

In addition to that, community health centers across the country serve 25 million patients every year; 300,000 of them are veterans, and 7.5 million of them are children.

I had the opportunity last Friday to visit two wonderful facilities—one in Flint, which is in Genesee County, and one in western Wayne County—and see the great work they do and talk to some of the people who were there to get care. People are counting on community health centers and they are counting on the Children's Health Insurance Program in order to make sure they have the care they need for themselves and their families.

It is important that we act. We could act right now. This is bipartisan. We passed a bipartisan bill out of the Finance Committee in September, before the deadline. I want to thank the chairman, Senator HATCH, and the ranking member, Senator WYDEN. I was pleased to join with them. We passed it out of committee with only one "no" vote. We have bipartisan support to get this done. Senator BLUNT and I offered a bill that is bipartisan and has had the support of 70 Members of this body in signing a letter saying to continue funding for community health centers.

Our plan all along was to pass the children's health insurance bill out of committee in September and add health centers and then pass it before the deadline so that it would take away the anxiety, worry, and fear that families now have about what is going to happen.

Every day that goes by, people are worried about what is going to happen. Are they going to be able to take their child to the doctor, be able to get their asthma treatments, handle their juvenile diabetes, cancer treatments, or the normal things that happen to kids every day?

I am not sure if there will be any votes today. We could, today, pass the Children's Health Insurance Program and community health centers and let families across America know they are going to be able to have the medical care they need for themselves and their children coming into the new year.

I yield the floor.

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.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise to speak about an urgent crisis that Congress must solve now for nearly 800,000 Dreamers in this country. I am proud to represent New York State in the U.S. Senate. One of the things I am most proud of is that my State is home to tens of thousands of Dream-

ers—tens of thousands of young people who have never known any other country as home but this one.

When President Trump announced that he wanted to end the DACA Program, it was one of the most inhumane actions of his entire Presidency. Let me be clear about what ending DACA will do. Ending DACA will force thousands of Dreamers to lose their jobs. It will force them to go into hiding. It will force them to have to make the unimaginable choice between staying here undocumented or being forced out of the United States.

I ask my colleagues, are you really OK with letting that happen when you personally have the power to prevent it from happening right now? Attacking Dreamers like this goes against our most basic values as Americans, our most basic sense of right versus wrong.

I know this Chamber is divided about how to fix our broken immigration system, but just for a second, forget about ideology and think about what it actually means for these young people who have spent their entire lives here. They are waiting and wondering if Congress actually has the guts to stand up to President Trump and do what is right.

If the President will not lead, then Congress must lead, and we need to lead now. We have to protect our Dreamers, and we need to pass the Dream Act.

Most of all, we should never allow our Dreamers to be used as political pawns. We should simply do what both parties have said is the right thing to do, which is to pass the Dream Act. This is a matter of basic human rights and human dignity. It is about people's lives, and I am not going to compromise on that.

Mr. President, are you willing to compromise on that?

We need to fix this problem, and we don't have a lot of time to do it. Every week that Congress refuses to take action, more Dreamers lose their DACA status. Very soon, we are going to have to pass a long-term spending bill just to keep the government running, but the Republican leadership has not yet committed to including a provision in the bill to protect our Dreamers.

I want to say this very clearly: If my Republican colleagues refuse to do the right thing and protect our Dreamers in the upcoming long-term spending bill, I will vote no. I will ask my colleagues to join me in this fight. I will ask all of them to see that this issue is not a political question. It is a basic question of whether or not we are a country that protects children.

I am never going to compromise when it comes to our Dreamers, not when their lives are literally hanging in the balance. Time is desperately running out. I urge my colleagues to do what is right. We must protect the Dreamers.

I yield the floor.

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

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

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, it is a historic day for our country, for the Senate, and for the Congress.

As we speak, the President of the United States is about to sign the bill that we passed on the floor of the Senate last night, which was the agreement on the conference report—the largest tax reform in the history of our country or, certainly, the largest since 1986. It is historic in many other ways because we are fighting wars overseas, we are dealing with terrorism, and we are looking at the economic climate for the future and trying to inspire our country to be better and be everything that it can be. We are talking about all of those types of things, and we are getting ready for Christmas.

TRIBUTE TO JIM MCCOOL

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, we are busy about lots of things, but there is one thing that you should never be too busy to do, and that is to pause and stop and say thank you—thank you to someone or some entity or some institution that has made a difference in your life or in the life of your country.

I don't often come down here on points of personal privilege. I do it, but I don't often do it. When I do do it, it is special for me, and I hope it is special for the people I am talking about.

A good friend of mine is retiring from the Southern Company in the next few months. His name is Jim McCool.

Now, most of you probably don't know Jim McCool. Jim is one of those people who some people refer to as a lobbyist and others refer to as a professional advocate. I refer to him as my good friend. I met him in the 1980s. He had started his own formal wear business. He then sold that business and went to work for Mississippi Power. It was later one of the Southern Company's companies. He then worked as a liaison to Washington for the Southern Company, for Georgia Power, for Mississippi Power, and for Alabama Power.

I got to know Jim in lots of ways. First of all, it was when I was in the Georgia State Senate and the Georgia State House. On the industry committee, we worked on issues that dealt with electric utilities. I didn't know anything about those, as I was a real estate broker. My knowledge of electricity was that when I threw that switch, I wanted it to come on. Once it got beyond that, I didn't have knowledge of it.

Jim was one of those people who didn't just come and say: This is my company's position. We want you to do it. He asked: What is it about my company's position that I can help explain

for you to make a decision? He never, ever asked me to do anything for him or anyone. He always offered to give me the information that I needed to make the decision myself. That is not a rarity in that profession, but it is certainly something that the average person doesn't think of when you hear of a lobbyist or a professional advocate.

Jim McCool is, has been, and, for me, always will be very special. He takes his job seriously, his company seriously, and his country seriously. Jim and his wife, Kathy, raised three great sons. They are proud of their dad, and he is proud of them. I have seen him in enough situations with his family to know that his family comes first for Jim McCool. Golf, unlike what most people think, is not first. It is only second. The Southern Company is third. I have played a lot of golf with Jim McCool, and that is why I put that in there.

Over the years, I have worked with Jim on many, many projects. Right now, we are working on a nuclear production tax credit, in addition to the tax extenders bill, which, hopefully, will pass the Congress within the next 2 weeks, after January 1, to continue the construction and the completion of units 3 and 4 at Plant Vogtle in Georgia. For me, ironically, this was such a special moment because I had worked on Vogtle units 1 and 2 when they were built in the early 1980s and when Jim was an advocate, at that time, for Mississippi Power. He later joined the Southern Company team.

Jim and I have watched Plant Vogtle go from a dream and an aspiration for the Southern Company to a reality in terms of units 1 and 2. If we get our work done here soon, units 3 and 4 will be online. For a long time after Jim McCool is gone and I am gone and all of you are gone, Georgia will have reliable, safe energy from a renewable source called nuclear, and we will continue to be a pioneer and a leader in the southern United States.

When I heard that Jim was retiring, obviously, I knew it was a special moment for him and his family. I wish him all the best, and I know that he is going to do great. I started thinking back over all of those times that we had worked on all of those issues that had such an impact on his job and his employer and, for me, on my State and his State. Jim never wavered in his commitment to doing the best job he could possibly do in always representing the best interests of his company while never losing the best interests of those who were served by his company—the customers.

On this day today, when the President of the United States signs major, sweeping tax reform and as we approach Christmas—a special holiday for all families—I rise on the floor of the Senate to take note of Jim McCool from the State of Mississippi, employee of the Southern Company, professional advocate, father of three, and husband

to a great lady. Jim McCool has gone the long way down the long road, and he has done it with style, with class, and he has delivered every single time.

Washington doesn't have a better advocate working in this town than Jim McCool. We are going to miss him, but I am going to get to play a lot more golf with him in the years ahead because he is going to have more free time than he has right now. So I wish Jim and his family the best. I thank him for all he has done for us as Georgians.

I yield the floor.

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

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

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise today to note this Congress's historic achievement in reforming the Nation's tax system for the first time in 30 years. I congratulate the hard-working teams, the staffers, and others from the Budget, Finance, and Energy Committees and their colleagues in the House for the work they have done.

It is not easy to modernize a Tax Code that has languished for over 30 years. Many groups have worked for a long time to solidify their special benefits, and they don't want to see those perks or special benefits go away. Many others just don't know how to work things under the status quo and think that must be the only way to do things, is to find a new status quo that represents the old status quo.

Reforming the Tax Code is not easy, but it is important. It is important to America's economy. It is important to America's working families. It is important to Colorado. It is important for a lot of reasons. For instance, right now, we waste 6 billion hours and \$263 billion just to file our taxes every year. After this reform, 92 percent of taxpayers will take the standard deduction. That simplifies the code, cuts those hours, and eliminates wasted dollars.

Perhaps most importantly, it will shake our economy out of its slow-walking recovery. While there are booming areas in our country—and undoubtedly Colorado's Front Range represents some of the best examples of booming areas in our Nation—there are many areas of the country that haven't seen the growth and have, quite frankly, been left behind. They haven't seen their wages go up for a long time. In fact, yesterday the Denver Post published two stories about wages. Those stories point out that median wages in Colorado in 2016 were still below the levels of 2007 and even 2000. While I appreciate these reports, the fact is, we

knew it wasn't anything unheard of. It certainly isn't new to those Coloradans who live outside of the Front Range and who they haven't seen their wages grow. It is a reality they have been dealing with for far too long.

Over the years, wages have become detached from corporate profits, and this chart is a good example of what has occurred. Prior to 1990, a 1 percent increase in corporate profits led to a greater than 1 percent increase in worker wages. But from 2008 to 2016, a 1 percent increase in corporate profits led to only a 0.3 percent increase in wages.

What you can see right here is the corporate rate over time. You can see that in 1990, 1986, the U.S. rate remained at 35 percent, what is today, for at least a little bit longer, the highest statutory tax rate in the world when it comes to business rates. You can see OECD nations have dramatically dropped theirs beginning in 1990 and going down through today. That is what has happened. Over that same period, our once-competitive corporate tax system has gotten more and more out of date. Our corporate rate today, as I said, is about the same as it was 30 years ago—35 percent. Meanwhile, foreign countries, such as Germany, France, Italy, and even Socialist Greece, have lowered their tax rates. Now America has the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world, and Europe has an average statutory rate of around 18.5 percent. So American businesses have shifted their work overseas. New factories were built in Poland, not Pueblo. New offices opened in Dublin, not Delta. With fewer opportunities, American wages stagnated.

The empirical data on this is clear. We have another chart to talk about this. High-tax countries see anemic wage growth—well under 1 percent a year—but low-tax countries see much stronger growth—between 1 and 4 percent.

You can see right here on the red line—this line represents the highest statutory corporate rates in the world, the 10 countries with the highest statutory corporate rates. They have less than 1 percent wage growth. You can see the lowest statutory corporate rates—the countries that represent the bottom 10 statutory rates in the world have wage growth at 4 percent a year. That is clear data—growth between 1 and 4 percent in low-tax countries.

Make no mistake, America is on the red line because we have an out-of-date corporate Tax Code—an out-of-date Tax Code that we have begun to address.

Lowering the corporate tax rate has historically had support on both sides of the aisle, including something President Obama said back in 2011 in his State of the Union Address at a joint session of Congress. But suddenly, over the last couple of months, that is not the case anymore, and sadly I suspect that opposition to tax cuts has more to do with partisan politics than the merits of the proposal.