

tax regime. Middle-class people's median income has been going down over the last decade. It is harder for middle-class people to average—it shouldn't be OK for them to get \$500 and the wealthy to get \$50,000. We ought to be directing the tax cuts at the middle class.

Republicans—Trump's organization—had an ad on TV. They said that wealthy people's tax rates remain the same, while the middle class gets a cut. That is false advertising because, when we compare apples to apples, the wealthy get a much larger cut than the middle-class people.

We have known for weeks that the longer this bill is in effect, the worse it gets for the middle class. To stay within deficit numbers, the JCT confirmed that under the revised House bill, entire middle-income groups will see a tax hike, on average, just a few years down the road. Speaker RYAN and other Republicans say that those tax hikes will not happen because future Congresses will extend certain tax breaks in perpetuity. If that is true, all the deficit hawks ought to pay attention. There is a gigantic hidden cost to the bill if we are going to make these tax cuts temporary in this bill and then make them permanent.

The scores this week will say that these bills blow a \$1.5 trillion hole in the deficit over the next decade. That is bad enough. But if a bunch of breaks, deductions, and expansions that are now temporary are made permanent, as the Speaker says they will be, the real cost will be hundreds of billions, if not trillions, more. All of my Republican friends who care about the deficit should be wary of this gain.

We do need permanence. We need corporate America in particular to be relying on a permanent change. But you can't do a permanent change without blowing a hole in the deficit, so you do a temporary change. There is a simple solution, which, if Democrats and Republicans work together, we could do: Close corporate loopholes, lower the top rate, keep the corporate reduction deficit-neutral and permanent. My guess is most corporate leaders would prefer that. They would prefer less of a tax decrease and more permanence because you can't build a factory or make a major investment if you know that the decrease is going to vanish.

We shouldn't be rushing through such an ill-conceived, backward bill—breaking the fine traditions of this body, busting the deficit, breaking the backs of millions of middle-class families, making the funding of defense far more difficult when there is so much agreement between our two parties on tax reform. On healthcare, it is hard to agree; the visions are diametrically opposed. But on tax reform, that is not true. Our Republican friends are just bollixing this up. Somehow they had in their heads that they had to do it through reconciliation. They had to do it without Democrats, and the result is a very poor product that most Ameri-

cans already don't like and even more will not like as they learn more about it.

We all want to reduce the burden on small businesses. We all want to encourage companies to locate jobs here. We could put together a bill that does those things. This bill doesn't.

If Republicans turn their backs on this deeply flawed approach, my commitment to so many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—who I know are squirming about this bill—is that we will come together and put a good bill together that a majority of both parties can support—both parties. That is how it ought to be done.

PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO ASIA

As President Trump returns from his week-long trip to several Asian nations, it is worth asking: What did America get out of his trip?

Did he forcefully confront the Chinese leaders about our imbalanced and unfair trade system, where we play by the rules and the Chinese do not? No. He said that China's behavior was not their fault and blamed American leaders instead for China's trade abuses.

Even if he believes that, what is the point of saying it? He is encouraging China to keep doing what they have been doing all along if he thinks they are not to blame—letting them off the hook. Why? Because Xi gave him a red carpet?

I have never been so ashamed of a foreign trip in my years. It is just inside out. We attack our friends, and the people who have given us the most trouble—China and Russia—we mollycoddle. That is so bad for the future of this country.

Did President Trump engage the various regional powers in a project of great importance, curtailing and containing the rogue North Korean regime? No. He settled for a sophomoric exchange of insults on Twitter, far below the dignity of the office. Then he came back and bragged about the great ceremony and how well he was treated. Xi played the President. He played the President. Every American should be embarrassed.

I heard one commentator say this morning that this trip cemented China as the leading power of the world, not because they have more economic power, not because they have greater intellectual ideas, not because they are better people but because Xi is dominating and smart, and the President so susceptible to flattery. It is demeaning to the United States and its role in the world.

Then, to add insult to injury, he seems to have a love for dictators. In the Philippines, where a strongman leader is engaged in a vicious campaign of extrajudicial killings, did Trump admonish him? Did Trump uphold the beacon of the United States as the noblest power in the world? No. He lectured and unsettled our allies while emboldening our adversaries, like China and Russia, by treating them with kid gloves and making it clear

that all they have to do is say a few flattering words and the United States will drop the interests that our people are so dependent on.

All in all, President Trump's trip was a colossal flop and embarrassment. He seemed far more interested in pomp and circumstances, red carpets, fancy meals, and the flattery of foreign leaders than in advancing vital American interests in a region that is increasingly looking to China for leadership. After the President's performance, those countries are going to turn more to China. At least they have strength and direction, even though China will take advantage of them, for sure, as they have taken advantage of us.

It is a sad state of affairs when the simplest of strategies—flattery—can derail an entire foreign trip and undercut American influence in the world. President Trump was played for a fool by China's leaders, and he enthusiastically accepted the role.

The President of the United States—this great, grand country we love—is supposed to be the single strongest voice and advocate for our national interests. If he will not stick up for America, her interests, and her values on the world stage, who will?

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TAX REFORM

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, thank you. I rise to speak about the tax reform issue and the tax reform effort that is front and center for this Congress and for all Americans. Particularly, I want to point out the fact that Congress has not undertaken this difficult task for over 30 years, and for anyone who has been involved in this, they now realize how difficult it really is.

In the years since the last major overhaul, Congress has, by patchwork, added numerous carve-outs and special interests, passed short-term tax extenders, which have made planning for families and businesses very difficult, and has generally contributed to a tax code that today is extremely complex, burdensome, and unpredictable.

My colleague from Idaho Senator CRAPO has stated that we couldn't have done worse if we had set out intentionally to do worse. Many of my colleagues and I have heard story after story from our constituents who have said the same thing. The Tax Code makes it hard for families and businesses, especially small businesses, to comply and plan ahead, let alone grow and prosper. This conversation hasn't gone away, so clearly the system, as it stands, is not serving the American people as it should.

It is imperative for the continued growth of the American economy that

we simplify the system, reduce complexity, and create certainty. Tax reform will bring relief to American families. Under the plan released by the Senate Finance Committee, middle-class Americans will see a benefit in the form of a lower tax bill, which means more money for households to bring home. In addition to keeping more money in the pockets of hard-working Americans, the Senate plan nearly doubles the standard deduction, increases the child tax credit to help families with the very real costs associated with raising a family, and preserves an existing tax credit to help care for elderly family members. This tax plan would also make it easier for individuals and families to avoid a time-consuming and expensive tax-filing nightmare by simplifying the Tax Code and eliminating deductions.

The aim of this entire exercise is to make the Tax Code simpler, fairer, and easier to comply with, reducing the burden on taxpayers and creating an environment that enables families and businesses to thrive.

Tax reform will help grow small businesses. As chairman of the Senate Small Business Committee, I have focused on highlighting small business issues in this tax reform process. The ranking member, Senator SHAHEEN, and I held a bipartisan hearing in June to talk about tax policies that would most benefit small businesses across the country. As a result, we sent a bipartisan letter to the Senate Finance Committee, which was drawing this bill, to outline the policies we determined were most important. The topline issue was the need to address the individual Tax Code along with the corporate Tax Code. Most of the Nation's small businesses are organized in a way that they pay taxes through the individual code. It is amazing they managed to create the majority of new jobs in America, despite facing this higher tax rate, with the added burden of spending time and money away from businesses to comply with this complex Tax Code. Thankfully, Ranking Member SHAHEEN and I are not the only ones who heard this message, and lower rates for small businesses is part of this conversation.

Small businesses have identified tax policies that work for them, along with changes that could be made to help more of them across the country. Two of the examples are the cash method of accounting and section 179 expensing. Cash method accounting is a simpler way for small businesses to keep their books, and section 179 expensing allows small businesses to immediately deduct the cost of investing in their business up to a certain amount. Both of these commonsense policies will reach more business owners in tax reform.

I am encouraged by the plan the Senate Finance Committee released last week and the process they are undertaking this week to move this bill forward. With tax reform, we have a real opportunity to make changes that will

have a tangible, positive impact on the American people and create an environment for our Nation's job creators to prosper. I am excited to see the kind of job creation that will result from the changes we are considering, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to make this a reality.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

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

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

YEMEN HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, my colleagues, cholera is a truly awful way to die. It is a manmade disease, a man-caused disease that this world could easily eradicate from existence. You become so dehydrated, you vomit so much liquid, your body dispenses so many nutrients, so much water through unending diarrhea, that your body is thrown into shock. You literally die from vomiting and diarrhea, sometimes over the course of hours, sometimes over the course of days, sometimes over the course of weeks.

Inside Yemen today, by the end of this year, there will be 1 million people diagnosed with cholera.

This picture I have in the Chamber is a hard image to see. I will replace it with this one.

One million people will be diagnosed with cholera. Thousands and thousands inside Yemen today are dying because of this disease. There is a humanitarian catastrophe inside this country—which very few people in this Nation can locate on a map—of absolutely epic proportions. This humanitarian catastrophe, this famine—one of four famines across the world today—is being caused in part by actions of the United States of America, and it is time that we do something about it as a body.

As we speak today, the Saudi-led coalition that has been engaged in an incessant 2-year bombing campaign in Yemen is blockading Yemen, not allowing any humanitarian relief, not allowing fuel or food or water to get into the country.

The coalition's blockade has grounded U.N. flights. It has prevented humanitarian workers from flying in and out of the country. It has barred ships from delivering lifesaving food, fuel, and medical supplies. A 25,000-metric-ton World Food Programme ship is currently, as we speak, being denied access to the port. As we speak today, hospitals and aid organizations inside Yemen are shutting down because they do not have enough fuel to continue operating. Vaccines will run out in the country by the end of the month. Prices for food and medicine are spiking such that they are unaffordable to

the majority of Yemenis. Because of cholera alone, 2,000 people have died. Thousands of other civilians have died because of other humanitarian nightmares, including a lack of access to the medical system.

I mentioned that the blockade is being run by the Saudi-led coalition. The United States is a member of that coalition. For 2 years, the United States has been aiding the Government of Saudi Arabia in a bombing campaign of the Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen. That bombing campaign caused this outbreak of cholera. Why is that? The bombing campaign deliberately targeted the electricity grid of Yemen in and around Sana'a, the capital controlled today by the Houthis. The water treatment facility runs on the electricity from that grid.

As you can read in a lengthy story in the New York Times from 2 days ago, the country no longer has the ability to treat water that goes to its capital because the Saudi-led bombing campaign has knocked out electricity. The fuel that has helped temporarily run the water treatment facility is no longer available either because the Saudi-led bombing campaign has targeted the infrastructure that allows for fuel to be delivered. So today the water is undrinkable. It is toxic. Yet, because there aren't other supplies of water, millions of Yemenis are ingesting it. They are eating food that is also toxic because of the inability to treat water, because of the flow of sewage and feces throughout the capital city, and almost 1 million people have contracted cholera.

That bombing campaign that targeted the electricity infrastructure in Yemen could only happen with U.S. support. It is the United States that provides the targeting assistance for the Saudi planes. It is U.S. refueling planes flying in the sky around Yemen that restock the Saudi fighter jets with fuel, allowing them to drop more ordnance. It is U.S.-made and transferred ordnance that is carried on these planes and dropped on civilian and infrastructure targets inside Yemen.

The United States is part of this coalition. The bombing campaign that has caused the cholera outbreak could not happen without us. The official position of the State Department with respect to the blockade—which was imposed by the Saudis about a week ago—is that they should end it, at least for the purposes of allowing humanitarian resources into the country. That has not happened.

As I mentioned, there is literally a World Food Programme ship right now with 25,000 metric tons of food waiting to get into the capital to help families like this. So although that may be the official position of the State Department, we clearly aren't articulating that position to the Saudis because the Saudi blockade—which happens with U.S. military support—continues. Maybe that is because the State Department and the White House are simply operating on two different planets.