

am going to do. I won't be able to afford the drug. How can our Republican colleagues be so heartless and cruel? I know that you want to reduce taxes on corporations, but why do you have to do it at Bridget's expense?

Of course, the House bill takes an ax to State and local deductibility, a bedrock middle-class deduction that affects nearly every State but hits high tax States, like Virginia, the hardest.

Any House Republican who watched the returns in the Virginia elections last night must be shaken by the overwhelming Democratic turnout in suburban areas. According to pollsters, the No. 1 issue was healthcare, and this deduction goes. But overall, suburban Virginia said no to the Republican way. Suburban families will be the ones hit hardest by the elimination of State and local deductions in States like Virginia but also in Washington, New Jersey, California, Illinois, Minnesota, and Colorado.

Just last night, we learned from reporting that the Senate bill is likely to go even further regarding the State and local deduction—full repeal. There are some from my State in New York saying: Well, we have a compromise. A, the compromise still eliminates three-fourths of the deduction, but, B, that compromise is going bye-bye. The Senate is going to get rid of it. You can be sure it won't come back in a conference committee.

So I say to my House colleagues, particularly those from suburban districts: Stop the elimination of the State and local deduction now before it is too late. If it happens and you vote yes on this bill, you will be to blame. There is no way to duck and cover behind the SALT compromise any longer because the SALT tax writers have made clear that they want to repeal it entirely in the Senate. Because of the stricter Senate budget rules, the Senate language is likely to win out over the House language.

Make no mistake about it, a full repeal of the State and local deduction is coming down the pike one way or the other. Voting to advance the GOP bill is a vote to fully repeal State and local deductibility. I say to my Republican friends from all those suburban districts where a high percentage of people use the State and local deduction: If you think the results in Virginia and New Jersey were terrible for you, wait until you pass a bill that raises taxes on large swaths of middle-class families in your district.

The debate over the State and local deduction is illustrative of the central problem my Republican friends have with their tax bill. Every time you pull in one direction and change something to solve a problem, you have to push in another direction, and you end up creating a new one. It is like pushing on a balloon.

Just this morning, Speaker RYAN said the phaseout of middle-class deductions would never happen. They are only there to "game the Senate rules."

Well, if there is no phaseout, the real cost of the bill will be much higher. I say to my Senate friends who have talked about making sure we don't let the deficit go out of control that Ryan is saying we are going to let the deficit go out of control and game the Senate rules because the phaseout of middle-class deductions will not happen. If there is no real phaseout, the real cost of the bill will be much higher. It is a tough pill to swallow to anyone in this setting on the Republican side who believes in deficit reduction and who believes about \$1.5 trillion—their rule—is about as high as you can go.

All of this is because our Republican colleagues are rushing this bill through. Something like this takes care. It takes hearings. It takes discussion. It takes experts. It takes affected groups all weighing in. That takes a while. That is how it is supposed to work. That is how the Founding Fathers wanted it to work. That is how we did it with the last successful major tax reform bill in 1986. I was there, and I know.

To rush a bill of this magnitude through the Congress in a span of a few weeks, with only one party doing the work, is reckless, it is irresponsible, and it will lead to a very bad result. It is why our Republican colleagues have such problems.

I repeat my plea to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Take a step back and consider doing tax reform the right way—bipartisan, through the committees, input from both sides. We have shown, as in healthcare, when we try, we can work together. The Senator from New Hampshire is on the floor. She was one of the leaders in that.

Earlier this year, we came to a good budget deal. Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY put together a reasonable compromise on healthcare. We can do it again on tax reform. We Democrats want to do real reform, but our Republican friends must abandon this partisan, secretive, reckless process that will lead to no good for them and for the country and come to the table with Democrats.

One final point on the matter, Republicans repeatedly promised that the \$1.5 trillion reduction in the corporate tax rate proposed by the Ryan-McConnell tax plan will lead the average American family to receive a \$4,000 raise. Yet corporate profits are already at record highs. Wages are relatively stagnant. So color us skeptical that showering corporations with new tax brackets that will result in them having even more money will end up creating higher wages for workers. Far more likely what it will create is another round of stock buybacks and dividends, which, by and large, benefit corporate CEOs and the wealthy.

You don't have to take it from me. David Marberger is the executive vice president and CFO—chief financial officer—of Conagra, which I believe is a major Fortune 500 company. Here is what he told his shareholders this fall,

the CFO of Conagra: "In terms of if there is a corporate tax reduction and there's more cash, we bounce back to our capital allocation"—more stock buybacks.

Republicans think a corporate tax cut without guardrails would boost wages, and we disagree. Later this morning, Democrats will urge our Republican colleagues to put their money where their mouth is and prove us wrong. We will be offering an amendment that would snap back taxes to the old corporate rate if corporations actually fail to boost their workers' wages. It is that simple. Put your money where your mouth is. The only thing you are hanging your hat on, on this bill, which so hurts so many middle-class people is, well, everyone will get a big wage increase because we are reducing the corporate rate. We challenge you to accept our amendment. If the wages don't go up, the corporate decrease in taxes is repealed.

We are simply telling Republicans, don't write checks to corporations that their employees can't cash. If Republicans fail to support this amendment, they will confirm that their tax bill is a farce. They really don't believe it, when it comes to boosting wages for working Americans.

Mr. President, one final word on the nomination of Mr. Robb to the NLRB. The NLRB protects workers' rights to form or join unions, bargain collectively with their employers, and act concertedly for mutual aid or protection. It is not clear to me, from reviewing Mr. Robb's background, that he believes in the mission of the agency.

In his experience as a labor and employment lawyer, he has defended companies against workers' unfair labor practice allegations, age and sex discrimination charges, class action age claims, and wage claims. The website of Mr. Robb's law firm brags about his efforts to delay and defeat union organizing at the Millstone Power Station in Connecticut. He was the lead counsel on the notorious Reagan-era case, which decertified the air traffic controllers' union. That resulted in President Reagan firing 11,000 traffic controllers and barring them from Federal service.

The general counsel for the NLRB sets the priority cases and determines when to bring charges against employers. It is a crucial role. Peter Robb's record shows he is not up to this job, and he will not defend workers in an agency designed to defend workers.

I will be voting no and urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION
MODERNIZATION AND ENFORCEMENT ACT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, it is hard to read or to listen to the news these days without hearing about Russia's interference in our American democracy, its influence peddling, and about the misinformation that has

been spreading on social media. I have bipartisan legislation that would address an aspect of this. This legislation is cosponsored by Senator TODD YOUNG, and it is legislation that would give law enforcement the tools they need to create greater transparency about foreign individuals and entities that are operating in the United States in the interest of other governments. It would make it easier for the public to better track information they are receiving, particularly from governments that are hostile to the United States.

This bill would give the Department of Justice necessary authority to investigate potential violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act, which is also known as FARA. We have heard a lot about that. This was legislation that was passed during the thirties, as there was fear about the rise of Nazism and Hitler in Germany and the effort to spread propaganda in the United States.

This would allow the American public to clearly trace where information is coming from and who is paying for it. I think, in this age of misinformation, that is especially important to the public.

At a time when our law enforcement officials, foreign policy experts, and leaders continue to grapple with the extent of Russia's intrusion into our democratic elections, this legislation is more urgent than ever. The need for this legislation is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the case of Russian propaganda networks like RT America and Sputnik International. Both networks continually propagate and share content and programming that are designed to very subtly confuse and influence audiences worldwide. If you have ever listened to either of those channels, you will know there is just this subtle difference in how they present information.

In the United States, RT America is available on cable TVs across the country. It is considered to be one of the most high-profile assets in Vladimir Putin's vast \$1.4 billion propaganda machine.

According to an assessment made public by the U.S. intelligence community in January, RT is the Kremlin's "principal international outlet," and it is integral to Russia's information warfare operations across the globe. The Kremlin selects the staff for RT and closely supervises RT's coverage, including disinformation and false news stories designed to undermine our democracy. If you have any question about that, watch RT here. It is on the cable network here in the DC area.

RT News has publicly boasted that it can dodge our laws by claiming to be financed by a nonprofit organization and not by the Russian Government. Recently, the Department of Justice asked RT America to, in fact, register as a foreign agent. RT rejected an entirely reasonable request from the Justice Department to respect our laws. They refused to register.

How did we respond? Well, we continued to allow RT America to spread its disinformation and false narratives. This is unacceptable. We responded that way because we don't have the teeth we need in the law to be able to enforce it. That is what my legislation with Senator YOUNG will do. That is why it is so important. It would strengthen FARA by giving the Department of Justice authority to compel foreign organizations to produce documentation to confirm funding sources and foreign connections. This new investigative authority was requested by the Department of Justice, and it is supported by the Government Accountability Office, the Sunlight Foundation, and the Project on Government Oversight. This is a good government piece of legislation.

In fact, if this authority that we have in our legislation were in place today, the Justice Department could immediately investigate RT America and publicly expose its ties to the Kremlin. In the absence of such authority, all the Justice Department can do is ask RT to voluntarily adhere to FARA regulations and hope the propaganda outlet complies. What are the odds of that? Pretty slim. Clearly, based on RT's refusal to comply with FARA, the Kremlin is well aware of the limitations that are inherent in our law.

As we wait for this commonsense legislation to move forward, the Kremlin, RT America, and Sputnik continue to wield their harmful propaganda and attempt to influence the American public.

Since the publication of the intelligence community's January report on Russia's interference in our 2016 Presidential election, we have learned that Moscow spent millions of dollars buying ads on social media sites and search engines, often using the very clips that had been aired by RT on its YouTube channel.

Last week, representatives of American social media companies testified before Congress and illustrated the lengths the Kremlin went in order to deceptively spread divisive propaganda, all seemingly without a trace or any clear indication about the origins of these ads and RT's news blasts.

The misinformation included numerous reports run by RT News on supposed U.S. election fraud and voting. So they spread, and they clearly intended to spread confusion about our elections in 2016 to try and encourage people to believe our elections don't work, to undermine our election process. They talked about machine vulnerabilities. They claimed the results of U.S. elections could not be trusted and did not reflect the people's will. Sadly, too many people saw those stories and believed they were real.

These are not just random examples of fake news. These stories are part and parcel of a broader influence campaign designed and directed by the Kremlin's leadership and pedaled by government-funded trolls in St. Petersburg and

other front organizations. So in the same way that Russia is building up its military force, its navy, its ability to operate in space, and its missile program, it has also built up its propaganda campaign in ways that are designed to undermine Western democracies. If we don't pay attention to this, then shame on us.

We are, of course, a resilient democracy. We are confident that our values and institutions will prevail in the free marketplace of ideas. Our Constitution, unlike Russia's, protects the right of individuals and organizations to spread Russian viewpoints, disinformation, and, even, outright lies. But no organization, including RT America or any other front outlet for a country that is hostile to the United States, has the right to conceal a foreign funding source and thumb its nose at requests from our Department of Justice.

The American people have a right to know if RT America is a Russian propaganda organization that takes its direction from the Kremlin. They have a right to know who is funding those programs and what kind of misinformation they are spreading.

To that end, I urge my colleagues to put an end to the Kremlin's charade by supporting the Foreign Agents Registration Modernization and Enforcement Act. Let's give the Department of Justice the tools it needs to investigate and expose RT America and to fight back against the Kremlin's interference in our democracy.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUL-LIVAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

HONORING OUR VETERANS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the courageous service and selfless sacrifice of our Nation's veterans.

Honoring our veterans is one of the greatest privileges I have as a Senator, which is why I often attend celebrations in Arkansas to acknowledge and salute some of the brave men and women who have served our Nation in uniform.

I recently had the pleasure to recognize the service and valor of 15 Arkansas veterans during the Arkansas Military Veterans' Hall of Fame induction ceremony. The class of 2017 inductees comes from all across Arkansas. These veterans served in conflicts ranging from World War II through the War on