

prosecutor, Mr. Palk has the legal skill and community support to excel as a U.S. district judge for the Western District of Oklahoma. The Senate Judiciary Committee approved his nomination by a large, bipartisan vote of 17 to 3.

Then there is Trevor McFadden. Mr. McFadden's sterling record of public service makes him an ideal candidate for the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Not a single Member—not one—of either party opposed him.

These nominees should have sailed to confirmation yesterday. Instead, Democrats are forcing us to waste time so we can again arrive at the exact same conclusion, but simply later this week.

This really has to stop.

In President Obama's first year in office, Republicans forced this procedural hurdle for a single judicial nominee, and it was a controversial one.

Let me say that again. In President Obama's first year in office, Republicans forced the procedural hurdle we have had to endure many times for one nominee, and that nominee was controversial.

In President Trump's first year in office, Democrats have forced this procedural hurdle for every single judicial nominee except one, even if they actually supported him or her in the end. This is just the kind of partisan game that Americans are so sick of.

President Trump should be commended for his strong judicial picks. The Senate is going to keep working hard to confirm them, and we are going to succeed. The only question is whether the Democrats are going to keep wasting more of the Senate's time getting there. I hope they won't. I hope they will end these pointless games so that the Senate can keep its time and focus where it belongs.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, good morning.

COMMENDING SENATORS FLAKE AND CORKER

Yesterday we all learned that our colleague Senator FLAKE will be retiring at the end of his term. After Senator CORKER's announcement a few weeks ago, this was another blow to this body. Senators FLAKE and CORKER are both men of principle, decency, and conscience.

In his address here on the floor shortly after his announcement, Senator FLAKE alluded to the great figures of history who toiled at these desks to remind us that our time here is only

temporary. He is certainly right. It should comfort him, however, that history will judge Senator FLAKE and Senator CORKER as two men of the greatest conscience to have graced this Chamber on either side of the aisle in a long time. This Senate will be much poorer for their departures.

THE BUDGET AND REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

Mr. President, last week the Senate passed one of the worst budgets in our Nation's history. It excuses one of the most massive expansions of the national debt ever—\$1.5 trillion. It directs the committees to take a sledgehammer to Medicaid and Medicare, again to the tune of \$1.5 trillion, and it sets up the same awful, partisan process that Republicans used to try to jam healthcare through for tax cuts.

The budget is now before the House. I hope every House Member is taking a close look at it, and Republican Members who come from States such as New York, New Jersey, Washington, California, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Illinois, and Minnesota should pay particular attention to the issue of State and local deductibility. There is no doubt the elimination of State and local affects States and congressional districts over the entire country.

For instance, one of the States that pays the highest rates and gets the highest tax break from State and local is Utah. Thirty-five percent of Utahns take it because it is such a large percentage tithe, and they don't use the standard deduction. It affects middle-class families in every State. In the State it has the lowest effect on, West Virginia, it will still affect 17 percent of families. I don't have the numbers in front of me, but my guess is that Kentucky, the home State of our Acting President pro tempore, is probably in the twenties. But in many States, the State and local deduction is claimed by over one-third of taxpayers and amounts to tens of thousands of dollars a year in deductions.

In California, 34 percent of taxpayers take the deduction for an average of \$18,400. In New Jersey, 41 percent of taxpayers claim State and local with an average deduction of \$17,850. Faced with this, some of our colleagues are looking for a compromise. They say: Well, let's just take away the deduction for the people who earn above \$200,000, \$300,000, or even \$400,000. Or they say: You can choose between taking the State and local deduction or the mortgage deduction. That is like saying: Taxpayer, we will chop off your left hand or your right hand, but we will give you the choice.

Even without the mortgage trade, a compromise doesn't work. It doesn't work for a few reasons. No. 1, it is double taxation. You are being taxed on paying tax. No. 2, for States like New York, particularly my upstate colleagues, it chases away businesses. Companies don't want to locate in a place where their top executives are going to pay a lot more, because they can't deduct their taxes. No. 3, it low-

ers State income so that whether or not you use the State and local deduction, your school board, your road building, your police, and your fire departments will be hurt as they will be creating a huge deficit.

So a compromise doesn't work here. I have named some of my Republican colleagues in New York. One of them got very mad yesterday. All I say is this: In 1986 there was a Democratic tax reform bill led by Senator Bradley and Congressman Gephardt. I had the same conviction and with the same strength and velocity opposed their taking away State and local, even though they were of my own party. We worked hard and we succeeded. Tax reform passed in 1986 with Ronald Reagan's blessing. I supported it. It was real tax reform. We closed loopholes and lowered rates. We did not just give massive tax breaks and let the deficit go up. But State and local was removed, and the bill still passed.

So I would simply ask my Republican colleagues to oppose their party leadership when it hurts their States and constituencies, as I did back in 1986 when I was a fourth-term Member of Congress.

Now a few Members of the New York and New Jersey delegation—a whole bunch in New York—have come out against the elimination of State and local deductibility. I salute them. They have done what they should do. In the eyes of the Founding Fathers, they have represented their States and their constituents. They have not represented these hard-right, corporate, wealthy interests that just want their taxes reduced. Are the remaining Members of the Republican delegation from New York and New Jersey, as well as Members from Washington State, California, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Minnesota, Illinois, and all the other States going to stand up now because they know this hurts middle-class constituents? This is not a tax break for the rich. The rich have lots of other big tax breaks, and the property taxes that they pay are not that much in terms of their income. I hope they will stand up as some of my courageous colleagues have in New York State and in New Jersey.

Here is another reason we don't want to eliminate the State and local deduction. A recent study by PricewaterhouseCoopers found that under the Republican tax plan, any homeowner with an income of between \$50,000 and \$200,000 would see an annual average increase of \$815.

Here is the amazing part of their study. They say that home prices would fall 10.2 percent in the short term. That makes sense. If you are a new homeowner or buying another home, you calculate: How much is my mortgage? How much are my property taxes? What deductions will I get? If you don't get the deduction, you have less money to pay the mortgage because you are paying higher taxes. So the demand for homes goes down, the

price new home buyers are willing to pay is less, and home prices go down.

So my Republican colleagues, particularly those in the House who have to vote on this bill tomorrow, are going to hit their middle-class and upper middle class constituents with a double whammy if they vote for this bill. They will pay more taxes, their home values will go down, and home values are the rock of the middle class. That is what people work for their whole lives. The happiness someone 45 or 50 years old has when they pay off their mortgage and their home is theirs is great. Why delay that? Why impede that? Why impugn that?

Are our Republican colleagues willing to go home and explain to their middle-class constituents why their taxes are going up and their home values are going down? Because if they are not willing to confront that, they shouldn't vote for this bill.

The budget is a betrayal of the middle-class men and women who sent House Members to Congress, who sent all of us to the Senate and the House. For many in the middle class, as I said, it raises taxes and erodes property values. And why? To lavish tax breaks on big corporations and the superrich. Its main focus is to give a tax cut to corporations and the top 1 percent.

I would say to the average American: Is your No. 1 goal reducing taxes on big corporations and the richest people in America? Well, that is the Republican Party's No. 1 goal. They say they must have tax reform. It is their No. 1 priority. And this bill, the core of it, the *raison d'être* for it, is to cut taxes on big corporations and the wealthiest people.

Again, to the American people: Is your No. 1 goal the same as the Republican Party's here in the Senate and in the House—to cut taxes on the richest corporations, to cut taxes on the wealthiest individuals? I don't think so. Do you, Mr. and Mrs. American, think that is what Congress should be gearing up to do when it has done so little? I don't think so. The Republican Party is making a huge mistake.

It is not that there shouldn't be tax reform. There should be—but real reform. Big corporations pay a real rate of 16 percent. If we were to lower those rates and close loopholes, we would be doing the economy a favor. As I said, I helped pass that in 1986 once they abandoned State and local deductibility. If it is simply to give a huge tax cut to the wealthiest people and biggest corporations, the recent polling data has shown that the vast majority of Americans are against it. A majority of Americans say: If it means a small tax break for me and a big tax break for the wealthiest, I am not for it.

So I am going to challenge my Republican colleagues: Go out there and speak plainly and honestly about your plan. Don't hide behind fake talking points and fake math. It is a massive tax cut for corporations and the wealthy. Defend it, why you think it is

a good idea. I know some of you truly believe—the Senator from Pennsylvania, a Republican, has spent his lifetime, when he was at the Club for Growth, advocating that cutting taxes on the biggest corporations and wealthiest individuals fuels the economy. Talk directly about it.

I hear the words "middle class" coming out of our Republican colleagues' mouths but not "wealthy" or "big corporations." And let me just say it doesn't prove to be true.

The corporate tax rate was much lower than the official tax rate. According to Goldman Sachs, our big corporations have more money than they have ever had and are paying a lower tax rate than they ever have, and they are not creating jobs. Give me one reason why giving them a tax break will now have them starting to create jobs when they are already flush with cash.

How about the example of Kansas, and I say this particularly to my two friends. Both are my friends. When I see them both in the gym—I used to play basketball with one. I would say to my two friends, the Senators from Kansas, look at what happened to your own State, the home of Charles Koch. Big tax breaks, huge tax breaks will make Kansas the growth center of America. What happened? They gave huge tax breaks. They predicted that income would go up in the Kansas State treasury by \$300 million. It went down by \$700 million. They had to actually consider schools going from 5 to 4 days. And job growth, this great engine of job growth—Kansas grew last year by 0.2 percent. The American economy grew by 1.6 percent. It was a total flop. Kansas not only rejected the proposal by raising taxes after they had cut them so deeply, they also threw out a lot of the more conservative Republicans, and there was a rebellion within the Republican Party itself.

Trading middle-class deductions for a tax cut for the rich is not a fair trade. Raising taxes on so many middle-class people so you can pay for tax cuts for the rich makes no sense, and it makes no sense particularly now that the scales are tipped more in favor of the wealthy and powerful than ever before.

That is why the American people, now that they realize we are getting close here, despite all the distracting issues the President tweets about—by the way, I hear that in the Republican caucus, he talked about no details on the tax plan; he just said get it done. No details. I know why—they are afraid to talk about it. The President may not know the details, but our Republican colleagues do, and they are afraid to talk about the details in public.

The bottom line is that the American people are learning what this plan is about, and they don't like what they see. In a recent Reuters/Ipsos poll, fewer than one-third of all Americans supported it. And just like healthcare, I believe that the more Americans learn about the plan, the less they will

like it. The number—low enough as it is—in support of the Trump tax plan will get lower.

Listen to this: In the same poll, nearly two-thirds of Republicans said that deficit reduction was more important than tax cuts for corporations. Two-thirds of Republicans said that deficit reduction was more important than tax cuts for corporations. That is not what the bill says. The poll also showed that three-quarters of Republicans said that deficit reduction was more important than tax cuts for the wealthy. Again, the bill does the opposite.

The Republican plan balloons the deficit by \$1.5 trillion to do those two things—tax cuts for the wealthiest corporations and tax cuts for the rich. The more Republicans find out about the plan, the less they will like it.

In conclusion, as the House debates the Senate budget this week, I urge them to consider first and foremost what the plan would mean for their constituents. I would tell them, should they vote down this budget, there are a large number of Democrats, including the minority leader, who want to sit down with Republicans and come up with a nice, mainstream plan, not a plan to please the thousand wealthiest families in America who have so much say over the Republican Party and shouldn't. But we want to work with you on a real, bipartisan plan. Defeat this plan, and we will, just as we promised on healthcare, and we have.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague and the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, for his statement on this Trump tax plan. I think he really has summarized in his statement the concerns many of us have.

We are concerned that the Trump tax plan will do several things. It will cut funds for education in America at a time when we need it now more than ever to prepare our people for the jobs of the future. It endangers Medicare, a program that for almost 50 million Americans is critical for the healthcare they receive. At the same time, it is going to dramatically increase the deficit. For so long, we have heard from the Republicans that their No. 1 issue was cutting the deficit, and now they come up with a tax plan that will increase the size of our deficit. Finally, of course, all of this is being done to create tax breaks for the wealthy and the biggest corporations in America.

Here are the simple facts: As a percentage of our gross domestic product, corporate profits in America have never been higher. Corporate profits have never been higher. As a percentage of the gross domestic product, corporate Federal taxes paid have never been lower. Profits never higher, taxes never lower, and the Trump tax plan says: Let's cut corporate taxes even more, and then let's cut taxes on the

wealthiest people even more. That is not a fair tax plan. It is not a fair tax reform.

The Trump tax plan sadly rewards the biggest corporations and the wealthiest individuals at the cost of cutting education, endangering Medicare, and unfortunately increasing the deficit, to be paid for by our children. The tax break for the wealthiest people in the Trump tax plan doesn't go to the rich. It doesn't even go to the very rich. It goes to the superrich—the superrich. Who am I talking about? The one-tenth of 1 percent. The highest incomes in America—way beyond the rich. It is not a person who drives a big limousine; it is a person who is never going to drive the rest of their lives and owns a big yacht. Those folks—the one-tenth of 1 percent—get 40 percent of all the tax breaks in the Trump tax plan. That may be good news for the President and his colleagues and friends and even his family; it is not good news for working Americans. To think that we would cut education, endanger Medicare, and increase the deficit to give that level of income, the wealthiest people in our country, such a tax break is hard to imagine.

Sadly, one of the provisions in the Trump tax plan creates an incentive for companies to move jobs overseas, because they will have a lower tax rate if they do. Think about that. A President who has told us over and over again that we want to "make America great again" creates a tax program to incentivize businesses to locate overseas and make their profits overseas. That makes no sense whatsoever, but that is the Trump tax plan. I am glad Senator SCHUMER brought that up.

DACA

Mr. President, let me address the issue of the Dreamers. It is one that I have spoken to many times before, and I would like to address it at this point.

On September 5, about 7 weeks ago today, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the Trump administration's repeal of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, better known as DACA.

DACA provided temporary legal status to immigrant students if they registered with the government, paid a fee, went through a criminal background check and a national security check, and did that on a renewable basis every 2 years.

The young people protected by that Executive order are known as Dreamers. They came to the United States as children, brought here by their parents. They grew up in our schools, singing our "Star-Spangled Banner," pledging allegiance to the only flag they have ever known. Seven years ago, I asked President Obama, in a letter that I sent with then-Republican-Senator Dick Lugar, to create a program to protect these young people and give them a chance to earn their way into legal status. The President responded to our request, and almost 800,000 have signed up.

Now, with President Trump's announcement that he is going to eliminate this program, the clock is ticking. By March 5, 2018, every workday for the following 2 years, approximately 1,400 of these Dreamers protected by DACA will lose their work permits and will be subject to deportation. Mr. President, 1,400 a day who signed up for this program, as of March 5 next year, will hear the clock ticking. Teachers will be forced to leave their students, nurses to leave their patients, first responders to leave their posts, and soldiers who are willing to fight for their country will be forced to leave the Army if this happens. It is an outcome that none of us want to see, I hope.

It isn't just a looming humanitarian crisis; it is economic too. The nonpartisan Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy says that DACA-eligible individuals contribute about \$2 billion a year to our economy. They are working. They are going to school. These are productive people who against the odds have succeeded in life and want to do more.

The Cato Institute—no liberal think tank—estimates that ending DACA and deporting DACA recipients would cost \$60 billion and result in a \$280 billion reduction in economic growth over the next 10 years.

Poll after poll shows overwhelming bipartisan support for the Dreamers. Even FOX News—no liberal media outlet—recently found that 79 percent of Americans support a path to citizenship for Dreamers—79 percent. What percentage of Republicans support it? According to the FOX poll, 63 percent of Donald Trump voters believe that Dreamers should be given a chance at citizenship.

The answer is clear: We need to pass the DREAM Act, and we need to do it before we leave Washington in the next few weeks. It was 16 years ago that I first introduced it. We have had our ups and downs. We have passed it at some time on the floor of the Senate and then again in the House of Representatives but never quite at the same moment so that it became the law of the land.

Over the years, I have told over 100 stories about the Dreamers. This is another one I want to share with you. This is a story about William Medeiros. William was 6 years old when his family moved to the United States from Brazil. He grew up in Boston and then moved to Florida. In high school, he was an honor student. He graduated with a 3.8 GPA. He was an athlete, playing high school soccer and football. He is now a student at the University of Central Florida. He has a 3.5 GPA. He will graduate in the spring of 2019 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

He is working full time to support himself. Because he is a DACA recipient, he isn't eligible for any Federal financial assistance to go to college. He has to work his way through school, and he is doing it. His dream is that he

wants to be part of America's military. Then, after serving his country, he wants to be an officer with his local police department. Thanks to DACA, he is on his way.

Last year, he enlisted in the Army through the MAVNI Program. In this photo, he is shown with his recruiter from his enlistment ceremony. The MAVNI Program allows immigrants like him, who are vital to the national interest, to enlist in the Armed Forces. More than 800 DACA recipients with these critical skills have had their dream come true. They have volunteered to serve America in our military.

Some Trump administration officials have claimed that DACA recipients are taking jobs away from Americans. But William and hundreds more like him have vital skills that our military desperately needs, and they want him to serve our country. William, along with many Dreamers, is now waiting to ship to basic training. He continues his undergraduate studies and is working full time while waiting for his first chance to serve.

He wrote me a letter, and here is what he said: "My desire to serve this nation and help people, to pay back my dues for everything I have received from this great country, and to lead by example by showing my fellow DACA members that anything is possible with hard work, perseverance, and dedication."

Is there any doubt in anyone's mind that this young man, William, desperate to serve our country and to be a law enforcement officer, will be an asset to the United States, a source of pride for all of us? Of course not. If DACA goes away and is not replaced, if this young man loses that opportunity, America will lose an important part of its future.

I was at the Phoenix Military Academy, one of six military academies within the Chicago public schools, just last week. I am proud to say that our Chicago public school system hosts the largest ROTC Program in America, with 10,000 cadets from school to school. It turns out that many of them are DACA Dreamers. They want to serve our country just like William. I was joined by COL Daniel Baggio, who runs the Junior ROTC Program. His grandfather was an immigrant who served in the U.S. Army during World War I. Colonel Baggio certainly understands the important role immigrants play in our Armed Forces.

William Medeiros and other Dreamers have so much to give America, but without the Dream Act, William and hundreds of other immigrants with skills that are vital to the national interest will literally be kicked out of the Army. Thousands of Junior ROTC cadets in Chicago will never realize their dream of volunteering to enlist in America's military. They want to serve. They are willing to risk their lives for our country. How can we let them down?