

So I appreciate the chance to set the record straight by outlining the differences between a recent bipartisan bill with two influential Republican Senators with whom I had the honor to work and the extreme Republican framework that came out last week. These plans are not just trillions of dollars apart based on the numbers. It is clear they are written with entirely different goals in mind.

Our view is that tax reform ought to be about giving everybody in America the opportunity to get ahead. What we have said is that, instead of it being an “our way or the highway” partisan approach, we ought to be doing—particularly in the area of tax reform—what has a storied history. The key to a successful tax reform, based on that history, is working in a bipartisan way.

I will close with the comments about the Democratic principles, which is that we are not going to give relief to the people at the 1 percent, we are not going to break the bank, and we are going to focus on the middle class. Those principles don’t even go as far as ideas advanced by President Reagan, where he said that we are going to treat income from a wage and income from investment in the same way.

I close by way of saying this. No. 1, the distinguished Republican whip is wrong when he compares the bipartisan bill I have been a part of to what the administration’s tax framework is all about. No. 2, the right way to do this is to focus in a bipartisan way, not through partisanship only. The principles that we have outlined on our side, when you compare them, do not even go as far as some of the ideas embraced by the late President Reagan.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURR. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we start the scheduled 11 a.m. vote now.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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 Eric D. Hargan, of Illinois, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Mitch McConnell, Lamar Alexander, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Mike Rounds, Chuck Grassley, Thad Cochran, Steve Daines, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman, Thom Tillis, John

Hoeven, John Thune, Mike Crapo, Bill Cassidy, James M. Inhofe, Tom Cotton.

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 Eric D. Hargan, of Illinois, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 210 Ex.]

YEAS—57

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

NAYS—38

Baldwin	Hassan	Sanders
Bennet	Heinrich	Schatz
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schumer
Booker	Kaine	Shaheen
Brown	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cantwell	Leahy	Tester
Cardin	Markey	Udall
Casey	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Franken	Nelson	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Harris	Reed	

NOT VOTING—5

Cochran	Heller	Menendez
Cortez Masto	McCain	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 57, the nays are 38.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority whip.

TAX REFORM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, beginning today, the Senate Budget Committee will take the next step in our effort to enact pro-growth tax reform, this time by marking up a budget resolution.

The committee’s work follows the release last week of our unified framework—the tax blueprint on how to cre-

ate jobs and how to put more money back in the pockets of the hard-working Americans who earn it.

Even though the framework is just 1 week old, there are some who are imagining the worst-case scenario. Rumors are spreading like wildfire. Last week, the Tax Policy Center fanned the flames when it published a report analyzing the plan—which, I want to emphasize, hasn’t been written yet. Let me say that again. The Tax Policy Center published a report criticizing a plan which hasn’t been written yet.

This alleged or so-called nonpartisan think tank has looked into its crystal ball and now claims to be able to see the future, and it said the future doesn’t look very good. The tax plan, it says, will be a resounding flop. Well, give me a break. I, for one, am sick and tired of this sort of pessimism parading as expertise—people talking about things they know nothing about and claiming to be the experts. It is pretty common here, in Washington, DC, you might have noticed.

It is not helpful to assume the worst prematurely and to condemn this important exercise before we are even starting, and it is irresponsible to masquerade biased, partisan analysis as somehow objective.

As the Wall Street Journal wrote a couple of days ago, in response to the Tax Policy Center’s economists, they made at least two baseless claims: first, that our proposal would “reduce federal revenues by \$2.4 trillion over the first ten years and \$3.2 trillion over the subsequent decade”; second, the top 1 percent of taxpayers would “receive about 50 percent of the total tax benefit.”

These statistics were pretty quotable and indeed raged like a prairie fire across the news media in our country, especially when the media is predisposed to believe the worst, without any question or semblance of skepticism. After all, the Tax Policy Center’s report made for easy headlines, reciting the same tired refrains we have all heard before that are all too predictable; that, somehow, our tax plan is only designed to help the rich.

Apparently, the temptation was just too great to resist, even though the report didn’t have a real author since no self-respecting economist wanted his or her name attached to it. As the Wall Street Journal pointed out, however, last week’s tax blueprint was just that—a starting place, a plan, a framework, and nothing more. It excluded many important data points which would be important to a real analysis.

For example, the income ranges for the three consolidated tax brackets, those weren’t in the blueprint. The value of the expanded child tax credit and when it would be phased out, that wasn’t in the blueprint either, and you would need to know that information in order to make a reasoned, logical analysis. The blueprint also doesn’t mention tax rates for small businesses and what deductions will be eliminated as part of the base broadening.

As we all know, an army of lobbyists, lawyers, and other folks have, since 1986, larded the Tax Code with a wide variety of deductions, credits, and other special preferences. What we need to do is clear out some of that thicket so we can lower the rates for everybody, so everybody gets a tax cut, and I mean everybody.

It is not going to be easy because we can imagine that army of lobbyists descending upon Capitol Hill trying to protect the special deals they were able to carve out of the Tax Code since 1986, but we have to do it.

None of these facts that would be important in order to conduct a reasoned and objective analysis was included in the framework, but all of them would have great potential to greatly move the final numbers. These, and many other details, are essential for any honest fiscal assessment of changes in our Tax Code.

When will we begin to see some of those numbers? We need to pass the budget resolution out of the Budget Committee this week—which we will. Then, after Columbus Day, we will come back and have a debate and a vote-arama to pass the budget resolution, which will equip us with the technical tools we need in order to pass a reconciliation bill.

Then the real work is going to be occurring in the Finance Committee on this side of the Capitol, where we will take the chairman's mark—the original bill which Senator HATCH will introduce at the committee—which will fill in a lot of these details. I predict that will be sometime around the third or maybe fourth week of this month.

Then we are going to have an amendment process. The real question in my mind is, Will our Democratic colleagues participate and make this a bipartisan bill? I hope they will.

I also want to mention two other related points that deserve mention but which were left out of the Tax Policy's report. One is, the committees in Congress will actually have the ability to come up with the details I mentioned. That will happen in the Ways and Means Committee in the House and in the Finance Committee in the Senate. There will be, as there should be, discussion, deliberation, and compromise as the normal legislative process works out.

There have been many around Capitol Hill who have said we don't have enough "regular order." What that means is, we need to conduct the normal legislative process and have the committees actually do what they are designed to do—which is to have hearings and vote on amendments and pass the bill out so it is available to be heard on the floor of the Senate. Then the Senate has a chance to amend it, vote on it, and debate it.

The second point I want to make is, any analysis of tax reform must consider what will be the impact on economic growth that will result from it. As the Journal stated, if the rate of

GDP growth speeds up from the Obama administration's pace of 2 percent a year to 3 percent, incomes would rise and revenues would increase to the Treasury by some \$2.5 trillion. That is what is most often overlooked, including by some of the people who score these bills.

If we are successful in passing pro-growth tax reform and tax cuts and we can get this sleeping giant of an economy awake and roaring again just to get it to 3 percent—which is below the average growth of the economy over the last three decades—just at 3 percent, it would put \$2.5 trillion more in the Treasury. That would be great because it would help us not only pay our bills, it would help us pay down the deficit and the debt.

Obviously, these are important factors to acknowledge. The best way to accomplish meaningful tax reform is to lower rates and simplify provisions across the board, to give Americans more take-home pay and have to spend less time hiring somebody just to complete their tax return. We can't simply throw up our hands, do nothing, and accept the status quo because American workers and job creators can't afford the status quo.

I am optimistic about the framework that has been released and look forward to working with my colleagues on the Finance Committee in the days and weeks ahead. What we have now is a useful starting point, and we need to fill in the blanks—and we will—so then we can have a debate based on the facts, not based on somebody's wild, fevered imagination about what the tax bill might look like.

One last point on that. We have the highest tax rate in the world for corporations and businesses. This used to be something that even the President of the United States, Barack Obama, back in 2011 acknowledged and said we need to reduce that in order to be competitive globally. We know too many of our jobs are moving overseas.

I mentioned yesterday that IBM, one of the largest businesses in the world, has more employees in India than they have in the United States. Now, there are probably varied reasons for that, including our Tax Code. Some of it is access to highly trained workers, lower costs of operation, and the like, but our Tax Code is a self-inflicted economic wound for our country, and the people who pay the price are the people whose wages are stagnant or people who are looking for a job and can't find one. We need to put more money back in their pocket, let them keep more of what they earn, and get this economy growing again.

PROTECT OUR CHILDREN ACT

Finally, just yesterday, the House passed a bill I introduced with Senators BLUMENTHAL, KLOBUCHAR, and HELLER called the PROTECT Our Children Act. This bill helps to stop the exploitation of children across the country and over the internet by reauthorizing the Internet Crimes Against Children, or ICAC, Task Force Program.

The Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force is a national network of 61 coordinated entities that represent 3,500 Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies that investigate and prosecute child predators. They develop victim support programs, provide training and technical assistance, and advance forensic methods.

They also help facilitate community education to make parents more aware of this threat against all of our children so we can prevent internet crimes against children before they even happen. This is an issue I have cared about for a long time, starting with my service as attorney general of Texas. I saw firsthand how vulnerable children can quickly become victimized at the hands of some truly despicable individuals. I also learned about the resources it takes to stop and prosecute these predators. Like the Presiding Officer, who also served as attorney general, we know that not all of our jurisdictions have access to the same sort of expertise and resources so it is important to have this resource in order to help them investigate and prosecute these crimes.

Back in 2000, when I started it in Texas, we called it the Internet Bureau. It is kind of a quaint title these days. Now I think they call it the Cyber Crime Unit, but we call it the Internet Bureau to fight internet crimes like child pornography. Tragically, in this day and age, the internet provides a safe harbor for too many people who want to use it for their own nefarious purposes. It can be a difficult arena for our law enforcement to navigate, but this bill ensures that they will have the resources to fight cyber crimes and keep our communities safe by reauthorizing programs until 2022.

I am happy the House has now acted, and I am thankful for the work of my colleagues from Connecticut, Minnesota, and Nevada for joining me in this effort. I look forward to working expeditiously to ensure that we repass this legislation in the Senate as soon as possible.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KING. 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. KING. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a subject that has been on our minds in recent weeks and months and, in fact, years; that is, healthcare—one of the most complex and confusing but important topics that we have to consider.

Before I get into the bulk of what I want to address, I want to make the point once again that as we are debating healthcare and debating who pays, how much they pay, whether it is the ACA or Medicare or Medicaid or private insurance or private pay, we also