Put it all together, and a typical middle-class family of four making a median family income could see a tax break of around $2,200. As families sit around the table to balance their budgets and plan for the future, this money will make a significant impact.

In addition, our tax reform proposal will provide much needed relief for low- and middle-income families by repealing ObamaCare's individual mandate tax. By ending an unpopular tax from an unworkable law, this plan can help those who need it most.

The bottom line is this: We want to take more money out of Washington's pocket and put more money into the pockets of American families. To accomplish this goal, we will continue to consider the plan under regular order. Every Member will have a chance to offer amendments on the floor, and then we will vote.

There are many places in this legislation where we should all—Republicans and Democrats—be able to agree. For instance, our Democratic colleagues have the opportunity to help us end tax incentives that contribute to American jobs going overseas. That sounds like something our friends across the aisle should support. In fact, many of them have identified those incentives as the fundamental problem in our current Tax Code. This is our chance to put an end to it. I hope they will join us in our effort to help jobs and investments stay right here at home.

I am proud to continue working with my colleague to get this legislation one step closer to the President's desk. Let's keep working together to deliver tax relief for the American people.

Now, Madam President, on another matter. Later today, the Senate will consider two more talented nominees to the Federal judiciary. First, we will vote to confirm the nomination of Dabney Friedrich to serve as district court judge for the District of Columbia.

NOMINATION OF GREGORY KATSAS

Next, we will vote to advance the nomination of an exceptionally well-qualified nominee to the Federal judiciary, Gregory Katsas to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. After graduating from Harvard Law School, Mr. Katsas clerked for Judge Edward Becker of the Third Circuit and Justice Clarence Thomas, both on the DC Circuit and on the U.S. Supreme Court. He then joined the litigation group at a prominent law firm focusing on State and Federal appellate litigation, including arguing before the Supreme Court.

In 2001, Mr. Katsas became the Deputy Assistant Attorney General supervising the Justice Department's appellate staff of the Civil Division. The Senate later confirmed him by a voice vote to serve as Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division, where he was responsible for overseeing hundreds of lawyers and some of the government's most complicated litigation. For his work, he was awarded the Edmund Randolph Award for outstanding service, the highest award given by the Department.

In a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee, former Attorney General Michael Mukasey expressed his support for Mr. Katsas's nomination. This is what Attorney General Mukasey had to say:

It was my great privilege to work with Greg when he headed the civil division and argued many of the most difficult and challenging cases the Department faced at that time. Greg worked tirelessly to defend the interests of the United States in court, whatever his personal views about them may have been.

Former Attorney General Mukasey, who has also previously served as a Federal district court judge, went on to say that ''it is Greg's character, temperament and virtue that most set him apart, and that suit him to serve as a Circuit Judge. There are many smart lawyers in Washington, and probably many nice ones,'' he concluded, ''but I know of no others who have Greg's unique combination of legal skill coupled with humility, integrity, and good judgment.''

That high praise was echoed by many of the other officials who knew Mr. Katsas well at the Justice Department. A large group of them wrote to the Senate Judiciary Committee supporting his nomination.

Greg is an exceptionally talented and brilliant fellow lawyer. His commitment to public service and academic qualifications are impeccable. In addition, we can attest to Greg's thoughtfulness, temperament, and character.

Furthermore, a group of distinguished attorneys who have, in their own words, ''worked with Greg or litigated against him in the Supreme Court or federal courts of appeals, or are otherwise familiar with his work'' penned a letter of support for Mr. Katsas's nomination.

''We hold a broad range of policy and jurisprudential views'' they wrote, ''but [we] are united in our view, based on our experience and knowledge of Greg's work, that he is highly qualified to serve on the D.C. Circuit.''

Once he completed his time at the Department of Justice and returned to private practice, Mr. Katsas continued to impress his colleagues with his legal skill and judgment.

His firm's managing partner wrote a letter, also signed by partners from around the globe, recommending his nomination. Here is what they wrote:

Greg is a truly great legal thinker with a well-earned reputation for integrity, fair-mindedness, and respect for others. He has been a brilliant, conscientious advocate—

They continued—

for the firm's clients in the Supreme Court and appellate courts throughout the nation in a wide variety of difficult, high-profile cases.

Mr. Katsas is an impressive individual who is well-qualified to serve on the DC Circuit.

I thank Chairman GRASSLEY, once again, for his outstanding work in moving President Trump's judicial nominees to the floor. I look forward to confirming the nomination of Ms. Friedrich and advancing the nomination of Mr. Katsas later today.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting their nominations.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

WELCOMING OUR COLLEAGUES BACK

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I welcome you and the Senator from Texas, and all of our colleagues, back after our Thanksgiving break. I had my parents, 94 and 89, at our Thanksgiving dinner with all of their children and grandchildren and cousins and ''thises and thats,'' so I have a lot to be thankful for. I am blessed to have my mom and dad see their whole family and be so happy about it.

WORK BEFORE THE SENATE

But now, Madam President, we are back, and we have a lot of work to do before the end of the year and precious little time to do it. Funding for the government expires a week from this Friday. Eight hundred thousand Dreamers are waiting to hear whether they can live and work in the only country they have ever known. Almost 9 million children are waiting for us to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, and millions more are waiting for us to restore funding for community health centers—the most cost-effective, and often only, healthcare lots of people can get.

We also need to fund the cost-sharing program that holds down premiums and out-of-pocket costs for low-income Americans because the administration refuses to do so. Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are desperately in need of additional aid to recover from the natural disaster that God brought on them.

Also, the debt ceiling must be raised again, and in short order.

So we need to come to agreements on all of these issues, and quickly.

To that end, the four leaders will meet with the President tomorrow. Hopefully, we can make progress on an agreement that covers those time-sensitive issues and keeps the government running and working for the American people.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

We could be working on all of these issues this week, but, instead, the majority is pursuing a partisan tax plan at a breakneck pace. Since the Republicans released their first draft of the tax bill a few weeks ago, we have had 1 week of markup in the Senate Finance Committee during which the bill shape-shifted on several occasions.

Aside from the testimony of one representative from the Joint Committee on Taxation, the Senate hasn't heard from any expert witness in a hearing room. Can my colleagues believe that? A major tax bill in front of the American people, changing lives dramatically—no expert witnesses, except the JCT witness. And the bill is likely to change drastically again on the floor of the Senate, with little time for Senators of either party to grapple with the consequences.

The Republicans are moving so fast, the Joint Tax Committee will not have time to produce a full analysis of the economic impact of the bill until after the bill is voted on. Is that backward—or what?

The Republican tax bill will affect every taxpayer and business in America, and my colleagues will not know many of its impacts before they vote on it.

Two things about this bill, however, seem certain. First, it will raise taxes on millions of middle-class families in every State of the Union. Second, it will explode the deficit. Every independent analysis of the Senate tax bill shows that millions of families making under $200,000 a year will eventually pay more, not less, in taxes under the Republican plan. The most recent Tax Policy Center analysis showed that about 60 percent of middle-class families—those making between $28,000 and $155,000—would see a tax increase at the end of the day. Most middle-class families, by the time the 10-year window is up, will see a tax increase of 60 percent, according to the Tax Policy Center.

While middle-class people are struggling—they either get a small decrease in taxes or an increase—folks making over $1 million a year will get an average tax cut of over $40,000—more than many Americans make in a whole year.

The tax breaks for individuals all expire; the tax breaks for massive corporations are permanent. Because the individual mandate is repealed, the tax bill would cause 13 million fewer Americans to have health insurance; meanwhile, couples with estates worth over $11 million get a tax break.

This bill is terrible for the country. It is a massive transfer of wealth to the already wealthy. It would exacerbate inequality and set the middle class back at the worst possible time.

At the same time, it would increase the deficit by $1.5 trillion, at the very least. Some of my Republican friends are saying that future consequences will extend the middle-class tax breaks that are now set to expire. Well, that would increase the deficit even more significantly. You can't have it both ways. Either the bill socks it to the middle class or it blows a giant hole in the deficit—a ''Scylla and Charybdis.'' No one wants either. The tax bill gives us that awful choice.

Some of my Republican friends say the tax bill will unleash such economic growth that the tax cuts will pay for themselves and the deficit will evaporate. It is curious to me that those same Republicans are rushing the bill so fast through the Joint Committee on Tax that it will not have time to assess the economic impact. Of course, they are afraid of what it will say. They know it is going to say nothing close to what our Republican optimists are predicting. According to a former JCT economist: ''There is good reason to expect the estimate of current legislation will show less than flattering growth affects.'' So one has to wonder: Are the Republicans afraid that the experts will find that the Republican promises of economic growth are pure fantasy? It sure seems that way.

The majority shouldn't be ramming through such an ill-conceived, backward bill. They shouldn't be breaking all the traditions of this body—busting the deficit, hurting millions of middle-class families—when there is so much potential agreement between our two parties on tax reform. We could come up with a good, bipartisan bill—not through reconciliation, through regular order—and we would all be the prouder for it.

We Democrats want to lower middle-class taxes. We Democrats want to reduce the burdens on small businesses. We Democrats want to encourage companies to locate jobs here instead of shipping them overseas, and we want to do all of these things in a deficit-neutral way. Those thoughts probably have a majority on each side of the aisle. It is a shame that the Republican leadership has chosen reconciliation, which means no regular order, no hearings, no sunlight, and no Democratic input into the bill. If Republicans turn their backs on a deeply flawed approach—and I plead with the handful who haven't committed yet—we can work together on bipartisan tax reform that delivers real relief for everyone in the middle class.

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

Madam President, finally, on the matter of the directorship of the CFPB—the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—there should be no dispute about who is the Acting Director of the agency. The process for succession laid out in Dodd-Frank is clear: Leandra English, not Mick Mulvaney, is the Acting Director of the CFPB.

Let me underscore that point: I was involved when Dodd-Frank was written. The clear intention of Congress was to establish a clear line of succession for the CFPB, separate and apart from the Federal Vacancies Act. I remember; I was here.

The language in question wasn't a part of the House version of Dodd-Frank, but we included it in the Senate version for an explicit purpose. We wanted the CFPB to be an independent agency, free from political considerations of the White House, free of the influence of lobbyists, who we knew would not like that consumers were finally protected in the financial area. We wanted a watchdog whose only job was to look out for consumers. That was the whole structure of the bill. That is why it has such a unique structure—to shield it from an administration, whoever it would be, that would be influenced by lobbyists.

That is why we expressly stipulated that if the Director were not available, the Acting Director should be the highest ranking member of the CFPB, not whoever the White House believes is in their political interests.

By attempting to install Mr. Mulvaney as the Director, the Trump administration is ignoring the established, proper, legal order of succession that we purposefully put in place, in order to put a fox in charge of the henhouse.

Mr. Mulvaney has, throughout his career, criticized the mission and purpose of the CFPB. The man the President chose for Director of the agency called it a sick, sad joke. He doesn't believe in the agency. He would prefer that it didn't exist. That is not speculation; those are Mulvaney's own words. In 2015, he said: ''I don't like the fact that the CFPB exists.'' The only reason the Trump administration would put Mr. Mulvaney forward for this position would be so that he can rot the agency from the inside.

There is a clear pattern in this administration. Rather than trying to scrap agencies that the administration doesn't like—a tactic that would never fly with Congress or the American people, who know how important these agencies are—the administration will put in charge the people who will undermine them.

To head the Environmental Protection Agency, the Trump administration chose an industry advocate who was against just about every advance in the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act.

To head the Department of Energy, the Trump administration nominated someone who called for its abolishment.

To head the Ex-Im Bank, which helps exports throughout this country—new jobs—the Trump administration nominated someone who called for it to be disbanded.

Mr. Mulvaney is only the latest in a long line of Trojan-horse candidates selected by the White House to undermine Federal agencies from within. The CFPB should be led by someone who believes in its mission, someone who is committed to working around the clock on behalf of consumers, not by a part-time Director who clearly disdains the agency. President Trump must nominate a permanent Director, and eventually that person will take charge of the agency, if confirmed. Whoever is nominated must have a demonstrated record of standing up on behalf of consumers. Former Director Cordray and Leandra English fit that mold. Mick Mulvaney certainly does not.

For the interim, the law established under Dodd-Frank dictates that Ms.