

Whether we are shipping our wild caught, sustainably managed salmon that people around the world love to eat, we ship that out. We ship in the toothpaste, the loaves of bread, and the basics that we need. Thanks to the combi, we have been able to do this with regular, reliable scheduled service in areas where the weather would usually chase off more. These are smaller aircraft. They can handle it all. The size of the combi allows them to land and take off in much more turbulent conditions than smaller propeller planes.

So it is a kind of bittersweet time for some of us who have grown up around these aircraft. As we think about the “only in Alaska” type of things, it is encouraging to know that this development of retiring the combi planes—the proposal is to replace them with separate, full-sized passenger and cargo planes. As a result of the increased demand for goods and passengers, we need more space on planes to deliver both. If updating the fleet means that we need and get more business in Alaska, I suppose that is a good thing for all.

There are many of us who are going to be bidding a fond farewell come October 18, which is the last scheduled flight for the combi. It is also Alaska Day in our State. I thank Alaska Airlines and those who fly these great planes and do so safely. They provide a level of service and have for so long. I thank them for what they have done over the course of so many years.

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. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, here is what is happening with so-called “tax reform.” Tonight, the Budget Committee is voting on a budget resolution that does two things.

First, it sets the spending limits for everything in the government—environment, energy, defense, healthcare, education, transportation, and so on.

Second, it includes something called reconciliation instructions that basically direct all of the committees to report back with legislation that either increases or decreases the Federal deficit by a certain amount. This time around, here is what they are doing—asking the Senate Finance Committee to draft legislation to increase the deficit by \$1.5 trillion. Again, this is going to pass on a party-line vote, with Republicans prevailing, to increase the deficit by \$1.5 trillion. This is what will start the tax reform process.

That is not all. Republicans still haven’t given up on decimating our healthcare system. They are still trying to cut Medicaid and, this time,

Medicare, and they are going to use this tax bill. They are going to cut \$473 billion from Medicare at a time when our population is getting older and many seniors are already struggling. They are also going to cut \$1 trillion from Medicaid. This is the program that pays for one out of every two births in this country. It helps millions of families who have loved ones in nursing home care.

Last week, they tried to pass a healthcare bill that cut taxes. Now they are trying to pass a tax bill that will cut healthcare. Their proposal will, actually, increase the deficit by \$4 trillion. That is 12 zeros.

Here is what we could do with \$4 trillion. We could completely rebuild half of the airports in the United States. We could put 20 million people through 4 years of college. We could pay off the debt for every student loan.

Instead, the United States is going to be in the red by \$4 trillion, but after they cut \$1 trillion from Medicaid and one-half trillion dollars from Medicare, the party that has railed against the Federal debt and deficit will still add \$2.5 trillion to the deficit.

This is all so that they can give tax cuts to the richest people in the United States. I promise you, I understand that both parties are sometimes guilty of exaggerating and that sometimes both parties are guilty of relying on talking points and relying on caricatures of the other side, but you couldn’t caricature this bill if you tried. This bill is already a caricature of what people say Republicans are all about, which is to shred the social safety net and provide tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans.

They are going to cut the corporate tax rate from 35 to 20 percent, and they are going to cut tax rates across the board, but the people who will actually benefit will be the people at the top. The Tax Policy Center, which is a non-partisan, highly respected group, has crunched the numbers, and they found that within 10 years, 80 percent of the benefits of this \$4 trillion tax bill will go to 1 percent of Americans.

Remember what is happening. We are borrowing a huge chunk of this, and whatever is not borrowed comes out of Medicare and Medicaid. So the programs that pay for women to give birth in a hospital or for elderly people to get healthcare will be decimated, and the wealthiest Americans will pay less in taxes. This is bad policy, not just for the people who work hard but for the whole economy.

I want to give you a specific example. Again, both parties rely on talking points, and both parties accuse each other of having the wrong set of ideas, but we have an example of what happens when you do this. This bill is actually modeled after what they did in the State of Kansas. The State government eliminated one of its business taxes, telling people that it would help the State’s economy. Instead, the economy slowed down, which left them with

even lower tax revenues. They had to cut government programs, like education, and now people do not want to send their kids to Kansas public schools anymore because they do not have the resources to educate their children.

This is not a path that America should follow. Everyone needs to pay their fair share, and that includes big corporations and the people who are benefiting from the system and making millions of dollars every year, but in this proposal, they are the ones getting all of the tax breaks.

Companies already have huge tax breaks. Some corporations end up paying zero in Federal income tax every April 15 even though they are making healthy profits. They have teams of lawyers and accountants who help them dodge paying even a penny to the Federal Government. That is why corporate income taxes make up less than 10 percent of all of the revenue to the Federal Treasury. Meanwhile, at least 30 percent of the middle class will actually pay more if the Republicans succeed with their tax reform package.

Think about this.

Thirty percent of the middle class is going to see tax increases in their tax bills. Why? It is because they have to find some money to subsidize the tax cuts for the richest people. Some of the money will be found by borrowing; some of the money will be found by making cuts to Medicare and Medicaid; and some of the money will be found by increasing taxes on the middle class. One out of every two households with children will see its taxes go up under this plan. Increasing taxes for these people while decreasing them for big corporations is not a plan for economic growth. We have heard over and over that Republicans do not want to add to the deficit—I don’t either—but this is, literally, what they are voting to do tonight.

Again, this is not a talking point. This is not a sort of rhetorical flourish. The bill, itself, provides for \$1.5 trillion worth of deficit spending. Yet it is not deficit spending on the military; it is not deficit spending on disaster response; and it is not deficit spending on Medicare or Medicaid or Social Security or any of the social safety net programs that they claim is the problem with the Federal budget. It is deficit spending for the purpose of a tax cut, 80 percent of which is going to 1 percent of the country. This is not conservative—certainly not fiscally conservative—and it will not help us to grow the economy.

It is no surprise that this policy is bad, because, again, the process has been so bad. With healthcare, they ignored regular order. They obliterated the committee process. They ignored Democrats. They ignored the way the U.S. Senate is supposed to work, and they failed. One Republican Senator says that he will not vote for anything that adds one penny to the deficit. Another Republican Senator said that he

will not do anything that does not cut taxes for everybody. It already does not meet that test. Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle—Republicans too—have promised not to cut Medicaid or Medicare. It violates all of those promises.

If you did not like the ACA repeal because it cut Medicaid, guess what. This cuts Medicaid more. If you made a promise to your voters not to cut Medicare, you should be aware that this bill provides for one-half trillion dollars in cuts to Medicare. If you are railing against debt and deficits, this is the biggest budget buster that I have ever seen in my short, 5-year career in the U.S. Senate.

During the campaign, the President of the United States promised not to cut Medicare, and the senior Senator from Arizona has called for regular order. This violates every procedural and policy principle that has been articulated on this Senate floor since I have been here. I do not see a way forward on this legislation when it has been conceived in a purely partisan way. It will only take us deeper into dysfunction. For the sake of the Senate, let's stop going down this path. Let's restore regular order and work together on a bipartisan tax reform process.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO PASTOR ALONZO PATTERSON

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, nearly every week I have been coming down to the Senate floor to recognize someone in my State who has made a difference for Alaska and really has made a difference for all Americans. It is my favorite part of the week to actually come down and talk about Alaska to my colleagues in the Senate, to the folks in the Gallery, to the press, and to the American people watching. It is what I refer to as our time to talk about the Alaskan of the Week.

Many watching and on the floor and those who have visited our great State know that Alaskans think it is the most beautiful place in the world. There are natural wonders everywhere. We had a beautiful summer. We have resilient, warm-hearted, fiercely independent but accepting people. We have challenges in Alaska just like the rest of the country, but at the heart of our State are kind, generous people full of different cultures and backgrounds that we celebrate.

Most people don't know this about Anchorage, AK: My hometown is probably the most culturally and ethnically diverse city in the country. We have places of worship all over the city and the State that reflect that great diversity of Alaska and America.

One of the stalwarts of our faith community for the past 47 years has been Pastor Alonzo Patterson of the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, and he is our Alaskan of the week. Every Sunday he fills his church with spirit, joy, and gospel music punctuated by "amens" that float through the church, down the street, and work their way into our community and into our hearts. That is what he has been doing for 47 years. For decades, those sermons have inspired countless Alaskans to help feed the hungry, provide homes for those without, and strive to create a more just country, State, and society, and a more just community.

Let me tell you a little bit about Pastor Patterson. He was born in Wilson, LA, and raised in New Orleans. Like a lot of Alaskans, thousands of Alaskans, he joined the military and made his way up to Fairbanks, AK, in the 1960s, where he founded the Corinthian Baptist Church, and he ministered to the congregation there. Then, in 1970, he was called to Shiloh, one of the few African-American churches in Anchorage. He designed and rebuilt Shiloh at its current location, and under his leadership, Shiloh's membership, its facilities, and its energy took off.

He has conducted thousands of marriages and baptisms. He has given thousands of eulogies, celebrated graduations and anniversaries, counseled countless couples, people who are grieving, people who are rejoicing, people who are suffering, and he has helped turn that into action—not just for the African-American community but for all people and all races in our community and in our State.

Pastor Patterson told a reporter:

The church was and always has been a sanctuary in the Black community. It is the meeting place, the community center, the focus for support and help, the place you come to be important, the psychologist for your particular problem, the time to shout out your frustrations and the only place to be significant.

He continued:

You could be a Deacon or something in the church where in the rest of the community you were just another Black person. The church was for us a panacea for many of the social ills that existed then and still have relevance.

That is what he talked about. That is his heart and soul, how he saw his church and congregation. Thanks to Pastor Patterson and Shiloh, the city is a more inclusive place for all. He has helped heal those social ills for thousands of our fellow Alaskans.

One of his friends, Celeste Hodge Growden, a member of the church, said:

He and the church have led the way for a lot of things that have been accomplished here [in Anchorage]. Pastor Patterson always says, "leaders lead." That is the way he has lived his life. He is not in the back-ground.

During election time, Pastor Patterson organizes a huge "get out the vote" campaign. He was instrumental in getting a Martin Luther King memorial in Anchorage—a 10-year-long endeavor.

She also talked about the groups he chaired, founded, and led beyond his congregation, including Bridge Builders of Anchorage, the March of Dimes Foundation, the Martin Luther King Jr. Foundation of Alaska, and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Anchorage.

You know, with leaders like this, the list goes on and on. In addition to Corinthian Baptist Church in Fairbanks and Shiloh in Anchorage, Pastor Patterson also planted Eagle River Missionary Baptist Church and Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church of Palmer.

I have been uplifted to the core when my wife Julie and I have gone to Shiloh and listened to Pastor Patterson preach and listened to the beautiful—and I mean beautiful—Shiloh choir sing. It is a spiritual and energizing experience like no other. I love attending services at Shiloh.

On November 5, 2017, Pastor Patterson's 80th birthday, he will be giving his last sermon as pastor of Shiloh, and I certainly plan on being there. He is stepping down for Pastor Undra Parker, who will be the new and dynamic leader of Shiloh—another great Alaskan, another veteran—and I know he is going to do a great job. But of course it is a bittersweet time for Shiloh's parishioners because of the foundation Pastor Patterson built.

The church, the singing, and the amens will continue on Earth and the church in Anchorage, AK, as it is in Heaven. God bless Pastor Patterson, his wife of 61 years, First Lady Shirley Patterson, and the congregation of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church for all they have done and continue to do for our community.

Congratulations to Pastor Patterson for being our Alaskan of the Week.

Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about my Members on the other side of the aisle who are doing something that is just not helping the United States of America right now; that is, obstructing progress with regard to the new administration.

I understand that right now my party is in the majority, and to be honest, I have been someone who thinks we should spend a lot more time here in the Senate, working in the Senate and getting things done. We have a lot of work to do. But I see that people back home can get frustrated with some of the lack of progress, and some of that we can address by spending more time in this body.

Some of the questions that are coming out are about why things aren't getting done. It is a good question. Answers can be complicated, but what it mostly boils down to is that a lot of issues in this body—a lot—rely on consensus. The rules were carefully constructed so that the minority has a say in the legislative process. For the most part, I believe that is a good thing. As a former President once pointed out, we are not a red or blue America; we are the United States of America.

With that said, the people did elect us to come here and start getting