

our national discourse. The millions of men and women who participated in marches across the country this week-end offered a powerful statement that they will not tolerate policies that restrict the rights of women or treat women like second-class citizens. They will not treat my wife as one, they will not treat my daughter as one, they will not treat my three wonderful granddaughters as one, and all five of our grandchildren will be treated the same.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration ignored the voices of millions of Americans and is already undermining the rights of women. Two of the President's first Executive Orders targeted women. His first Executive Order attempts to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, which throws into limbo the health insurance arrangements of millions of American women who have been guaranteed maternity coverage as part of their health care plans, who have been able to have affordable birth control for the first time, who have been able to tell insurance companies that no, pregnancy is not a preexisting condition. In other words, women can be treated the same as men when they seek insurance.

President Trump also reinstated the so-called Mexico City policy, a policy that would be illegal and unconstitutional in this country—that will only result in more abortions and more pregnancy related deaths in developing countries. A former Republican Senator whom I respected highly, when he was chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee—he was strongly against abortion, but he said this kind of a policy is only going to result in more abortions and more pregnancy-related deaths in developing countries, and he is right. He is right. Affordable health care, affordable birth control, and the availability of these services would bring down abortion and pregnancy-related deaths, whether in the United States or the countries we help.

Mr. President, Americans are watching. From what I heard and saw from Vermonters on Saturday, I could tell you that they are fired up and ready to go. We need a President who is committed to equality and opportunity for all people, no matter their sex, gender, or race. We will not stand for policies that turn back the clock on so much progress we have made. To paraphrase Dr. Martin Luther King, we have to accept finite disappointment, but we must not give up infinite hope. Only light can crowd out the darkness.

I was proud to see so many Vermonters speaking up. They are not going away, and, as I pledged to them on Saturday, I am not going away. I am going to speak. I am going to speak the same way I did when Marcelle and I walked with our daughter and our granddaughter in the million women march. I will continue to speak up, as the people in my office in Vermont did, in Montpelier. I will speak up for all five of our grandchildren, for Francesca and Sophia and Fiona, but also for Pat-

rick and Roan. I will speak up for all Americans. I will speak up for all Vermonters. They expect nothing less and they deserve nothing less.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

#### 44TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to follow my neighbor from Vermont, Senator PATRICK LEAHY. We also had a very inspiring march in the capital of New Hampshire on Saturday that Senator HASSAN and I both attended. But I am not here to talk about that so much as about the 44th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision. That anniversary happened this past Sunday. That ruling affirmed the constitutional right of women to control our own reproductive choices. It made birth control safer and more accessible for women across this country.

On Saturday, as Senator LEAHY said so eloquently, we saw millions of women and men come together in Washington and Concord, NH, and other cities across New Hampshire and across the United States and all across the globe. There were events in all 50 States and in 32 countries. We came together to defend this constitutional right, as well as other critical gains for women in recent years. Our message, expressed peacefully and powerfully, was that we will not allow these gains to be taken away. We will not be dragged backward.

Despite the progress since the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, women's reproductive health care remains under constant assault. States have passed restrictions intended to shut down clinics and limit access. Sadly, Republican leadership here in Congress has repeatedly attempted to defund Planned Parenthood, which is one of this Nation's leading providers of high-quality, affordable health care for women, and over 95 percent of the work that is done by Planned Parenthood is done to provide preventive services and health care to women, such as mammograms, cervical cancer screenings, and other important preventive care.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration and Republican leaders here in Congress have exhibited a dangerous obsession with rolling back women's reproductive rights. President Trump has promised to nominate Supreme Court Justices who will overturn Roe v. Wade. It is interesting—he has talked about court decisions around LGBT rights as being settled law, and yet we have the Roe v. Wade decision, which is 44 years old, and for some reason he doesn't include that as settled law.

Just yesterday, in one of his first official acts, the President signed an Executive order reinstating the global gag rule, also known as the Mexico City policy that began with Ronald Reagan's Executive order. That Execu-

tive order prohibits U.S. financial aid to many international organizations that offer contraception and comprehensive family planning services to women. But what we have seen with this Executive order that President Trump signed is a broad expansion of that Mexico City policy.

The new Trump administration has joined with Republican leaders in Congress in pledging a much broader assault on women's rights and the gains women have made in recent years. In addition to terminating funding for Planned Parenthood, which more than 12,000 Granite Staters depend on for quality, affordable health care, they have promised to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which would have profoundly negative consequences for women's health. The repeal would end ObamaCare's ban on discrimination against women in health insurance. Depending on how the law is crafted, it would allow insurers to once again classify pregnancy as a preexisting condition and to deny many women coverage; it would allow insurers to charge women more simply because we are women; it would reverse women's access to contraception without cost-sharing; and it would end access to preventive health services, such as mammograms and cervical cancer screenings, without cost-sharing—all very significant benefits of the Affordable Care Act.

Last week, we also saw reports that at the Justice Department, the Trump administration plans to eliminate the Office on Violence Against Women, including all 25 grant programs that have been working to prevent domestic violence, sexual assault, and other forms of violence against women for more than two decades—this at a time when one in five women in this country still reports being the victim of a completed or attempted rape.

Taken together, these actions amount to more than a dangerous obsession with throwing back women's reproductive rights, they amount to an assault on the safety and well-being of women and girls in the United States and across the globe. This is exactly what millions of women and men were protesting on Saturday.

Sadly, people are not just concerned, they are frightened, and unfortunately with very good reason.

As those of us who gathered and marched on Saturday made very clear, we are not going to stand still for this assault on our rights and gains. We are not going to be taken backward. This week, I am introducing bipartisan legislation to permanently repeal the global gag rule, with Senator COLLINS. This rule bans Federal funds for non-governmental organizations that provide abortion services or information about abortion as part of comprehensive family planning services.

As I said earlier, the Trump administration's reinstatement of the global gag rule is even more extreme and harmful than it has been in previous

Republican administrations. Previously, under President Reagan and the Bush administration, this policy applied only to family planning funding, but under President Trump's order, it applies to every program that falls under global health assistance. This means that it puts at risk 15 times more funding and millions more women and families. This targets some of the most effective health organizations that work in the developing world—organizations that are doing great work to provide HIV services and maternal health care and to counsel women on the risks of the Zika infection—and it ignores decades of research. We know that when family planning services and contraceptives are accessible, there are fewer unplanned pregnancies, fewer maternal deaths and child deaths, and fewer abortions. So if you want to prevent abortion—something I think we all agree on—then why not give women and their families access to family planning services? I don't think we can allow extreme ideology to triumph over the urgent practical needs of women and families across the world.

The facts make clear that when family planning services are accessible and contraceptives are affordable, rates of unplanned pregnancies and abortions go down. Here in the United States, the abortion rate has dropped to the lowest level since 1943—a success that is directly attributed to reduced cost-sharing for contraception under the Affordable Care Act. And what do we have? We have the leadership and Congress trying to reverse that assistance to women and families.

In recent days, we have been presented with a fateful choice. We can stand aside and allow the Trump administration to lead an across-the-board assault on women's rights—on women's access to health care, on programs that protect women from sexual assault and other forms of violence—or we can come together on a bipartisan basis to protect the important gains women have made in recent years and decades.

Back in the early 1980s, I chaired a committee in New Hampshire that was working on women's employment in the State. One of the conclusions we came to was when women are supported, their families are supported. So this is not just about women in this country; this is about families. It is about women and their children and their husbands and their brothers and their fathers and their mothers. This is about what is in the best interests of the American people.

Millions of Americans joined together on Saturday, peacefully and passionately, to urge Congress to make the right choice, to protect women's constitutional rights, to protect our access to health care. I urge my Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle to listen to those voices, and I urge my colleagues to join with me in ending the global gag rule once and for all.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, this past Sunday was the 44th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. I wish to take a moment to reflect on how far we have come since the Supreme Court decision.

Because of Roe v. Wade, American women for the last 44 years have had the right, the freedom, the privacy to make their own decisions about their own bodies with their doctors and with their families, without the Federal Government barging its way into the conversation and telling them what they can or can't do with their own bodies.

Roe v. Wade was one of the most important Supreme Court decisions in the history of women's rights in this Nation, but it was only a start. In the 44 years since, we have made so much progress with women's health, and much of that progress has to do with what we accomplished in the Affordable Care Act.

Millions of American women now have access to health care coverage that used to be extremely difficult and expensive for a lot of women to get. Millions of American women now have access to affordable preventive health care services, including contraception, birth control, STD screenings, mammograms, breastfeeding support and supplies, and cervical cancer screenings, and since the Affordable Care Act was passed, the number of unwanted pregnancies has gone down, in part, because more women have access to affordable contraception.

There is no doubt that American women have better access to safe and affordable health care because of Roe v. Wade and the Affordable Care Act, but some of my colleagues are committed to turning back the clock on women's health and taking away women's access to this lifesaving care. They are doing everything in their power to get rid of the Affordable Care Act, and they are determined to see Roe v. Wade get overturned.

One of President Trump's first Executive orders was so extreme that it would take away funding for any international organizations that even talk about whether a woman might want to terminate a pregnancy. We should never let this happen. If we take away women's access to the health care they need, it would be devastating—even life-threatening—for millions of American women.

This weekend, a massive group of women and men and children joined together in women's marches across the globe. They were there to speak out, to be heard, to protest some of these issues that would deeply affect American families and women in particular. I was so proud to march with them. I was inspired by them—their passion, their determination, and their commitment to never give up.

The women's marches were truly the biggest outpouring of support and activism I have seen in my lifetime and certainly that we have seen in this generation. They were loud and clear statements that we will not let the government dictate to us how we should manage these most personal decisions—when you are going to have a family, how big your family is going to be. Those are decisions that are made by husbands and wives, by spouses all across this country about what their family is going to look like.

I urge all of my colleagues in this Chamber to listen to the millions of Americans, the millions of women who would like to make those decisions themselves, who would like to choose their health care, who would not like to be charged more just because they are women, who would not like to see their health care coverage dropped the minute they become pregnant, who would not like to be told: You have a preexisting condition and we will not cover you. That is what we go back to.

We have to fight for the Affordable Care Act, and we have to make sure the Supreme Court does not overturn Roe v. Wade. Listen to your constituents. These marches weren't just in New York; they were in every State across the country. These marches were real, they were powerful, they were determined, and these men and women want to be heard.

Members of Congress, I hope you are listening to them. That is our job, to represent our country. Their voices must be heard. We shall not ignore them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5 p.m., on Tuesday, January 24, the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of the following nominations en bloc: Executive Calendar Nos. 6 and 7; I further ask unanimous consent that there be 30 minutes of debate on the nominations en bloc, equally divided in the usual form; and that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc, with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and no further motions be in order; and that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### FUTURE OF THE EPA AND NOMINATION OF SCOTT PRUITT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, last week the Committee on Environment