

The resolution (S. Res. 265) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

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ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2017, AND MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn to then convene for a pro forma session only, with no business being conducted, on Thursday, September 21, at 8:30 a.m.; I further ask that when the Senate adjourns on Thursday, September 21, it next convene at 4 p.m. on Monday, September 25; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Emanuel nomination, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; finally, that at 5:30 p.m., all postclosure time be expired and the Senate vote on the confirmation of the Emanuel nomination with no intervening action or debate, and, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

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ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator BLUMENTHAL.

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

The Senator from Connecticut.

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HEALTHCARE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for yielding me this time before we close business today, as the last speaker of the day.

Let me first of all say how deeply we feel about folks who have been affected by these mammoth storms in the gulf coast, in Florida, and in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, as well as others elsewhere. Our hearts and prayers are with them.

I am here today to talk about another potential disaster to our country, although it is of a completely different kind and not a physical disaster made by nature but a disaster potentially of our own making—one that can be pre-

vented and avoided. I am horrified that I am here again, fighting back again, against a proposal that would devastate the health and finances of so many families in Connecticut and around the country.

This proposal—the so-called Graham-Cassidy bill—is cruel beyond measure. It is undoubtedly the most extreme proposal we have seen from my Republican colleagues in their political crusade to destroy the successes of the Affordable Care Act. How illogical and irresponsible to pretend, as my Republican colleagues continue to do, that any proposal that cuts billions of dollars from Medicaid and decimates important Affordable Care Act provisions protecting people with preexisting conditions and high medical costs will somehow result in a better healthcare system. In fact, it will vastly diminish and in some respects destroy that system.

The Republican obsession with repealing the Affordable Care Act and gutting Medicaid really has to end, and it has to end today.

My constituents in Connecticut made themselves heard loud and clear in saying that past proposals were sickening attempts to ruin the gains we have made in providing better healthcare to many people. Those folks who came to town meetings and emergency field hearings, who wrote, who phoned, who made their views known, were the catalyst in defeating these ill-advised efforts before. I can assure you that, once again, they will be heard. They will, once again, guarantee its defeat.

Under this lethal proposal, hundreds of billions of dollars will be cut from Medicaid. Those severe cuts will cause Connecticut more than \$2 billion by 2026. In 2027 alone, without the reauthorization of funds, Connecticut would lose \$4 billion. In 2027 alone, \$4 billion would be lost to Connecticut without reauthorization. Those are not just dollars, those are lives. They are hundreds of thousands of lives.

This bill would end the patient protection that countless Americans have come to rely on in their oftentimes lifesaving care. States would allow insurance companies to reimpose annual caps and lifetime limits; insurers could decide to drop essential health benefits, like maternity care or mental health services; and those with preexisting conditions could see their premiums skyrocket, leaving them with no affordable options and nowhere to turn. It would be a humanitarian catastrophe. This is not hyperbole. It is not exaggeration. It is reality.

In a recent report on this legislation, there was a finding that a person with metastatic cancer would see a \$142,650 premium surcharge; a pregnancy would mean a \$17,320 premium surcharge; and, during a deadly and unrelenting opioid epidemic, people struggling with substance abuse disorder could expect to see a \$20,450 premium surcharge. These effects are immoral and incomprehen-

sible. They will lead to many Americans needlessly losing their health insurance and very likely their lives.

When I see the true effects of this bill and what they are likely to be, I can't help but think of a little boy in Connecticut whom I mentioned on the floor before. He is 7-year-old Conner Curran. Conner has Duchenne muscular dystrophy. It is a chronic and terminal condition that will slowly erode his motor functions unless there is a cure, and none exists now. This disease will eventually take his life. He is a young man of extraordinary courage and strength and so is his family.

His parents have told me that although he appears healthy, he will slowly lose his ability to run, walk, or even hug them goodnight. In fact, earlier this summer, just days before the last Republican effort to gut Medicaid and repeal the Affordable Care Act—which failed in the Senate, fortunately—Conner's family had two lifts installed in their home so he could move up and down the stairs more easily. The video shows Conner's infectious smile as he tries out the new lift, not fully understanding the disease that necessitates it but enjoying his newfound freedom. He is just a little kid.

His mom wrote that this experience shows just how important Medicaid is to their family. As Conner gets older, he will only need more and more help, more medical services and equipment, and more financial support for his family to enable that kind of care. He will need a loving and compassionate healthcare system that will protect and care for him when he is at his most vulnerable. That is the only way he will have a fair chance at life. This bill, to put it mildly, deprives him of that fair chance.

So I question whether my Republican colleagues can look Conner or his family in the eye and explain to them why protections for children with preexisting conditions should be weakened, diminished, eviscerated. I question whether they can look at Conner's smile and tell him why Medicaid will be eliminated. This is the program that one day will make sure he has everything he needs to live. It is a program that should be enhanced, not cut by hundreds of billions of dollars.

Tell his parents why the insufficient or temporary funds my colleagues have proposed to replace Medicaid will run out in 10 years, as a shadow of Medicaid that you have left behind goes dark. See whether Conner's family cares about your legislation. See if your empty promises leave them reassured.

I can tell you, Conner's parents are two of the kindest, most wonderful people you will ever meet. They are also among the hardest working. They worry about countless things every single day. They worry about Conner's slowing body and medical research that could save him before that pernicious disease takes his life. They worry

about his independence. They worry about his two brothers and the toll this awful disease will have on them. They worry about those stairs—the ones that will have a lift. I promise you, Conner's parents worry nonstop. All of us worry about our children. They worry about Conner unceasingly.

I will say it again. I am ready to work with all my colleagues on solutions to the healthcare problems our country faces. They are urgent and important—critically important—to address. I refuse to stand silently and let

this cruel proposal give Conner's family even more reason to worry.

We as a country are better than these reprehensible proposals—first, repeal and replace; now, Graham-Cassidy. They are all different versions of TrumpCare that is a catastrophe which will lead to a humanitarian crisis. This heartless proposal should be put behind us. We should work together as our colleagues Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY are doing and, at least for the moment, give Conner some assurance that we are making things better for him, not worse, and the parents who worry

about their little boy know that at least we are moving in the right direction, not rolling back the progress we have made.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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ADJOURNMENT UNTIL THURSDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2017, AT 8:30 A.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 8:30 a.m. on Thursday.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:14 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, September 21, 2017, at 8:30 a.m.