

and take those jobs overseas. We need to get this tax rate competitive and as low as possible. Otherwise, other countries will immediately lower their rates, and we will still be at a significant disadvantage.

If we don't take bold action right now, we may not get the chance to do so again for another 30 years. We need to make sure we don't get outpaced by other countries, even after we make these tax changes.

Let me just describe why this is so important. Today, the U.S. tax rate is 35 percent. Asia right now averages about 18 percent. Europe is about 20 percent. So if we go to 20 percent, the rest of the world is going to move. We already know that the United Kingdom is moving to 15 percent. Others are talking about moving as well. We have a 50-percent differential. That difference allows other countries to come into this country, buy our companies and use that tax differential to pay for part of the acquisition costs. What that does is it takes jobs overseas and actually thwarts our ability to compete. Because of this reality, because of this 50-percent differential, there are twice as many foreign companies buying U.S. companies, both C corporations and passsthroughs, as there are U.S. companies buying foreign companies. We simply have to change that.

Let me give you some examples of how competitive and how dynamic this issue about the corporate tax rate is. Germany today has a 16 percent tax rate; that compares to our 35 percent top tax rate. The UK today is 19 percent, but as I said earlier, they have already announced that they are going to 17 percent next year. France and the Netherlands have also announced that they are going to take rates lower next year.

When the UK goes to 17 percent, France lowers theirs, the Netherlands lowers theirs—Germany is already sitting right there at 16 percent—if we increase this corporate tax rate from what we have already agreed to in our negotiations in this body, then we will replicate the 50-percent differential with the rest of the world almost immediately, so we will have accomplished nothing.

The greatest burden on the American worker, again, is this corporate tax rate of 35 percent. It is estimated that every 1 percent drop in the corporate tax rate could mean roughly 30,000 new jobs in an economy that is \$30 billion larger. We can't afford to play around with this corporate tax rate that we have already agreed on. It is time to stop that debate.

All of these changes in the Tax Code, though, were meant to lift up Americans, simply put. It is the family who will benefit from this. It is the individual who is trying to get an education, get that first job. It is those people who are going to retire and depend on a robust Federal Government to take care of them in their retirement. But right now, with this debt

crisis, we are losing the ability to do the right thing.

Members of both sides of the aisle have previously supported many of these changes to the Tax Code. There was no reason to vote no on this bill, and there is no reason not to support them now. The United States made history the other night at about 2 a.m. on Saturday morning by approving this plan. We now have certain individuals from this body and the House who will go into a conference, and they will work out the differences between the House bill and the Senate bill. That is called democracy, and I am looking forward to seeing that bill come back to this body. We must not lose sight about what this is all about—to bring relief to Americans and help us become more competitive. We cannot take this standard of living for granted.

This body is great at spending money, but right now every dollar we spend of discretionary money, by definition, is borrowed money. This can no longer be the case. This tax bill is clearly an investment in our future.

I am not embarrassed to say that I believe in capitalism. Capitalism is what has made this country different from any other country in the world so far. Right now, the economic miracle of this past century is based on three simple things: innovation, capital formation, and the rule of law. That, combined with the best workforce in the history of the world, has created this economic miracle. Yet we sit here today where my children, the next generation, will be the first generation in the history of our country to face lower economic prospects than the generation before them. That does not have to be the case. It is up to this body to stand up and do what is right for the next generation. This is a critical part—don't miss this—this is a critical part of solving our debt crisis. This is the least we owe to our children and our children's children.

We must continue doing all we can to make sure that we put this tax bill on President Trump's desk before Christmas. Our children and our children's children's futures depend on it.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, let me tell you a story. Yesterday, I was in Nashville, and I went to Chick-fil-a on Charlotte Avenue about 2 p.m. in the afternoon, and I ordered six chicken nuggets, some mac and cheese, and some waffle fries. I was about to leave, and a lady walked up to me and said: Senator, thank you for what you are doing to help me with insurance.

I said: Well, what do you mean?

She said: My name is Marty Parish. I am a self-employed farmer, and the year before ObamaCare started, my monthly insurance premium was \$300.

Next year, it is \$1,300, and that is very hard for me to afford.

I said: I guess you are one of those Americans who work hard and you don't get any government subsidy to help you pay for your health insurance.

She said: That is exactly right. I have to pay for the whole thing myself.

I said: Well, Marty Parish, I have a Christmas present for you. The Congress can pass, by the end of the month, legislation that would lower your premiums in the year 2019 by 18 percent. That is according to Avalere, one of the country's leading health consulting firms, which made the announcement yesterday.

So if your premiums are \$1,300 a month, that is a couple of thousand dollars less that you will have to pay, and that is still way too high. If the Senate and the House agree on a tax bill that removes the individual mandate and the Congressional Budget Office is right, that will put some upward pressure on those same rates but only 10 percent. She was still going to get an 8-percent decrease in her rates in 2019, and that is about \$1,000 in her pocket. Those are real dollars.

Marty Parish has seen, if she is like the average Tennessean, her premiums rise 176 percent over the last 5 years, and she has seen them go up an average this year of 58 percent more. So a very good Christmas present for Marty Parish and men and women like her across this country would be for this Congress, before the end of the month, to pass what we call the Alexander-Murray and the Collins-Nelson legislation, which will lower premiums by 18 percent. More than that, that Christmas present, which is all wrapped up in a nice package and sitting in the White House, waiting for anybody who wants to consider it—according to the Congressional Budget Office, it will not just reduce premiums, but it will reduce the amount of Federal tax dollars that go to pay for ObamaCare subsidies. If the premiums are lower, the subsidies are going to be lower. And if the premiums are lower and the subsidies are lower, then the Federal debt is going to be lower.

So here you have, for my friend whom I met yesterday at Chick-fil-a, an 18-percent, on average, reduction in her 2019 insurance premiums. Fewer of her tax dollars are going to pay for Affordable Care Act subsidies, and there will be less Federal debt for her and her family. Because the President has said that he will not put up with it and because Senator MURRAY, the Democrat who is ranking on the HELP Committee, and I agree on this, there will be no bailout of insurance companies in these proposals.

Who would support something like this? Well, President Trump supports it. He told us that last week. In fact, he asked for it. He called me specifically a few weeks ago and said: I don't want people hurt in the next 2 years while we are still debating what to do in the long term about health insurance. Why

don't you work with Senator MURRAY and see if you can put together a bill that keeps people from being hurt and that stabilizes the market so premiums don't go up so much?

I said: Mr. President, we are already working on that.

I have talked with him half a dozen times about that. I met with him at the White House, talked to him the other day, and he has said publicly and privately that he supports the Alexander-Murray legislation, and he supports the legislation supported by Senator COLLINS, a Republican, and Senator NELSON, a Democrat. So that is a pretty big one.

Senator McCONNELL, the Republican majority leader, supports it. He has said that publicly and privately. He supports both of them.

Senator SCHUMER, who is the Democratic leader, said 2 or 3 weeks ago that every single Democrat in the Senate would vote for Alexander-Murray and that it had 60 votes, and Senator McCONNELL should put it on the floor as soon as possible. He thought it would pass with a lot of votes.

Well, the bill hasn't changed except in one way. It has gotten better from the point of view not just of Democrats but of Republicans.

The idea that Senator COLLINS and Senator NELSON have come up with is the idea of creating an invisible risk pool or a reinsurance fund. To allow States to do that would permit those States to do what Maine has done, what Alaska has done, and what Minnesota is trying to do, and it is this: Alaska created such a fund; they call it a reinsurance fund. Maine calls it an invisible risk pool. They put money into taking care of the very sick people in the individual market in Alaska, and once they did that, well, they were able to lower rates for everybody else by 20 percent. That is in addition to the 18 percent that Avalere talked about in our bill—in addition to that, Maine did a similar thing in a little different way in their State.

Who else likes this idea? Well, Republicans in the House of Representatives like it. They, of course, are a full partner in this exercise. They will have to consider it and decide whether they are for it, but I think it would be pretty easy for them to support Collins-Nelson because it was in the repeal-and-replace bill for the Affordable Care Act that the House passed and voted for. In fact, the so-called compromise by Representative MEADOWS and Representative McCARTHY included an invisible risk pool of up to \$15 billion to allow States—this is pretty good Republican philosophy—to make their own decisions about doing this and decide, as Maine did, Alaska did, and as Minnesota is trying to do, to say that we are going to create this fund, and we are going to take care of the very sick people who use most of the money we spend on healthcare. When we do that, we lower the rates for everybody else. In the Alaska case, because it low-

ered the rates for everybody else, again, premiums went down, subsidies went down, and Alaska was able to pay for 85 percent of its reinsurance fund with Federal dollars without any new Federal dollars going to Alaska. That is what happens when you allow States to use their own good judgment, and that is why Senator COLLINS, a Republican, and Senator BILL NELSON, a Democrat, have suggested it over here.

The other thing that the House of Representatives did in its Republican replace-and-replace bill was continue the cost-sharing payments for 2 years. Cost-sharing payments are payments that the Federal Government makes so that low-income Americans will not have to make them when they buy their insurance. It makes them to the insurance companies, but the benefit from the lower rates is supposed to go to the individual consumer or to the taxpayer.

The House of Representatives, in its repeal-and-replace bill, understood—just as the distinguished Presiding Officer Senator CASSIDY, Senator GRAHAM, and Senator JOHNSON understood—that if they are able to repeal and replace ObamaCare or make any significant major changes in it, it will take a couple of years to put it in place, and you don't want people to be hurt in the meantime. That is exactly what the President said to me when he called me a few weeks ago. He said: I don't want people hurt during this 2-year period.

So the House of Representatives put into their repeal-and-replace bill 2 years of cost-sharing payments, not to bail out insurance companies. It doesn't bail out insurance companies. The benefits go to individuals. They wanted to make sure that rates stayed down and people didn't get hurt.

The proposals we are talking about, the Christmas present I talked about to the young farmer in Tennessee—both have fundamentally been a part of the House repeal-and-replace bill. While I can't speak for the House of Representatives—what they do is their business—I believe as they study Alexander-Murray and Collins-Nelson, they will find that they like it because they have already voted for it once this year. The House of Representatives created the invisible risk pool. That was a real breakthrough in their ability to pass a bill. Then, second, they wanted to make sure that during this interim—the time we try to change the individual insurance market in this country—people aren't hurt.

So I have come to the floor today just to say that there is a lot going on today and next week. It involves defense spending. It involves the amount of money we can spend for the next year in our government. It involves a tax bill. The Senator from Georgia has just talked about it—a historic tax bill that I hope we can pass. But there is also an opportunity for every single one of us to give a Christmas present to the 9 million Americans who have

been hammered by skyrocketing insurance premiums.

We don't need to debate whose fault that is. I don't need to say it is all the fault of the Affordable Care Act. Democrats don't need to say it is President Trump's sabotaging it. Let's forget that for a moment. Let's just say that the fact is, in Tennessee, premiums will go up in 2018 by 58 percent, and they are going to go up more the next year if we don't do something about it.

We have two bills here that will say to the self-employed farmer in Tennessee or Iowa or Louisiana or the songwriter or the small business woman: We hear you. We know you can't afford these rates. If you are paying \$1,300 a month for two of you, that is way too high.

We can begin to take those rates down—according to Avalere, 18 percent in 2019. According to the Congressional Budget Office, if we don't take this action to pass the cost-sharing payments, rates will go up 25 percent. So if the present we have includes lower premiums, less debt, less money going to ObamaCare subsidies, and it doesn't bail out insurance companies, why should we not pass that? I think we will pass it.

I think it would be pretty hard to explain—I don't want to run into Marti Parish at Chick-fil-A in Nashville between Christmas and New Year's and say: I am sorry about that Christmas present. I could have lowered your rates 18 percent, and I could have done it in a way that didn't run up our Federal debt. I just couldn't get it done.

She would say to me: Wasn't the President for it?

I would say: Yes.

Hasn't the House already voted for that once?

I would say: Yes.

Didn't the Democratic leader say the Democrats were for it?

I would say: Yes.

She would say: Then why didn't it pass?

I would have a hard time coming up with an answer to that.

I hope that over the next few days, we are able to do what Democrats and Republicans have suggested and what 12 Democratic Senators and 12 Republican Senators have offered to this Senate in Alexander-Murray and what Senator COLLINS and Senator NELSON have offered in Collins-Nelson. Both ideas are very much like two provisions already voted on this year by the House of Representatives.

Let's realize that it is the Christmas season. A very nice Christmas present for 9 million hard-working Americans who don't get any government help to pay for their skyrocketing health insurance premiums would be to pass these bills into law so they can count on insurance premiums in 2019 that are, on average, 18 percent lower.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

DACA

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today as a voice for 800,000 young men and women who are counting on all of us to pass the Dream Act. We can't wait because they can't wait. Every day that passes is another day they are forced to keep their lives on hold. Right now, hundreds of thousands of young people in this country are deferring their dreams of finishing a college degree, of becoming a doctor, buying a home, raising a family, starting a small business, or serving in our military—all because President Trump pulled the plug on the DACA Program 3 months ago.

Imagine that feeling of waking up day after day without any certainty about what comes next. Imagine that the country you love—the country where you grew up, where you are part of the community, where you pay your taxes, where you spend your time, your energy, and your money—will not commit to uphold this promise to you. That is just wrong.

Dreamers were brought to this country as children—some of them so young, they don't even remember it—and holding up their futures or sending them to a country they have never known makes no sense for them or for our country. It doesn't do anything to solve our broken immigration system, and it certainly doesn't reflect a country of opportunity or promise—something the United States has always aspired to.

My colleagues have been sharing stories from their States. Here are a few from my home State of Washington—just a few. I have heard so many in recent months.

Not long ago, I was in Tacoma, and I visited a community organization that has actually helped hundreds of men and women get enrolled in the DACA Program, including a woman named Adriana. She has always been a strong student. As early as middle school, she was representing her school district in statewide math and science competitions. Now, after becoming a certified nursing assistant, she is a program manager supervising others. Letting the DACA Program collapse would be a huge setback for Adriana and would end her authorization and her ability to work as a nursing assistant.

I heard from a sophomore at my alma mater, Washington State University, who was brought here to this country at the age of 9. Thanks to the DACA Program, she was able to get a job helping adults with disabilities, which has allowed her to pay for college tuition and support herself. She is a full-time student with a part-time job and still finds time to volunteer in her community. She is on track to graduate in 2019. She dreams of owning her own company someday.

I heard from another DACA recipient who owns a business in Washington State. He said that his college degree from the University of Washington—which he completed without any Fed-

eral funding, by the way, no help at all—symbolized one of his great life challenges. And, as he noted, he is now using his education, his skills, his earnings, and his taxes to contribute to the U.S. economy. He wrote: "This country is my home."

The thought that this country would slam the door shut on him or any other Dreamer after all they have put in their communities and our country is so backward. That is why we Senators who are elected to work for the people and address the big issues facing the country need to act.

I urge my Republican colleagues to consider the stories you heard from your own States. Think about the communities you represent and the young men and women who are studying and working and starting businesses in the communities you travel to and live in. Show them that President Trump's reckless, divisive agenda does not represent you, your party, or your own State. Work with Democrats to stand for the Dreamers in your district, who are unsure if they can keep their job at a hospital or as a firefighter or serve in our military to fight for our freedoms, who are unsure if they can stay in the only country they have known as home and remain with loved ones.

We need the help of every Member to push back against the policies and the rhetoric that hurt our friends and our neighbors, our coworkers, our students, and our loved ones, because, to paraphrase Dr. King, we know that only our light can drive out the dark forces of bigotry and division in this country.

I thank the countless DACA recipients who have bravely shared their stories in letters, in person, and at rallies across our country. I know it cannot be easy to speak up in these uncertain times, but I want Dreamers to know that there are a lot of us here in Congress and across the country who are inspired by your courage and resilience. We stand with you, and we will not stop until we get this across the finish line.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO MAX MENDEZ

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, it is my honor to announce our latest Granite Stater of the Month, an inspiring, resilient, and generous young man from Merrimack, NH.

Max Mendez, an 8-year-old boy—also known as Mighty Max and Professor Max—has battled leukemia for over a year, and he has proven to be a shining example of the values that make the

Granite State and all of our communities strong.

As Max began treatment last year—procedures, blood draws, and tests—at Boston Children's Hospital, he was often recognized for his courage and grit. The hospital had a supply of toys, and after these procedures, he would often be rewarded with one of them.

Max received so many toys that he started to donate some of them to other kids and realized that giving toys felt even better than receiving them.

In the face of his own severe health challenges, Max started Mighty Max's Mega Toy Drive to help supply Jimmy Fund Clinic, the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, and Boston Children's Hospital's hematology and oncology unit with presents for brave young patients like himself.

In true Granite State fashion, Max and his family received invaluable support from their community, including friends, local businesses, schools, sports teams, and the local police department.

Max's community donated toys, offered spaces, collection sites, and delivered donations to Max and the Mendez family. With extra help from his sister, Mckayla, and the Lyna family, who helped advertise the toy drive and store donations, Mighty Max's Mega Toy Drive received roughly 3,000 toys ahead of the holiday season this year.

Mighty Max, the Mendez family, and all of the Granite Staters who supported the toy drive demonstrate the spirit that makes New Hampshire such a strong, resilient State.

While battling leukemia and enduring painful treatments, Max found it in himself to bring joy to others who face similar challenges. His entire community, including people Max will never meet, is stronger because of his generous spirit and hard work.

Max is an inspiration for all of us during this holiday season and beyond, and I am proud to call him our Granite Stater of the Month.

Thank you.

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

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

DACA

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, this fall, I met with Dreamers in my home State of Oregon. At meetings in Eugene and in Portland, these young people gave powerful accounts of how the Trump administration has needlessly and cruelly injected fear into their lives and the lives of their families.

Right now, these Dreamers—these young people who have done nothing wrong, who have terrific grades, wonderful conduct, who are helping their