acts of pointless sabotage of our Nation's healthcare system. He signed an Executive order that would give insurers more latitude to sell temporary, junk plans that are not only incredibly risky to the consumer but undermine the rest of the healthcare market by drawing healthy Americans out of the pool. Even worse, President Trump decided to stop the cost-sharing program, which reduces premiums, deductibles, and copays for 7 million Americans a year. There is literally no upside to the President's decision to end the cost-sharing program.

Because of the President's actions, premiums will go up between 20 and 25 percent, according to the CBO. Just today in Pennsylvania, we saw premiums rise by 30 percent as a direct result of the President's actions. Deductibles and out-of-pocket costs will go up by thousands of dollars. Deficits will rise by $194 billion because the government will have to pay more in subsidies to make up for the lack of the cost-sharing program, and the marketplaces will become less stable because more people will go uninsured.

The Republican Governor of Nevada, Brian Sandoval, may have said it best:

> It's going to hurt people. It's going to hurt kids. It's going to hurt families. It's going to hurt individuals. It's going to hurt people with mental health issues. It's going to hurt veterans. It's going to hurt everybody.

That is from Republican Governor Brian Sandoval.

Another point that the President should hear is that nearly 70 percent of the Americans who benefit from these cost-sharing payments live in States that Donald Trump won in the election.

Make no mistake about it—the President is deliberately undermining our healthcare system with these two actions. When premiums go up because of this action, the blame will fall on his shoulders.

There is a way out. The way out of all of this is for Congress to aggressively pursue a bipartisan healthcare bill that will take cost-sharing out of the President's hands by locking in the payments. For many months, Democrats have been pushing to stabilize the markets and to work toward a bipartisan agreement that would keep premiums down for millions of Americans. Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY have been negotiating a package that would include cost-sharing as well as some provisions that the Republicans want. These negotiations began long before the President's decision to end cost-sharing last week. I am encouraged by the progress of the negotiations, and I am hopeful that we are nearing an agreement that makes clear that we have no intention of supporting the President's reckless efforts at sabotage.

If President Trump is now supportive of an agreement that stabilizes and improves the existing system under the Affordable Care Act, we certainly welcome the change of heart. We have been asking for this for a long time. We hope that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, in their realizing the damage the President has done, will join us in strengthening, not in sabotaging, the healthcare system.

TAX REFORM AND THE BUDGET

Madam President, now a word on the Republican tax plan.

This week, the Republican majority will likely move to pass a budget resolution that includes reconciliation instructions to increase the deficit by $1.5 trillion. Amazingly, it also includes a total of $1.5 trillion in cuts to Medicare and Medicaid. Cutting taxes on the wealthy to be paid for by cutting Medicare and Medicaid? How many Americans want that—Democrat, Republican, Independent, liberal, conservative? The GOP budget makes it as clear as day that the Republicans will try to pay for a massive tax cut for the wealthy by cutting Medicare and Medicaid. It is the same formula they used for TrumpCare—cutting healthcare to pay for tax cuts for the rich. The American people rose up against that plan, and it failed. This plan should fail for the same exact reason.

Now the White House is out with a new report today, which reads that a giant tax cut for big corporations will increase wages for middle-class Americans. President Trump complains about fake news. Well, this is fake math, and it is as bad as any of the so-called fake news the President has complained about. This is a deliberate manipulation of numbers and facts that, quite frankly, is appalling. History shows that tax cuts like these benefit the wealthy and the powerful to the exclusion of the middle class. History shows that corporations will use tax cuts for CEO bonuses, stock buybacks, and dividends rather than for increasing worker pay or creating new jobs.

In fact, none other than Goldman Sachs concluded that shareholders, not workers, "typically get most of the benefits of tax cuts." This is not a liberal think tank or CHUCK SCHUMER talking; this is Goldman Sachs, which represents shareholders—a lot of them. The two authors of this plan, Gary Cohn and Steve Mnuchin, who are from Goldman Sachs, should heed what their former employer says. Even Goldman Sachs is saying that the Trump tax cuts will not create massive growth or new jobs or higher wages. In fact, another recent report by Goldman Sachs predicts only the most minor growth effects from this tax cut, not more than 0.1 or 0.2 percent.

As the President likes to point out, the stock market is at record highs, and companies are raking in unprecedented profits; yet wages have remained relatively flat. The companies are already flush with money—record profits. They are not creating jobs; they are enriching their shareholders and enhancing their CEOs' salaries with stock buybacks. It is proof positive that companies already have the cash reserves but do not use them to boost wages.

To assert the opposite, which is that giving corporations and the wealthy a tax cut leads to higher middle-class wages, belies the facts and the history, and it is a blatant attempt to fool Americans into thinking that the GOP plan would benefit them when in reality it is a sop to the rich. No wonder our Republican friends cannot talk about what the plan does—cuts taxes for the wealthy and powerful. They have to hide it and say that this is job growth. Those are fake numbers, and I would like my friends on this side of the aisle to admit that they believe in trickle-down economics, because that is what their plan is all about.

Rather than helping the biggest corporations avoid paying their fair share, tax reform ought to reward those companies that create jobs and raise wages here at home. Similarly, tax reform ought to directly benefit the middle class, but the Republican tax plan slashes a key middle-class deduction in the form of the State and local deductibility.

Now let's talk about Vice President PENCE. He is visiting Buffalo, NY—a city I love in my home State. Since Vice President PENCE is traveling to Buffalo, I thought that I would share some numbers about how the elimination of the State and local deduction affects western New York.

In Representative COLLINS' district, which stretches from East Buffalo toward Rochester, 29 percent of the residents claim the State and local deduction. They get an average deduction of $12,125. In Representative HIGGINS' district, which is in the heart of Buffalo, 27 percent of the residents claim the State and local deduction, with an average deduction of $12,083. In Representative REED's district, which is just south and east of Buffalo, 22 percent of the residents claim the State and local deduction, with an average deduction of $11,716. Their constituents get clobbered, as do just about all New Yorkers and so many in the rest of the country, when you eliminate the State and local deductibility. It affects the middle class and the upper class. The State and local deduction elimination is a dagger to the heart, not just to Buffalo but to Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, and all of Upstate New York.

Will Vice President PENCE have the courage to answer questions about this deduction elimination? Will he tell middle-class New Yorkers that they are going to get a huge tax increase under this bill? When the Vice President arrives in Buffalo tomorrow, I hope he is prepared to explain why he wants to hike taxes on thousands of middle-class families in the Buffalo area, in the Rochester area, in the Syracuse area, and in the Albany area.

Eliminating the State and local deduction hurts the middle class, and it hammers the New York economy. Businesses, if they do not have this State and local deduction, are not likely to relocate in Buffalo or Rochester or Syracuse or Albany. It also hurts homeowners. Make no mistake about it—if we get rid of the State and local deduction, the values of homes will go down. That is why the realtors are so opposed to this elimination. It is not just true in New York or in California or in Connecticut or in New Jersey; it is true across the whole country.

As for my dear friend and chairman of the Finance Committee's State of Utah, because of the great charity of his people—and so many tithe—35 percent of the taxpayers will get a huge, huge increase in their taxes with the elimination of State and local deductibility. So many of them do not use the standard deduction because they are so charitable, but they are penalized for that charity.

Eliminating the State and local deduction, while slashing taxes for the wealthy and huge corporations, will hurt middle-class taxpayers.

Now there are some efforts to compromise State and local deductibility. They don't work. Some have proposed letting taxpayers make a choice between getting rid of the mortgage deduction and getting rid of the State and local deduction. That is like saying: Should I chop off my left hand or my right hand, Mr. Middle-Class Taxpayer?

Others have said: Let's limit it to people who earn below $100,000. That still leaves lots of people at risk, particularly in high-priced areas like Long Island, and it doesn't reduce the deficit by much. It is estimated that a large percentage of the deficit will still go up.

It makes no sense to eliminate State and local deductibility. Vice President PENCE ought to go to western New York, but instead of going just to a small business—and we want to lower small business taxes—he should go to a middle-class family in Amherst or in Orchard Park or Tonawanda and tell them that he is there to raise their taxes.

NOMINATION OF TOM MARINO

Madam President, I want to address the President's nominee to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Representative MARINO.

An article in yesterday's Washington Post described Representative MARINO's advocacy for a law that may have prevented the DEA, the Drug Enforcement Agency, from going after the worst practices of drug distributors. It is a profoundly troubling revelation about the man who has been tapped to lead the primary agency in our government that focuses on stopping the opioid crisis.

The opioid crisis was in part fueled by wholesale drug distributors sending millions of unnecessary pills into communities. As my friend Senator MANCHIN has pointed out, one company shipped 20 million doses of opioids to pharmacies in his State of West Virginia over a 5-year period. That included 11 million doses sent to Mingo County, WV, where the population is 25,000. There were 11 million pills sent to a county of 25,000 people over a 5-year period. No wonder there is a crisis.

What the Washington Post revealed yesterday was that Representative MARINO worked to pass a bill in 2016 that made it ''virtually impossible for the DEA to freeze suspicious narcotic shipments.'' Confirming Representative MARINO as our Nation's drug czar would be like putting a wolf in charge of the henhouse.

The American people deserve someone totally committed to fighting the opioid crisis, not someone who has labored on behalf of the drug industry. So tonight I am calling on President Trump to withdraw the nomination of Representative MARINO for the ONDCP. We can do better. Senator MANCHIN has made such a call, and he is right. President Trump ought to withdraw Representative MARINO's nomination.

If the President presses forward with Representative MARINO, it will be another betrayal in a long line of betrayals on issues near and dear to rural America. The President's healthcare proposals would have put daggers into the heart of rural America, decimating Medicaid and rural hospitals. The President's tax plan lavishes the wealthy and the big corporations but does little for the working man or woman in rural America. The President promised several months ago to label the opioid crisis a national emergency, yet he still hasn't done it. He said this afternoon that he will finally do it next week. We will see.

By now, the idea that the President is sticking up for the forgotten man and woman in the forgotten parts of rural America should be dismissed. President Trump seems to have forgotten the forgotten parts of America, and his lack of action—we don't need talk; we need action—on the opioid crisis and his nomination of Representative MARINO is just another example.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

Madam President, over the weekend, several parts of California were swept by some of the most devastating wildfires the region has seen. At least 40 people have died, thousands of homes and businesses have been utterly destroyed, and at one point over 100,000 people were evacuated. As Gov. Jerry Brown said, ''This is truly one of the greatest, if not the greatest, tragedies that California has ever faced.''

Our thoughts are with everyone affected by these wildfires. We are enduringly grateful for the firefighters and all our first responders. And our response here in the Senate must be to send aid where aid is needed.

For our country, this has been a devastating few months of fires and floods. Hurricanes Harvey and Irma buffeted Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are contending with a humanitarian crisis on an unprecedented scale in the wake of Hurricane Maria. Our job is to speedily send aid, and I am hopeful that we can pass another supplemental aid package this week as well as another more comprehensive package later in the year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip is recognized.

TAX REFORM AND THE BUDGET

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, today I want to talk to you about time and how little of it we have to accomplish two incredibly important legislative priorities, one that is national in scope and potentially historic in impact. The first of those priorities is tax reform. We have a target date on the calendar, and now the clock is ticking. We have to get to work.

The budget resolution that we will consider this week sets November 13 as our deadline for the Finance Committee to report a bill, and of course the distinguished chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator HATCH, is on the floor, and that is a commitment I know he takes very seriously.

This bill, I hope, will broadly cut taxes on individuals and businesses alike and put more money in the pockets of working families across the country. What I like most about the plan I have seen so far is that it is bold. We are not trimming a little here and a tiny bit there. We are slashing rates, consolidating brackets, and eliminating pet credits and deductions. This is not JV tax reform. This is tax reform that is serious and based upon our commitment to get the economy growing again.

Two weeks ago, the House approved its version of the resolution, and the Senate Budget Committee reported out its version. Now the Senate will consider the committee's resolution in the coming days. Why do we need that budget resolution? How is this all going to work?

Well, these resolutions from each Chamber are the first step in passing pro-growth tax reform. They authorize the use of a tool called budget reconciliation. That means when the tax reform legislation is considered, it can't be stopped by less than a majority of the Senate. Of course, this isn't our first choice.

I wish our colleagues across the aisle, our Democratic friends, would join us in bipartisan tax reform, but passing a budget resolution in the Senate is a must because this is something we can hold in reserve if our friends across the aisle simply refuse to participate in the process of pro-growth tax reform. It is a key procedural step because we have to fundamentally change the Tax Code before the end of the year.

How well our economy does next year, how many jobs are created, and how much investment occurs here in the United States will depend largely upon our success in passing pro-growth tax reform this year. The clock is ticking, and we have to act with dispatch and with determination.