

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, we do want to go far, and we need to travel together. We have been trying to make the case that, indeed, we do this in a bipartisan way instead of being jammed through in a partisan way.

I don't think there would be a Senator in this Chamber that would not want to help Puerto Rico, given the fact that Puerto Rico is going through the ravages of the aftermath of a hurricane, where still today just under half of the population in Puerto Rico does not have electricity, and it is 3 months after the hurricane. But we are going to send another hurricane to Puerto Rico if we pass this bill because of the provisions that are so punitive to Puerto Rico in this tax bill.

In this tax bill, there is a 20-percent penalty on businesses doing business in Puerto Rico. It is just unbelievable, a 20-percent penalty on companies that invest in Puerto Rico, causing one of the daily newspapers on the island, *El Nuevo Dia*, to state that 250,000 jobs would leave the island just as a result of that provision. That is not something we want to do to Puerto Rico. We want to help Puerto Rico.

Unfortunately, that is not all. The bill eliminates the section 199 manufacturing deduction for Puerto Rico, specifically in the law to encourage manufacturing in that island Commonwealth, a territory of our fellow U.S. citizens.

The bill also eliminates the rum cover, which is how they get a rebate for paying those excise taxes on the production of Puerto Rican and U.S. Virgin Islands rum. It is a means of offsetting the cost of economic development in those two territories, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

This bill further fails to put Puerto Rico residents on an equal footing with those on the mainland by giving them the same treatment on the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit.

First, the bill is so out of balance, to begin with. But then, when you get down to the specifics in so many of the items—now, in this particular item affecting Puerto Rico—this is not what we want to do. Yet we are just about to vote on this bill, and that is what is going to happen. That is what is going to happen in Puerto Rico.

I urge some of our Members to reconsider their vote.

I yield the floor.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MISSILE DEFENSE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, for 20 years now, I have viewed the develop-

ment and deployment of a layered ballistic missile defense shield as vital to our national security. The experience that we witnessed yesterday is something we have been talking about for a long time that was going to happen. Sometimes our DIA, or Defense Intelligence Agency, has said it is going to happen 5 years from now and then 4 years from now. The question is this: When will North Korea have the capability of a weapon and delivery system that would reach Washington, DC, or any of the States of the United States? The adversaries like North Korea are developing ballistic missiles with increasing range and accuracy. It is important for us in the Senate to communicate to the American people the credible, grave, and immediate threat that we face.

Today the world is more dangerous than it has ever been before. I have said so many times in the past that I look wistfully back at the days of the Cold War when things were predictable. We had two superpowers. We knew what they had, and they knew what we had. It is not that way anymore. Every time we have someone coming in to our Defense Committee to testify, they talk about the fact that North Korea is not predictable. So we don't know what is going to happen and what they are capable of doing.

I have been here on the floor on this issue in 2001, 2009, 2012, and this will be the third time this year. Over the last 30 years, we have witnessed our missile defense programs go through dramatic investment changes from administration to administration, depending on who is President. Remember how everyone ridiculed President Reagan about "Star Wars," hitting a bullet with a bullet. They felt that it was pretty funny at that time. Right now, everything he said that was going to happen is happening and happened yesterday.

In 1993, they cut out of the Reagan budget and from the Bush budget the missile defense budget request for fiscal year 1994. They terminated the Reagan-Bush Strategic Defense Initiative Program and downgraded the national missile defense—this is all during the Clinton administration—to a research and development program only and cut 5 years of missile defense funding by 54 percent, from \$39 billion to \$18 billion.

In 1996 they cut funding and slowed the development of the THAAD program—the THAAD program we are so dependent on right now to defend against an incoming missile in many parts of the world with our allies. They cut the Defense authorization bill, which required accelerated development.

In 1999 they delayed by at least 2 years our Space-Based Infrared System satellites, designed to detect and track missile launches, necessary to coordinate with any effective national missile defense system.

Then along came Bush. By the end of 2008, the Bush administration had suc-

ceeded in fielding a missile defense system that was capable of defending all 50 States. During that period of time, we had 44 ground-based defense systems in the United States. The Obama administration cut that back down, but the Bush administration wanted a system that would take care of all 50 States.

Here is the problem, though. All of our ground-based systems were on the west coast—in Alaska and California—so we didn't have anything else. At that time, they thought that was where the threat was going to be, but during the last years of the second Bush administration, we realized that we needed to do something about the rest of the country—something about the east coast—and something about Western Europe.

We made a deal with the Czech Republic and Poland to have a ground-based system in the Czech Republic and Poland, along with the radar that was necessary to operate it. I remember that. I was there and had a conversation with Vaclav Klaus in the Czech Republic.

He said to me: If we go along with building this system, we are going to incur the wrath of Russia, and it is going to be very difficult for us. So can you assure us, if we agree to do this, that you will not pull the rug out from under us?

I said: Certainly, we will not do that. This is something that we are committed to doing.

The problem is that the first thing that happened when the Obama administration came in was he pulled the rug out from under them. So we found ourselves vulnerable to, maybe, having one shot at a defense system in the eastern part of the United States and in Western Europe.

Then, in April, there came the first of the Obama defense cuts, which began disarming America and dismantling our layered missile defense system. Additionally, due to President Obama's overall reduced budget request for defense, there were not enough Aegis ships or missiles to meet the demand that was there.

Since Kim Jong Un took power in 2009, he has already conducted more than 80 ballistic missile tests. That is far more than his father and grandfather conducted. North Korea has conducted six nuclear tests of increasingly powerful weapons. The latest test was in September of this year. That bomb had an explosive yield estimated to be 100 kilotons, which is almost 7 times more powerful than the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima and as much as 11 times more powerful than what North Korea tested in January of last year.

In April of this year, at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Policy and Strategy in the Asia-Pacific, a panel of expert witnesses agreed with me that North Korea currently represents the most imminent threat to our national security. On July 4 of

this year, North Korea made a major breakthrough with its first successful ICBM launching. If it had been launched on a standard trajectory, the missile could likely have traveled up to 5,000 miles. That would have been enough to have reached Alaska. On July 28 of this year, North Korea tested another ICBM. This missile demonstrated the potential ability to reach mainland U.S. targets with a nuclear-armed ICBM.

Yesterday was the big day. Yesterday, it finally happened. Yesterday, North Korea proved that it could reliably range the entire continental United States with a test of its latest developed and newest version of the ICBM. It is important to remember that all of this power is being wielded by the erratic despot Kim Jong Un. We don't have the luxury of time. He has stated that his goal—listen to this—is to attain a nuclear-capable ICBM that can annihilate the United States. Each and every day, he gets closer to this goal, and, yesterday, he proved that it could be done.

Secretary Mattis confirmed the technical advances that were displayed in yesterday's test. The missile had 53 minutes of time in flight, and Mattis confirmed that it had gone higher than any previous shot they had ever taken.

David Wright, an analyst with the Union of Concerned Scientists, wrote that yesterday's test indicates that North Korea can now hold the United States well within missile range. Wright wrote: "Such a missile would have been more than enough range to reach Washington, DC, and in fact any part of the continental United States."

When one talks about the real threats that are out there, we now know that even though people didn't believe it 20 years ago, 10 years ago, 5 years ago, it finally happened yesterday. They have the range that could reach the continental United States, and they have proved that they have a missile that can do that. The only argument they use is that this may not have had a payload, that maybe they couldn't have done that with a payload. Actually, it had that kind of a range. That doesn't give me much comfort. I really think that we are to the point at which we have to recognize that we are in the most threatened position we have been in as a nation, and now it is a lot easier to believe that because we witnessed it yesterday.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Montana.

TAX REFORM

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I have long supported efforts to reform the Tax Code—tax reform that gives a break to working-class Americans and small businesses so that they can create more jobs and keep more of their hard-earned money in their pockets, tax reform that provides permanent, long-term certainty for job-creating

businesses and middle-class families so that they can plan for the future, and tax reform that doesn't burden future generations with loads of debt. Unfortunately, the bill that we are going to vote on this week is not tax reform.

The majority and the administration can call this proposal whatever they want, but from where I come from, which is north central Montana, we call it how we see it. This is a tax giveaway to the wealthy—a tax giveaway that will cut taxes for the wealthiest families while raising taxes on nearly 14 million middle-class Americans. This tax giveaway benefits wealthy out-of-staters at the expense of hard-working Montanans. In fact, folks making less than \$30,000 a year will see a tax hike in 2019, and folks making less than \$40,000 will see a tax hike in 2021. That pattern continues climbing until every individual will see a tax hike in 2025.

Why is this important?

We haven't done tax reform in 30 years, and 2025 will be here tomorrow. A tax break for the wealthiest will continue not only to add to our debt, but it will continue to take money out of the pockets of hard-working middle-class families. All the while, the large corporations will enjoy permanent tax giveaways.

It doesn't have to be like this, but the majority has chosen, once again, to write a bad bill in secret—no bipartisanship, no input from working families, no regard for how this bill is going to impact folks down the road. This tax giveaway to the wealthy reeks of the swamp, and it represents everything that folks hate about Washington, DC.

So why are we rushing this process?

During the Reagan tax cuts in the eighties, the House and the Senate combined to hold over 20 committee hearings before bringing a bill to the floor. Why was there no public input in this process today? Why aren't we waiting for final estimates from the Joint Tax Committee to let us know what the impacts will be? Why don't we know what the long-term impacts—past the first 10 years—are going to be? Why are we voting before we have analysis on what happens to those folks 12, 14, 16 years from now? Why are we voting on a bill before we have even had time to read it?

There is an appetite in this Senate for good tax reform—a tax bill that will cut taxes for middle-class families and small businesses and will not add to the debt, a bill that will actually drive our economy. I don't understand why folks in this body are rushing to pass this tax giveaway that is going to hurt the folks who need a tax cut the most. This is not the first time we have been down this road. Next year, nearly one-third of our national debt will be a direct result of the Bush tax cuts—over \$5.6 trillion. Yet here we are again, a decade later, and we are about to make the same mistake.

Most folks who serve in this body will say that they came here to provide

more opportunities for the next generation, that they came here to work on bills and pass bills that will help our kids and our grandkids succeed. I am here to tell you that actions speak louder than words. This bill saddles our kids and our grandkids with even more crushing debt by adding, at a minimum, \$1.4 trillion to the debt. Why? It is so that we can give tax giveaways to the wealthy and big corporations and so that some politicians can claim a political victory. If you vote for this bill, you are putting \$1.4 trillion on the credit card that our kids and our grandkids are going to be forced to pay. That is a fact. Where are the deficit hawks? Where have they flown? My, how times have changed.

We can do better than this. Our kids and our grandkids deserve better than this. Hard-working families in this country deserve better than this. We need to do the right thing and pull this bill from the floor and work together in a truly bipartisan way to pass real tax reform—get public input, get support from both sides of the aisle—and get a bill that Democrats, Republicans, and, as far as that goes, Independents can support.

The truth is apparent. The other side of the aisle doesn't want to be bothered by differences of opinion or public input, so we end up with a poorly written bill that doesn't do what it is advertised to do. Let's help businesses create more jobs and raise wages, and let's make sure that hard-working folks can keep more of their money in their pockets. That is the kind of tax reform that America deserves. Instead, we are stuck with a partisan gimmick that makes the rich richer while the rest of us pay the bills.

I am voting no on this bill, and I am voting no for Montana's kids and grandkids. I encourage my colleagues to take a look at this bill, by the way, that we don't even have yet. Take a look at it, what is there, and vote no to avoid, at a minimum, a trillion and a half dollars being added to our national debt.

When I go home, one of the things that folks ask of me is to work together—to work together and find bipartisan solutions. Don't just cast off those on the other side as being wrong. Listen to them. Try to find that middle ground. That hasn't happened here with this bill. Anything but that has happened. We have a bill that has been crafted by one party in secret and has been put in front of us, and they have said: Here. Take it or leave it. We don't even know the impacts of this bill, and they don't know the impacts of this bill. Once this passes, it will be too late. This is the most deliberative body in the world. We ought to do a little deliberating and get some public input and find bipartisan support and move forward with a bill that works for America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.