

HURRICANE AND WILDFIRE RELIEF

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, Puerto Rico and the nearby U.S. Virgin Islands have been buffeted by not one but two successive hurricanes, including a direct hit by the powerful Hurricane Maria. Many citizens have had their homes and businesses destroyed, tens of thousands—hundreds of thousands—are living without electricity, husbanding gas and food and water and their remaining cash. The situation is desperate. Puerto Rico has taken a serious punch to the gut. They need our help, and they need it now.

These are our fellow Americans—3.5 million of them. It is our duty in the Senate to speedily send aid to the people of Puerto Rico and to the U.S. Virgin Islands, just as we did for the people of Texas and Louisiana who were hit by Hurricane Harvey and the people of my own State when we suffered from Hurricane Sandy, as we will do for the people of Florida who were hit by Hurricane Irma.

So let's all work together to help the island of Puerto Rico rebuild and recover, just as we would anywhere else in America.

At the same time, we must bear in mind that much of the western part of our country is besieged by wildfires. The Senators from Oregon have come to the floor to remind us of our duty to help those parts of the country also.

The administration must quickly prepare an appropriate aid package for Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Western States for Congress to act on in the near future. We Democrats will insist that any package of supplemental aid for Hurricanes Harvey and Irma also include aid for Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Western States ravaged by forest fires. We owe it to every State and community impacted by these devastating hurricanes and these horrible firestorms.

One beautiful thing about this country is, although we are 50 States with different ideas and politics and accents, we are also one Nation, bound together, and we will come to the aid of any individual State or territory whenever one of them is in need.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on healthcare, last night we began to see reports of a new version of the Graham-Cassidy bill. Faced with stern resistance from several Members of their own caucus, it appears that the authors of the legislation have tweaked the bill in an attempt to gain the support of the holdouts. Despite sending more money to the States of those Members, this new bill, if anything, is worse in many ways than before and, in the long run, will still result in a net cut for every single State in the country.

It still contains a massive cut to Medicaid, it still defunds Planned Par-

enthood, and it actually further weakens consumer protections, and almost completely does away with protections for those with preexisting conditions—even worse than in the first version.

The S&P has just come out with a study that estimates that Graham-Cassidy would result in 580,000 lost jobs and \$240 billion in lost economic activity by 2027. That is not a Democratic propaganda machine, that is Standard & Poor's; down the middle, 580,000 jobs lost and \$240 billion in lost economic activity if Graham-Cassidy is enacted.

Under the latest version, States would be able to lift the regulation that caps out-of-pocket costs, meaning insurance companies could offer barebones policies with sky-high deductibles and copays.

Under the latest version, States could do away with lifetime limits, meaning insurance companies could cap the amount of coverage you receive for a given illness. Imagine the parent of a child suffering with cancer being told your policy only covers 4 months of treatment; you are on your own after that—devastating to too many families in this country.

Under the latest version, States could remove the benefit of getting preventive services at no cost, such as birth control, cancer screening, and immunizations. Under the latest version, States could opt out of the preexisting condition without even applying for a waiver. So even more so than in the old bill, preexisting conditions are not protected.

States just have to submit a plan that allows for adequate and affordable insurance. In other words, the new Graham-Cassidy makes it even easier and even more likely that States will allow insurance companies to discriminate against Americans with preexisting conditions. Again, that parent of a child aching with cancer is in real jeopardy. Maybe they can't even get insurance at all.

In short, the new Graham-Cassidy tells every American with potentially high medical costs, you are on your own. If you have diabetes, cancer, congenital illness, or asthma, Graham-Cassidy says that you are on your own. It eviscerates the protections that make healthcare affordable for those who need it most.

It is no wonder that it is so unpopular with Americans. Recently, even though the bill has just been introduced, a majority of Americans say they don't like it. The more they learn—just like with the old TrumpCare—the less they like it.

Americans want good healthcare, lower premiums, and more coverage. This bill does the opposite—higher premiums, fewer people covered, and it makes it harder to get good insurance.

Guess what. We are expected to vote on this bill in just 2 or 3 days. There will have been only a single hearing, which Republicans scheduled almost as an afterthought, just to say they had one. Certainly, there will not be any

amendments to the bill. It is not going to go through the committee process. There will not be a shred of input from the minority, despite all the complaints that ObamaCare, which did have input from the minority, was passed by one party's vote.

The Senate's former Historian said he could not think of "anything comparable" to the process Republicans are employing in the entire history of the Senate. The Senate's former Historian, a scholar, said that there is nothing comparable to the process being employed now—one-sixth of the economy, no amendments, one hearing, no changes.

Add to that fact that the CBO will not have enough time to properly analyze this legislation. We will not know how it actually impacts our healthcare system. At most, we will get a barebones analysis sometime today that may not tell us a thing about how Graham-Cassidy would impact coverage—the cost of care, the quality of care, and the stability of marketplaces.

It is shockingly incomplete not to have our CBO tell the American people and tell us—the representatives of each State—how it affects their State and rush it through. Even after the minimal CBO report today, Republicans will still be voting on a healthcare bill with thick blindfolds on their eyes. They will not be able to see it. My guess is that I don't think they want to see it.

When the American people learn what is in this bill, they are going to dislike it intensely—intensely. The new TrumpCare is bad policy. It is being jammed through this body at an alarming, ludicrous pace. To say it is hastily constructed and considered barely scratches the surface.

New versions are coming out every few hours. The websites of the Senators from Louisiana and South Carolina keep saying: We are changing this; we are changing that.

It is Monday. We are voting this week. The Republicans are basically scrawling a healthcare law for 300 million people on the back of a bar napkin. The bill should go down. I believe my Republican colleagues who were skeptical about this policy and this process are too principled to be swayed by last-minute formula tweaks.

Governor Walker of Alaska, an Independent, has said he will not support a healthcare bill that is bad for the country, even if it might be good for his State, which the bill isn't. That is principled leadership. I believe the same kind of principled leadership exists in this body as well. I know it does.

I wish to say to all of my Republican colleagues directly: Vote down this bill. If it goes down, we Democrats are pledged to work in a bipartisan way to improve our healthcare system. We are pledged to work through committee, to support the efforts of Chairman ALEXANDER and Ranking Member MURRAY, and to find a bipartisan consensus on a healthcare package.

We welcome bipartisan change. We know there is always give and take when that happens, but usually the product is better. A bipartisan process led by ALEXANDER and MURRAY to make the present system better will be a whole lot better for both the process in this body and for the health of the American people than this rushed-through, half-baked proposal.

We disagree in the Senate a lot. Very rare are the times when there is a clear right and wrong, but this bill and the process it has gone through are clearly wrong. The bill would hurt so many people in our great country. The process has damaged this institution and would do much greater damage if it were to pass.

We have a chance—a chance—to legislate the right way, through regular order, by resuming bipartisan work already started by the HELP Committee, which has had hearings and intends to—at least, as I understand it—go through a process with amendments. We Democrats are at the table. We ask our Republican friends to join us at the table once again.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Emanuel nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of William J. Emanuel, of California, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2021.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Washington.

HEALTHCARE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, before I begin on the nomination before us, I wish to first echo what so many of my colleagues—Democrats and Republicans—and millions of people across the country have made very clear today: enough with all of the partisanship around healthcare, enough with playing politics with people's lives, and enough with the repeated attempts to roll back all of our progress and move our country backward.

It is time that we drop Graham-Casidy, drop TrumpCare, once and for all, and join together to actually work to improve healthcare, starting with acting right now to lower premiums for families and strengthen healthcare in a bipartisan way.

That has been my message to colleagues all along. The truth is that I know many of my Republican colleagues prefer a bipartisan route. They have said as much in the last TrumpCare debate, in the very productive discussions we have had in and outside of the HELP Committee, and in many of their comments over the past few days.

It begs this question: Why are we in this spot yet again?

People across the country have been demanding for months to turn the page on TrumpCare. Instead of working in a bipartisan way to actually help people, a few of our colleagues have now pushed through yet another reckless repeal bill that is even worse than the previous TrumpCare version. It is a bill that will increase costs for families, especially seniors and people with pre-existing conditions.

It will allow insurance companies once again to charge people more for basic healthcare, such as maternity care, mental health services, and more, and it will take away women's access to care at health centers like Planned Parenthood and result in millions of people across the country losing their Medicaid. Just like last time, the bill has not been subject to any real hearings, public debate, or even a complete and thorough CBO score.

Let's be clear. This bill is not a new proposal. It is not serious policy. It is not regular order. It is yet another version of TrumpCare that would be devastating for people across the country.

This is actually pretty simple because there is a clear alternative path before us. Let's do what my colleague, the senior Senator from Arizona, and so many others have so bravely called for once again and return to working together.

As I have said, I wholeheartedly agree with my colleague from Arizona that the right way to get things done in the Senate—especially on an issue as important to families as their healthcare—is through regular order and finding common ground. That is why I am still at the table ready to keep working. I remain confident that we can reach a bipartisan agreement as soon as this latest partisan approach by Republican leaders is finally set aside.

Mr. President, I come to the floor today on the nomination before us and to urge my colleagues to vote no on William Emanuel to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board.

On the campaign trail, President Trump promised to put workers first, but instead this administration has rolled back worker protections and prioritized corporate interests at the

expense of our workers. It is critical today, more than ever, that the NLRB remain what it is supposed to be—independent and committed to protecting workers' rights to organize and to bargain collectively.

I am deeply concerned that President Trump's nominee, Mr. Emanuel, will use his place on the Board to advocate for corporations and special interests. As a corporate lawyer fighting on the side of management, Mr. Emanuel has spent decades repeatedly undermining workers and their efforts to unionize.

It is the core mission of the NLRB to encourage collective bargaining. Given his long anti-worker track record, I am afraid that workers' fundamental rights are not safe in his hands.

I urge my colleagues to join me tonight in doing what President Trump has failed to do and to start working to put working families first and to vote against this nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

ANTITRUST

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to return to the topic of antitrust. When I last spoke on this matter, the debate was already simmering, albeit mostly on the left. In the time since, controversy in both our markets and our politics has kept it at the fore.

Handled prudently, that can be a good thing. I say we have this discussion. I think it is important. Heavens, I will even try to do my part to make it a little more fun. But I do have my concerns that the topic of antitrust policy is still more enthusiastically invoked than deliberately considered.

I am concerned that it is still undermined by the same old easy retreats to the right and to the left. That may be typical of issues here in Washington, but on no issue can we afford it less. You see, especially in antitrust policy, it is critical that the center hold. It is critical that we secure that delicate middle ground—hard won over the years and easily lost in a moment of fervor—whereon economic liberty thrives.

I have come to the floor, once again, to speak and, to the growing discussion, to contribute.

Permit me to say a few words about holding the center. When I took to this floor last month, I argued that on the fundamental question of economic management, America has courageously defied the historical norm. Rather than acquiescing to the central planning, we fully embraced free enterprise. Thus, ours is a market economy and the most prosperous one of our times.

Markets are messy. They are chaotic and, from the individual perspective, impossibly complex. Perhaps, most counterintuitively, they are, in a sense, disorganized.

For all their productivity, for all the wonders they work, there is no single actor or entity in control. The miracle arises all on its own, through an order