from millions of Americans in order to pay for those kinds of tax breaks for the richest. In fact, just those tax breaks for the richest 400 Americans would have paid for 700,000 Americans to have had Medicaid, which is basic healthcare insur-

ance. That would have been enough to have covered the States of Arkansas, West Virginia, Nevada, and Alaska all put together.

Then we saw the House’s bill come over here to the Senate, and the Senate set up a group of the secret 13. Is there anything more opposite of “we the people” than the secret 13 Senators meeting in the halls of this building and particularly choosing a room that the press would not be allowed into? They did not want to be seen entering the room or leaving the room. That is how secretive it was. That is how embarrassed they were about the possibility of having the American people see what they were crafting. Then they came forward with the Senate’s version of the bill.

Now, of the House’s version, the President of the United States of America called it mean, and he called it heartless, but the Senate’s version did not end up being much different than the House’s version—the Senate’s version that would proceed to throw more than 20 million people off of healthcare, as well, the Senate’s version that, through, maybe, the Congressional Budget Office’s analysis, would throw off 1 million fewer over 10 years—22 million instead of 23 million—but 1 million more over the first year, that being 13 million rather than 12 million. It proceeded to constrain basic Medicare—Medicare as it existed before ObamaCare—in such a fashion that, over time, it would put a stranglehold onto Medicaid. Therefore, it was even meaner, if you will. It was even more heartless than the Senate’s bill.

Then the secret 13 and its leadership said: We do not want to have the American people see this, so we are not going to give the time in order to have committee hearings on it. We are going to keep it out of the healthcare committee. We are going to keep it out of the Finance Committee because the experts will come, and the American people will see just how terrible, how mean, how heartless this bill is.

We had a zero, zero, zero process—zero days of committee examination, compared to 8 years earlier with the longest committee hearing and markup that lasted 5 weeks in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. We had the second longest committee hearing and markup in Finance 8 years earlier, which was the second longest in history. Again, the Senate’s leadership recently said: No exposure in the Finance Committee—zero days in the Finance Committee—zero days in the HELP Committee, and zero months for the Senators to go back and talk to their citizens and talk to their healthcare stakeholders about what this bill would mean.

You know that something is wrong when you have a process that has diverged so dramatically from “we the people.” Instead, we had the secret 13 and the zero days of committee examination and the zero days in the Fi-

nance Committee and the zero months to be able to consult with healthcare experts and stakeholders and, most importantly, zero months to be able to hold a dialogue with the citizens back home.

Yet we did hear from the citizens back home. As great as the effort was to hold them at bay—to give them the stiff arm and prevent them from weighing in—they weighed in nonetheless. My office received well over 8,000 phone calls. Of those, they ran 84 to 1, saying stop this diabolical TrumpCare bill. I also received a whole lot of constituent mail, with more than 25,000 people weighing in from Oregon, back home. It ran 36 to 1.

With 84 to 1 and 36 to 1, when do you see such opposition?

Maybe we saw such opposition because the people of the United States wanted to weigh in, knowing that only the powerful special interests were meeting with the secret 13 to design this diabolical bill to rip healthcare from millions of Americans. Maybe that is why so many American citizens weighed in. Thank goodness they did weigh in. They filled our email boxes, and they overflowed our phone systems. They filled the streets often and went to our home States’ offices to say that this matters, and it certainly did matter.

Has there ever been a bill in the history of the United States that did more damage to more people than the TrumpCare bill that was proposed here in the U.S. Senate?

One of the things that the citizens of the United States did was to weigh in with their stories with all of us—with all 100 Members of this Chamber. They wanted to let us know how unexpectedly they had been affected by their having a child who had a sudden and dramatic illness or a car accident that had occurred or, suddenly, a family member who had been afflicted with cancer or emphysema or leukemia or multiple sclerosis. The list went on and on and on—real people, real lives, real challenges, real “we the people” input.

I heard from Caroline in Portland, the mother of two young children who wrote to me, sharing her story of raising a child with special needs and the help that the Oregon Health Plan had been to her family—the Oregon Health Plan, Oregon’s version of Medicaid—and how terrified she was about not being able to afford healthcare for her child under TrumpCare.

I heard from Leslie, who contacted me about his 3½-year-old daughter Gloria, who suffers from a rare genetic condition that has led her to live with near constant seizures and cystic fibrosis. She needs intensive, around-the-clock care, and she is able to get that care because of a special Medicaid waiver that helps her parents afford it. With TrumpCare, she would have lost that waiver.

I heard from Jay in Eugene, who reached out to share his story about his battle with leukemia and stage IV