

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

VOTE ON MOTION TO INSTRUCT

The question is on agreeing to the motion by the Senator from Florida.

The motion was agreed to.

VOTE ON MOTION TO INSTRUCT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion by the Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted “nay.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 309 Leg.]

YEAS—47

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

NAYS—51

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

NOT VOTING—2

Alexander	Franken
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The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

CHIP AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I am coming to the floor again to focus on the fact that the clock is ticking for families in Michigan and across the country—men and women, children, older people, younger people who use the community health centers, as well as those who have their children covered under the Children’s Health Insurance Program. The Federal funding for those programs stopped September 30—67 days ago. We have had votes. We have had bills. We have had nominations come before us. There have been divisiveness and controversy. It would be wonderful if we could stop for 1 day and do something that has bipartisan support.

The fact is that CHIP covers 9 million children, and 100,000 of those are in Michigan. We passed a bill out of the Finance Committee in September. I want to laud our chairman, Senator HATCH, and our ranking member, Senator WYDEN. It was a bipartisan bill. There was only one “no” vote. We reported it out. I assumed we would want to get this done before September 30, when the funding ran out.

Instead, here we wait, 67 days later. There are 9 million children at risk because of this inaction—100,000 children in Michigan.

The truth is that today, thanks to CHIP and thanks to a variety of healthcare efforts across the country, 97 percent of the children in our country have access to a doctor. In Michigan, it is actually higher; it is 97 percent of our children. So if a child has juvenile diabetes, if they have a cancer or asthma or just fall out of a tree and break their arm or have bronchitis or the flu, whatever it is that is happening to children, parents have the peace of mind under the MIChild Program to know that they can take their child to a doctor whom they have a relationship with and who knows their children, instead of going to the emergency room.

We also know that emergency rooms are the most expensive way to provide care. They are necessary. They are important for emergencies but not for the daily routines of life, when someone could be seeing a doctor. It costs more; uncompensated care costs more, and when someone uses the emergency room when they could be seeing a doctor, then everyone else pays for that with their insurance rates going up.

So MIChild in Michigan and the Children’s Health Insurance Program across the country work. They save money. They save lives. In fact, as soon as January, in Michigan, families are going to start to get notices that the funding will go away, that the medical care will go away. It is not a great way to start the new year: Merry Christmas. Happy New Year. Your child is not going to be able to go see their doctor anymore. We don’t have to have that happen because we have strong bipartisan support for this.

It is the same thing with community health centers. Twenty-five million people are able to see a doctor or a nurse and get the care they need through a community health center in their community. There are 300,000 veterans who are able to see a doctor through a community health center, and there are 7.5 million children as well.

In Michigan, our health centers are all over the State. We have some 260 different clinics around Michigan that serve 681,000 people and, again, almost 13,000 veterans. Starting in January, they are going to begin to lose funding at different times—some in February, some in March, some in April—because of local funding streams. But starting in January, in Michigan, health centers are not going to have the funding they need. The majority of their funding—70 percent of their funding—comes through the program that expired September 30, and we know that this also doesn’t have to happen.

My friend Senator ROY BLUNT and I have put in legislation. We have a letter signed by 70 Members—not 7—70 Members of this body, over two-thirds of this body signing a letter supporting the continuation of community health centers. Yet we can’t get that brought up either.

We thought the original plan was to bring up CHIP, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, and include community health centers with it, and get that done before September 30. The clock is ticking every single day, and it has not been done. Folks may be trying to hold it hostage politically for some reason or trying to work on some deal at the end of the year. In the meantime, families are worrying, men and women are worrying, and veterans are worrying about what is going to happen, whether or not they are going to continue to get their healthcare.

Let me go back to where I started. Today is 67 days, and tomorrow it will be 68 days since the funding for two healthcare programs that have had broad bipartisan support over the years and broad bipartisan support today—67 days since that funding has stopped.

I would like to close with a story from a gentleman named Darin, whose life was changed by one of Michigan’s community health centers. He shared his story with me.

Darin was an unemployed truck-driver when he moved to Jackson, MI, 4 years ago. He hadn’t seen a doctor for a decade, and, in his words, he was “a complete mess.” He had diabetes, congestive heart failure, and he had no energy. He needed an oxygen tank to walk. He started seeing Dr. Roy at the Center for Family Health, which is a great health clinic in Jackson. He told her he didn’t want to just be stable; he wanted to get better. So they went to work so that he could get back on his feet and get back to work.

Darin got his diabetes under control. He improved his lung function, got rid of the oxygen tank, and quit his pain pills. Darin said:

I went from being . . . hardly able to move to where I feel like I can do almost anything. Dr. Roy saw me at my lowest, and she has seen me improve so much that she celebrates with me. Dr. Roy kicked me in the seat of the pants, and I will always thank her for it.

Darin got his kick in the seat of the pants, and, Mr. President, with all due respect, I believe Members of this body could use one too.

There are 25 million people who count on community health centers for their care—their children's care, the care of their moms and dads. There are 9 million children who are covered under the Children's Health Insurance Program. They have been waiting and worrying for long enough; 67 days is long enough. I am hopeful that there will be a sense of urgency from colleagues to get this done.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORAN). The Senator from Utah.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, last week, the Senate came another step closer to providing real tax relief to the middle class and providing a much needed boost to our economy. Yes, I am talking about the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

That bill spent years in the making. As my chief legislative focus for many years, tax reform is not some off-the-cuff effort. No, we have been researching, holding dozens of hearings, commissioning bipartisan working groups, and working with our friends on the other side of the Capitol and down the street at the White House for some time now.

This bill is going to put another \$2,200 in the pockets of the average American family. This bill is going to boost the economy. It is going to grow jobs and finally help end the wage stagnation we have been faced with for years.

This bill is going to unleash the American spirit, bringing businesses back home where they started and encouraging other businesses to both come from abroad, as well as to grow from within. Once again, America will be open for business.

I have not been alone in this process though, not by a long shot. In fact, tax reform has been a priority for many of my colleagues, including some who are no longer serving. I am talking, of course, about people like Congressman Dave Camp and Senator Max Baucus, who did a lot to move this effort forward. I feel gratified to have been here and to have worked with my colleagues to get this far.

As efforts this year began in earnest, we set out to build on the work of our former colleagues and to give low- and middle-income Americans some much needed relief and to give our country an opportunity to compete in the global economy. Our bill will do that, but as we all know, these great reforms are

not quite yet promised to the American people. There is still work to do as we work to iron out our differences with the House and make sure every section of this bill is ready to be eased into law or passed into law.

That said, I think we deserve to celebrate a little bit and, more importantly, to thank everyone for their work to get us to this point. So many people—both in and out of Congress—have worked hard to get us this far, and I want to express my appreciation for their efforts. Of course, I can't thank everyone in a single floor speech, but I do want to thank some who may be within earshot of this Chamber.

First and foremost, I need to thank Secretary Mnuchin and Director Cohn for their commitment to this effort and their help in getting it done. It is good to finally have an administration that is willing to lead out on tax reform. I also want to thank the distinguished majority leader who also did so much to secure the details of the bill and shepherd it through the Senate. Furthermore, I want to thank Chairman BRADY and Speaker RYAN over in the House of Representatives, as well. They, too, have been great partners and leaders in this endeavor.

I also need to thank the staff from the leader's office, including Sharon Soderstrom, Brandan Dunn, Antonio Ferrier, Hazen Marshall, Erica Suares, Terry Van Doren, Don Stewart, and Jane Lee.

Of course, I want to thank the Members of the Senate Finance Committee who put in countless days, weeks, and months in preparing this legislation and helping to get it passed. All of our majority Members contributed greatly to this process, and I am most grateful.

I also want to thank the tax legislative assistants from each of the committee members who helped to craft this bill; namely, Chris Allen, Sam Beaver, Joseph Boddicker, Chris Conlin, Shay Hawkins, Randy Herndon, Bart Massey, Monica McGuire, Mike Quickel, Zachary Rudisill, Andrew Siracuse, Robert Sneeden, Derek Theurer, and Mark Warren, all of whom did an outstanding job in helping us to produce this bill.

I also thank the committee's legislative directors: Charles Cogar, Ken Flanz, Chris Gillott, Brad Grantz, Amber Kirchhoefer, Kurt Kovarik, Jessica McBride, Sarah Paul, Landon Stropko, Jay Sulzmann, Stephen Tausend, Pam Thiessen, and Christopher Toppings.

In addition to all of the Senators and staff on the Finance Committee, I need to thank some others. As we all know, this process has been a joint effort with our friends on the Budget Committee. I need to thank Senator ENZI, once again, for his leadership on that committee to give us the reconciliation instruction that made this all possible. Additionally, I would like to thank members of his staff, including Joe Brenckle, Jim Neill, Betsy McDonnell,

Matt Giroux, Paul Vinovich, Becky Cole, Eric Ueland, Thomas Fueller, and the rest of the Budget Committee team.

Closer to home, I thank the staff of the Finance Committee, who have done so much of the heavy lifting here. I need to single out Mark Prater, my chief tax counsel, who has served the committee for decades, and whose knowledge and expertise on these matters is recognized by everyone here and by pretty much everyone everywhere else. I also express my thanks to the rest of my committee tax staff: Jennifer Acuna, Tony Coughlan, Christopher Hanna, Alex Monie, Eric Oman, Marty Pippins, Preston Rutledge, and Nick Wyatt.

Additionally, I need to thank my staff director, Jay Khosla, who quarterbacked the staff through this whole ordeal and who has spent many years with me as we have laid the groundwork and started construction on this undertaking. I want to thank the other members of my senior team as well, including Matt Hoffmann, Jeff Wrake, Julia Lawless, Jennifer Kuskowski, Chris Armstrong, and Bryan Hickman. I need to thank the communications staff on the committee: Katie Niederee, Nicole Hager, and Joshua Blume.

I also need to thank a couple of former staff members: Chris Campbell, my former staff director, who worked for years on this effort. While he is now at Treasury, I am sure he is celebrating right now along with us. I would also like to give a thank-you to Jim Lyons, my tax counsel, who, unfortunately, passed away a little over a year ago. He contributed greatly to this effort for a number of years, and his steady presence has definitely been missed.

Other bodies deserve our thanks as well. Tom Barthold and his team at the Joint Committee on Taxation made themselves available at all hours to help us get this bill written and ready to pass, as did the staff at the legislative counsel's office, led by Mark McGunagle and Jim Fransen, as well as those who work with Elizabeth MacDonough in the Parliamentarian's office.

I am so grateful to all of you for your sacrifices and talents that have allowed us to craft this impressive package.

Unfortunately, though, there are too many people to thank in a single floor speech. So, please, let me express my gratitude to the countless individuals who have helped in this endeavor over the years. This would not have been possible without you.

Before I close, I would like to reiterate that we are not yet there though. I know I will not rest and that I can count on the rest of you to keep going until we have this over the finish line. We are so close to finally giving the American people the Tax Code, and, in turn, the economic growth not only they but their children and grandchildren deserve. It is my solemn commitment to keep working and get this done for all of us.