for 12 hours for maintenance. Isn't that amazing? For 12 hours on the one day of the week when many working people are going to have an opportunity to try to understand this system and enroll, they are going to be down from midnight Saturday night until noon on Sunday, the middle of the day on Sunday.

I want to go back to the beginning. This isn't about ideology. This is about seeing that the laws are faithfully executed. That is why they call it the administration. The administration is supposed to administer the laws, not unadminister them.

We are talking about people. Why does anyone want to have fewer people with insurance? I am at a loss to understand the motivation. I can understand if you don't like the ACA. If you don't like the ACA, let's work together and find ways to improve it and change it, but figure out how to keep people with health insurance.

The uninsured rate in America has fallen 50 percent because of the Affordable Care Act. That is an enormous achievement. It is one that should be celebrated, not sabotaged. That is what is so puzzling to me about this: fewer people with coverage and higher costs to the Treasury.

We can do better than this. These are all things the administration in good faith can say: OK, we don't like the ACA, but we are going to move beyond the politics of this and try to help people get the coverage they desperately need.

This is about real people's lives. This is about lifting the threat, the cloud of a healthcare disaster, both physically and financially, from families across America. We are talking about millions of families—not tens of thousands but millions of families. I don't get why we are deliberately trying to undermine and sabotage something that is so meaningful to so many people. As one can tell, it makes me angry. Mostly, it makes me sad because I know people in Maine who have benefited, who have gotten coverage, who did not have it before and who will not have it if this is taken away—people who need those navigators to help them, people who need to be able to use the website on a Sunday morning, people who need to have rates that are lower because the CSRs have been funded, and we are not continuously raising the uncertainty of that piece of this law.

We can do better. This is about the health of our people. I cannot think of anything more important. We can have different ways of getting there, but right now we have a law that is in place, and until we change it—and we should change it; we should fix it—we should administer it straight up, straightforwardly, as it was written and as it was intended. This is too important for politics, and it is too important for ideology. This is all about people and their health.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The Senator from Utah.

TAX REFORM

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, last week I joined with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Director of the National Economic Council, our Senate majority leader, the Speaker of the House, and the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee in releasing a unified framework for tax reform.

This is a big step in the ongoing effort to overhaul our Nation's miserable Tax Code. I have been in the Senate awhile, and I can only remember a few times when the White House and the House and Senate leadership were in agreement on an issue as complicated as tax reform so the current state of affairs is pretty remarkable. Still, as we made clear in the framework document, this is only a step; it is not a final product.

The House and the Senate tax-writing committees will be tasked with putting together legislation that is aimed at meeting the goals and principles that are outlined in the framework. Therefore, as the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, my top goal at the moment is to produce a comprehensive tax reform bill that can get at least 14 votes in the committee because, without that, there likely will not be any tax reform. Yet, before we can get to that point, we have to pass the fiscal year 2018 budget resolution.

Make no mistake, the budget resolution is critical to our tax reform efforts. If we are going to move a tax reform vehicle in the current environment, we need a resolution in place with a workable reconciliation instruction that will allow us to produce a bill of sufficient size and scope to give middle-class taxpayers a pay raise, grow our economy, and create more American jobs.

As we all know, the Budget Committee will begin marking up its resolution later today, and it will include the type of instruction we need in order to produce a bill that will fix our broken tax system, boost economic growth, and give a pay raise to middle-class Americans.

I am grateful for the leadership of Chairman ENZI and all of our colleagues on the Budget Committee for their work in crafting the resolution, and I urge everyone who supports tax reform, whether he is in Congress or elsewhere, to support the budget resolution.

Once again, that is the next big step in this process, and it is an absolutely essential step. Once that is done, the Finance Committee will be able to move forward on crafting and marking up a tax reform bill.

Some have said tax reform is a do-or-die moment for the GOP. I wholeheartedly believe that to be true, not just because we might lose an election or that our poll numbers might go down, it is that Republicans have promised, for some time now, that we will deliver meaningful, comprehensive tax reform that will spur economic growth, increase wages and well-paying jobs, and simplify our existing system. We need to deliver on that promise and not just because we will suffer politically if we do not. We need to deliver because the cost of doing nothing—the cost of maintaining the status quo for the foreseeable future—will be too much for the American people and our economy to bear.

The last major overhaul of our Tax Code was 31 years ago, and in many respects, our current tax system was built for the economy of 1986 and is ill-suited for the needs of today. In the last 31 years, we have seen a dramatic increase in international trade and expanded globalization. We have seen the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of most centrally run economies, and of course we have seen the development and rapid expansion of the internet, which has, in many respects, remade the entire world several times over.

America no longer has a competitive Tax Code. Instead, we have a Byzantine system with exceptionally high rates and an array of overlapping and often less-than-effective deductions, exclusions, and credits. This is not just a parade of horribles trotted out by Republicans, these problems have been acknowledged by a number of prominent Democrats, like Presidents Clinton and Obama, not to mention our current Senate minority leader and the ranking member of the Finance Committee, Senator WYDEN.

We all know the system is not working. Still, in many respects, we have politics as usual around here when we talk about tax reform. While both parties have supported reforms in the recent past, including a number of reforms that are included in the framework, we are already hearing the same, tired arguments that come up every time Republicans want to talk about tax reform.

According to the opponents of reform, our ''plan'' will cut taxes on the superrich. Our ''plan'' will raise taxes on the poor. Our ''plan'' will harm the middle class. Our ''plan'' is a giveaway to greedy corporations. These are some pretty odd claims given that as of right now, no completed ''plan'' exists. We have a framework, and we are not calling it that simply for PR reasons. We have some basic principles and targets that the leaders have agreed upon, but as the framework makes clear, the Finance and Ways and Means Committees have been tasked with filling in the details and writing legislation.

Here are just some of the details that are not included in the framework:

Income thresholds for individual tax brackets. The framework includes rate targets for three brackets, but the breakdown of those brackets is still to be determined.

The size of the enhanced Child Tax Credit. The framework anticipates an increase, but it does not specify an amount.

The existence and rate of the highest bracket. Our document leaves room for the creation of a fourth bracket at the high end, but it does not include any rate target.

Safeguards to prevent abuse of the separate passthrough rates.

These are just some of the key details that need to be filled in.

My point is, no one can make any definitive statements or make any credible estimates about the fiscal impact of the plan until the committees do more work. Still, that has not stopped people from trying.

Last week, the left-leaning Tax Policy Center released an unattributed ''analysis'' of the framework that appeared to confirm a number of blanket claims that critics have made about our ''plan.'' As we all know, left-leaning pundits, liberal media outlets, and many of our friends on the other side seem to love the TPC, apparently because the TPC is willing to provide estimates and analysis about tax plans without waiting for all of the boring details.

We all remember well when the TPC wrote Mitt Romney's tax plan for him and claimed that he wanted to raise taxes on the middle class to finance a tax cut for the top 1 percent. Their analysis of the Romney plan—a plan that was not yet in existence beyond a broad set of principles—became the gospel for our friends on the other side, and their estimates were repeated time and again; never mind the fact that they did not have nearly enough evidence to support their assertions.

The TPC appears to be on the same track with regard to the unified framework. I guess they think they can get away with it again. Maybe they can. I don't know. The TPC's document from last week included a relatively precise estimate of lost revenue that they claim would result from the framework. It also estimated how much of the tax benefit of the framework would go to the top 1 percent of earners, again with a fair amount of precision. How they got to these results is, certainly, to me, a mystery.

There is simply no way for the TPC or anyone to deliver these kinds of specific estimates with the information that is provided in the framework. To get their estimates, they filled in blanks with numbers from other proposals, added a pile of exceptionally pessimistic and biased economic assumptions, and came up with a tax plan that, for all intents and purposes, is their own. Just because they say this analysis was performed on the unified framework and was not just a plan they made up themselves does not suddenly make their estimates credible.

Still, I expect to hear a lot about the TPC's ''analysis'' in the coming weeks. Some will treat their estimates as fact, and I expect we will see them cited in a few campaign commercials before too long. Breaking from any notion of professional accountability, the TPC's ''analysis'' was, according to the TPC's report, authored by the TPC's staff. Evidently, no one in an organization that describes itself as ''nonpartisan'' wanted to put their name on a document that would be used in such a partisan manner, but let's be clear. We cannot separate this kind of speculative ''analysis'' from the way it is being used by our friends on the other side. It has become fodder for more of the same partisan attacks.

In going forward, I hope the TPC and other think tanks will acknowledge the still undefined features of the framework, including the commitment to maintaining the current progressivity of the Tax Code, which will require adjustments in order to achieve. I think groups like the TPC can be helpful if they avoid the partisan criticisms and focus on shedding light and providing accurate assessments of various proposals. Everyone who has an interest in these issues should wait and let the tax-writing committees do their work.

In the Finance Committee, we are going to write a committee bill. Any Member who is sincerely interested in working with us will get a chance to contribute, whether he is a Republican or Democrat. We are going to have a markup during which the bill will be debated and amended in the light of the day. Thereafter, I expect that we will have a fair and open amendment process on the floor. Despite some odd claims to the contrary, the Joint Committee on Taxation will score the bill.

At the end of the day, people will be free to disagree with the final bill and to vote against it, but no one will be able to credibly claim that the legislation was written behind closed doors or that the American people did not get a chance to see what was in the bill and read accurate accounts of its fiscal and economic impacts.

I want to work with anyone who is willing to come to the table in good faith. I think the framework puts forward a number of general proposals that both parties can support. There is fertile ground for bipartisanship here if my Democratic colleagues are willing to set aside some of the unreasonable preconditions that they have put on their involvement in tax reform. The last time I checked, both Republicans and Democrats supported tax relief for low- and middle-income families. The last time I checked, reducing our uncompetitive corporate tax rate was a bipartisan objective. The last time I checked, both Republican and Democratic voters were in need of higher wages, more jobs, and a more competitive economy.

This is going to be a difficult process, whether it is bipartisan or partisan. There is a long list of sacred cows in our Tax Code, each of them with a constituency that will fight to keep them in place. We are going to have to eliminate a number of tax deductions and credits if we are going to be fiscally responsible, including a number of provisions that are, under the current system, pretty popular in certain segments of the country. The framework specifies two deductions that should stay in place because they benefit many in the middle class and they are designed to achieve important policy goals. Everything else is currently on the table, including items that I have personally championed in the past.

We have already seen stories about how Republicans are already divided on the fate of the State and local tax deduction. Make no mistake—that is a pretty popular deduction, particularly among Democrats, but it has some Republican supporters as well. I would remind my colleagues who are adamant about preserving the State and local tax deduction that the benefits of that particular provision skew heavily toward higher income earners, especially those living in high-tax cities and States. So if our main goal is to help the middle class, I would hope that there won't be many Senators who will fall on their swords in order to keep this particular deduction in place.

Still, nothing is set in stone, and most items are currently still up for negotiation. The State and local tax deduction is, like virtually every other tax provision, currently on the table, and we may very well have to pare it back one way or the other. We need to see how the numbers work out before we can speak definitively on this or any other tax policy item.

Before I conclude, let me just say that this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. There is currently more momentum in favor of tax reform than at any other time in the past three decades. All of us should be willing to take advantage of this opportunity. All of us should be able to give in order to get a final bill done that will make sense and will get us back on track. I am hopeful that we can have a bipartisan effort here, but whether we do or don't, I intend to see that we get tax reform done and that we get it done in the best interest of our country, the best interest of our people, and above all, the best interest of the middle class.

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. CASEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I come to the floor today for the second time this week to highlight the tragic human cost of gun violence. I will speak today about just one victim, but of course we are thinking as well about the 58 victims in Las Vegas. Not counting the killer in that total, the last count was 58 victims and well over 500 injured.

We have some sense of the gravity of the violence that played out in Las Vegas. I am not sure any of us can fully understand it, and some of us will