None of that has mattered to President Trump, who has spent the past 10 months orchestrating a deliberate campaign to sabotage healthcare for tens of millions of American families.

From his first day in office, President Trump directed Federal agencies not to enforce the law. He cut the open enrollment sign-up period in half. He yanked advertisements and slashed outreach and enrollment assistance funding.

And he terminated the cost-sharing reduction subsidies that keep costs down for 7 million Americans. As a result, individual market premiums will increase 20 percent next year alone.

President Trump has done everything within his power to sabotage and undermine this law.

Despite President Trump's repeated attempts at repeal and sabotage, the Affordable Care Act is still the law of the land, and that means that quality, affordable healthcare options are available.

And we are right in the midst of Open Enrollment. Starting last week—on November 1—Americans who purchased their health plans in the individual marketplace began signing up for health insurance that covers them next year, in 2018. But you only have 6 weeks to sign up. Open enrollment began November 1, and ends on December 15.

This is your opportunity to buy insurance that covers important health benefits—hospitalizations, prescription drugs, doctor visits, maternity/newborn care, mental health and substance abuse treatment.

And there is financial assistance to help you buy these plans. In fact, 8 out of 10 people who purchase health insurance in the individual market are eligible to receive tax credits that help make that insurance more affordable.

In Illinois, about 350,000 people purchase their health insurance in the individual market, and nearly 300,000 of them are eligible for tax credits that will ensure their health plan premiums are below $100 per month.

So, despite the frenzy in Washington over healthcare: health insurance under the ACA is open for business, and the time to sign up is now. Visit www.healthcare.gov or call 1–800–318–2596. I would encourage everyone to sign up early. Don't wait unitl the last minute.

Speaking of waiting until the last minute, I remain dismayed that this Republican-controlled Congress has failed to reauthorize two incredibly important Federal healthcare programs—the Children's Health Insurance Program and the community health centers program.

Nationwide, 27 million people receive care from community health centers. And 9 million children and pregnant women get their healthcare through the CHIP program, including more than 330,000 kids in Illinois.

Because of congressional inaction, funding for these two programs expired over a month ago, on October 1. And what have Republican leaders in the Senate done over the past month, while funding has lapsed for children, pregnant women, and our Nation's health clinics?

Well, they passed a budget resolution making it easier to give huge tax cuts to wealthy individuals and big businesses. That is right. While States and health centers are struggling to figure out how to keep their programs operating, while families are worrying about when their health coverage may run out, congressional Republicans are focused on tax breaks for the rich.

Facing this funding uncertainty, States and community health centers are trying to figure out how to keep their programs and clinics operating. Ten States—plus the District of Columbia—will run out of CHIP funding in the next month or so.

For example, later this month, the State of Colorado is planning to send health coverage termination letters to lower income families. The letter reads, in part: ''You are receiving this letter because members of your household are enrolled in the [Children's Health Insurance Program] . . . If Congress does not renew federal funding, CHIP in Colorado will end on January 31, 2018 . . . there is no guarantee that they will.''

Imagine how terrifying it would be to receive this letter, to learn that your child is about to lose their health insurance coverage because Congress is preoccupied with tax breaks for the rich.

It is beyond unacceptable that congressional Republicans abdicated their responsibility to reauthorize these critical health programs.

If we truly want to help the communities and people we serve, let's quickly reauthorize funding for children's health care and for community health centers.

And remember, if you need health insurance next year, you have until December 15 to sign up. Don't miss your chance.

PROTECTING OUR STUDENTS AND TAXPAYERS ACT

Mr. President, last week, I reintroduced the Protecting Our Students and Taxpayers, or POST, Act. I was pleased to be joined by Senators REED, BLUMENTHAL, CARPER, MURPHY, and WARREN in the Senate and by Representative STEVE COHEN in the House.

Since 1992, Federal law has required for-profit schools to derive a portion of revenue from non-Federal sources. This was meant to keep for-profit schools, which in general rely much more heavily on Federal dollars than traditional schools, from being completely dependent on Federal taxpayers to keep their doors open.

Originally, these schools had to receive at least 15 percent of their revenue from non-Federal sources. In 1998, the threshold was lowered to only 10 percent, creating today's so-called 90/10 rule. Think about that. Mr. President, $9 out of every $10 these schools take in can come from U.S. taxpayers. But it gets worse.

Only Department of Education Federal student aid dollars are counted as Federal funds. A loophole in the law excludes billions in Department of Veterans Affairs GI bill education benefits and Department of Defense Tuition Assistance, (TA), funds from being counted as Federal revenue. It means, by recruiting veterans and servicemembers, for-profit colleges can actually receive more than 90 percent of their revenue from Federal funds and still comply with the law. This powerful incentive makes our men and women in uniform targets for predatory for-profit colleges.

I have told these stories before, but I think they bear repeating. I have told the story of two former military recruiters at a for-profit college in Illinois. They were told their job was above all to put ''butts in classes,'' that they should dig deep into the personal lives of their recruits to find their ''pain point.'' If a prospective student was out of work, recruiters were encouraged to say things like, ''How do you think your wife feels about being married to someone unemployed?''

Entrance requirements were low—it didn't matter how long a student stayed as long as it was long enough for the school to receive the GI bill dollars.

There is Paul Fajardo, a marine veteran who served in Afghanistan. He used his GI bill benefits to enroll at the now-defunct Corinthian Colleges and had to live out of his car when his school lost its eligibility to receive GI bill benefits. He told the LA Times that Corinthian recruited him and other veterans because ''they knew it was a guaranteed paycheck.''

There is James Long, who suffered a brain injury when an artillery shell hit his Humvee in Iraq. He used military benefits to enroll at Ashford University after being heavily recruited. He told Bloomberg News that he knows he is enrolled at Ashford, but can't remember what courses he is enrolled in.

These veterans were nothing more than ATMs for these for-profit colleges intent on pocketing their hard-earned education benefits.

And in 2016, for-profit colleges pocketed 34 percent of all GI bill benefits—$1.7 billion—and 44 percent of all Department of Defense Tuition Assistance funds—$220 million. Mr. President, $2 billion that these for-profit colleges were able to count as non-Federal revenue. Non-Federal?

The last time I checked, the Department of Veterans Affairs was part of the Federal Government, and the money it spends—whether on veterans' healthcare or housing or education—comes from U.S. taxpayers.

When asked in writing during his confirmation process whether GI bill funds are Federal funds, VA Secretary David Shulkin answered simply, ''Yes.''

And the last time I checked, the Department of Defense was part of the

Federal Government, and the money it spends—whether on planes or bombs or servicemembers' education—comes from U.S. taxpayers.

When I asked Secretary Mattis if Department of Defense Tuition Assistance funds are indeed Federal funds, he responded, ''Yes . . . these benefits are Federal funds.'' Seems like commonsense. Yet the law doesn't see it that way.

That is why my colleagues and I have introduced the POST Act. Our bill will close this ridiculous loophole. It will count all Federal education benefits as Federal revenue and take the targets off the backs of veterans and servicemembers. The bill also reduces the Federal revenue limit to the original 85 percent.

Our legislation is supported by, among others, Student Veterans of America, the Military Officers Association of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

Last year, in response to a request from Senator CARPER and me, the Department of Education publicly released Federal revenue data for the first time that included VA and DOD benefits. The data showed that 186 for-profit institutions received more than 90 percent of their revenue when these additional Federal education benefits were included. Mr. President, 563 institutions received more than 85 percent of their revenue from Federal taxpayers when all Federal sources were included.

I was disappointed that when the Department released its 90/10 calculations this year, Secretary DeVos did not continue the practice of releasing calculations that included VA and DOD funds, though maybe that shouldn't be surprising. After all, unlike Secretaries Shulkin and Mattis, Secretary DeVos has refused, when asked, to acknowledge the obvious—that VA and DOD education funds are indeed Federal funds or support closing the loophole.

But I am confident that the American people will see the current 90/10 rule for what it is—a loophole that makes no sense and that puts those who have served our country at risk.

This week, on the eve of Veterans Day, I will stand with my friend—Senator CARPER of Delaware—as he reintroduces the Military and Veterans Education Protection Act. This bill also closes the 90/10 loophole, but leaves the Federal revenue limit at 90 percent. It is a step in the right direction, and that is why I support it.

I hope our colleagues will consider supporting one or both of these commonsense proposals.

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

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield back all time on this side and reserve one minute for Senator CARPER.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, as we prepare to vote on this nominee, I wish to implore my colleagues to take one last moment to think about this decision before us. I ask them to recall the words that I said just a bit earlier this morning from the hymn that Martha and I heard at church, not far from my home in Wilmington, DE, one Sunday on a beautiful spring morning. It is a song, a hymn that we all know:

For the beauty of the Earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies,
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

That powerful message reminds me of the incredible responsibility we have in this body to serve and protect the people who sent us here. We must serve as stewards, also, of this planet, which has been entrusted to us and to care for all the most vulnerable among us.

For me, that is not just my responsibility as a parent or as an official elected to serve the people of my State for all these years. It is a moral imperative and a sacred obligation, and there is no more basic human need than having clean air to breathe.

I implore my colleagues. We have seen Mr. Wehrum's extreme agenda at the EPA once before. It would be the height of irresponsibility and a shirking of our moral obligation to confirm him today. I implore you to join me in voting no on Bill Wehrum.

Thank you very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Wehrum nomination?

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 268 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Alexander	Blunt	Burr
Barrasso	Boozman	Capito
Cassidy	Hatch	Risch
Cochran	Heller	Rounds
Corker	Hoeven	Rubio
Cornyn	Inhofe	Sasse
Cotton	Isakson	Scott
Crapo	Johnson	Shelby
Cruz	Kennedy	Strange
Daines	Lankford	Sullivan
Enzi	Lee	Thune
Ernst	McCain	Tillis
Fischer	McConnell	Toomey
Flake	Moran	Wicker
Gardner	Murkowski	Young
Graham	Perdue	
Grassley	Portman	

NAYS—47

Baldwin	Franken	Murray
Bennet	Gillibrand	Nelson
Blumenthal	Harris	Peters
Booker	Hassan	Reed
Brown	Heinrich	Sanders
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Schatz
Cardin	Hirono	Schumer
Carper	Kaine	Shaheen
Casey	King	Stabenow
Collins	Klobuchar	Udall
Coons	Leahy	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Warner
Donnelly	Markey	Warren
Duckworth	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden
Feinstein	Murphy	

NOT VOTING—4

Menendez	Roberts
Paul	Tester

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes.

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Thank you, Mr. President.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

I come to the floor to speak right now because I know our colleagues are trying to move forward next week on some various proposals that are part of the tax package. I am very concerned and remain very concerned about the measures within the policy that raise taxes on middle-class families because I don't think we should be passing a tax bill that raises taxes on middle-class families. For me, in Washington, obviously, it is a big concern. We don't have an income tax. They are getting rid of our local deductions that are so meaningful to us.

Literally, we have done calculations—and I know there will be calculations in other States—that show you are literally raising taxes on middle-class families to give a tax break to corporations that, in some cases, aren't asking for them or certainly are not paying that corporate rate today.

I think we can do better than these policies. I certainly think we can do better than the policies that are going to be before the Energy Committee next week, if the information we are hearing now or getting word of is that my colleague on the Energy Committee, the Senator from Alaska, is going to propose literally getting rid of