

*Chief of Police, Arlington Massachusetts,
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Mr. BROWN. I think it is pretty clear how important this is. This bill got, I believe, 2 or maybe 3 negative votes out of 400-some in the House of Representatives. There is no organization I know of that opposes it. I hear from people in my State consistently about how important this is, from police organizations to parents, to individual police officers and county sheriffs and all, and deputy sheriffs.

There is just no reason we shouldn't be able to do this before we go home for Christmas. There are a lot of things we should do before we go home for Christmas, including the Children's Health Insurance Program, but this is one we know we can do. There seems to be no substantive disagreement from any large number of groups or individuals that I can see, so I am hopeful we can move forward with this in the next few minutes.

Mr. MARKEY. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BROWN. Yes.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I thank the Senator for yielding.

Can I just list the names of the organizations that support this bill so the police can interdict, stop the fentanyl from coming into our country?

It is the National Fraternal Order of Police, it is the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, it is the National Border Control Council, it is the Police Assisted Recovery Initiative, it is the National Sheriffs' Association, the National Tactical Officers Association, the National Association of Police Organizations, the National Narcotics Officers' Associations' Coalition, the Sergeants Benevolent Association, the American Legion, the International Union of Police Associations, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Major County Sheriffs of America, and the Massachusetts Coalition of Police. So it is pretty much every single law enforcement agency at all levels in the country saying: Please give us this tool now so we can detect this incredible killer in our country.

Three former Commissioners of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, appointed by both Democratic and Republican Presidents, support the INTERDICT Act. President Trump's nominee to head the agency, Kevin McAleenan, testified that he supports getting more of these high-tech scanners into the hands of Customs and Border Patrol.

Despite working for months with Senate leadership to try and secure authorization for funding, we just can't seem to get this over the finish line so that in the new year they have these devices. The way it works is, you just put the device up next to a package, and it will tell you if it has got fentanyl or not. Right now, many law enforcement agencies will not even allow one of their police dogs to sniff

for fentanyl because it will kill the police dog. That is how dangerous fentanyl is, and that is why these electronic devices are so important. It ensures that we have minimized the exposure of our officers to these substances and, at the same time, dramatically increase the likelihood that we are going to identify the fentanyl in a package and, as a result, deter these people from China or from Mexico who bring it into our country and are killing us by the thousands.

At 42,000 deaths last year, it is now approximating the total number of deaths in the war in Vietnam throughout its entire history. That is just 1 year, 42,000 people—1 year. That is a terrorist attack of a magnitude on our own streets that is unimaginable.

With these devices, we don't completely solve the problem, but we put more weapons in the hands of our law enforcement officials, detection devices that can minimize the likelihood that these terrible people from China, from Mexico, principally, can bring this stuff into our country.

So this is a huge issue. It goes right to the heart of the seriousness of dealing with this issue. My only hope is, we have an ability to be able to move this thing forward in a way that lets the American people say: We understand the issues you want us to work on, and the opioid crisis is at the top of the list. It is indiscriminate. It affects potentially every family. No one is immune to addiction. No family is immune from addiction. It could hit any family at any time, and fentanyl is the ultimate killer.

I thank the Senator.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I thank Senator MARKEY and hope we can work things out with Senator JOHNSON on this issue.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. BROWN. Yesterday, Madam President, a bunch of Members of Congress, with healthcare paid for by taxpayers, went to the White House and celebrated a handout for corporations that sends jobs overseas—companies that shut down in Mansfield, in Zanesville, in Lima, and Toledo moved to Wuhan and Sheshan and Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Families here in America, at the same time—I am still incredulous about this. Families in this country, at the same time—in this State of Virginia, just a few miles from here—are getting letters in the mail saying their kids are about to be kicked off their health insurance through something that was bipartisan and never interrupted for 20 years since Chairman HATCH and Senator Rockefeller and Senator KENNEDY wrote this bill to create CHIP—and a number of us worked on it in the House of Representatives—because Congress hasn't done its job.

Think about that. Because Congress hasn't done its job, we are about to go

home for Christmas—most of us—and those who don't celebrate Christmas are about to go home for the holidays and celebrate the new year. My grandchildren are coming from Columbus, and another one is coming from the Virgin Islands with his father—our son and his daughter-in-law. We are going to go home, and our families have health insurance, but Members of Congress who get good health insurance paid for by taxpayers are willing to leave here and not reauthorize, not continue the Children's Health Insurance Program. To make it worse, several States, including Virginia—Ohio is in a little better position because there is a little more money left over to take care of this—but letters are going out in State after State after State to parents saying: Sorry, the health insurance for your children is going to expire. The health insurance for your children will no longer be there.

Imagine you are a parent, and you get this letter. You are just vaguely aware that Congress is fighting about something. You are vaguely aware of the hard-heartedness of a whole lot of people in this Congress. You are vaguely aware that a bunch of politicians—privileged, elected officials who make good salaries and make good benefits—are going to turn their backs on you. You don't really think much about that. All you know is, you take this piece of paper, tear open this envelope, and you start reading this letter, and you see, oh, my gosh, the insurance for my children.

Now, overwhelmingly, these parents are people who are working. They are earning \$8, \$10, \$12, \$15 an hour. They are not making enough that they can afford insurance for their families. They are not working at a job where insurance is provided as part of the compensation your employer is paying you. So that is why the Children's Health Insurance Program is so important.

A new report from the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families reports that 1.9 million children could lose coverage in January—1.9 million children. Almost all of them have a mother or a father who will open a letter and see that, oh, my gosh, the insurance for my daughter, for my son is about to expire. That is 1.9 million in January and another 1 million will lose insurance by the end of February.

Parents will panic, parents will be confused, and parents, to be sure, will have their Christmas ruined by this. Think about those families getting that letter. It should be a joyful time of year for families, spending time with family, enjoying the holidays. Imagine checking that mailbox and kind of thinking maybe this is a Christmas card and opening it and finding out it is that letter. Imagine telling your daughter: I am sorry, honey. Santa is not going to bring much this year. We don't make a lot of money—you know that—but we will not have any presents under the tree. Then you have to

look into your children's eyes—you have to look into your son's eyes, you have to look into your daughter's eyes, and you hope they don't see the worry in your eyes because you just got this letter. Now you are wondering how you will afford to take him or her to the doctor if he or she gets sick. These are often families with two working parents who, as I said, aren't lucky enough to work for an employer who provides insurance.

These are often families with children who have special needs. Like Crystal Lett and her son Noble, a first-grader in Dublin, OH, which is a suburb just west and northwest of Columbus. Crystal and her son Noble—I met them. This is obviously Noble. I met Noble and his mother Crystal in Washington this spring when they came all the way from Ohio to talk about what CHIP means to their family.

Noble was born with a rare genetic disorder. He needs three therapy sessions a week. He needs daily hormone injections to treat his condition. His medications run about \$1,500 a month.

I talked to Crystal again at the end of last month. She and her family are scared to death about what will happen to them if Congress doesn't save CHIP. She said CHIP is "the difference between living a middle class lifestyle, or being part of the poverty line." It is the difference between a middle-class lifestyle or being part of the poverty line.

Over the last several weeks, Congress was busy. Congress had the time to hand out massive tax cuts to the richest Americans and the biggest corporations but didn't have time to help these families. Some of you may have been in this Chamber a few nights ago when I pointed down the hall to Senator McCONNELL's office, the Senate Republican leader, and described the lobbyists who went in and out of his office to get these tax breaks. It was the lobbyists from the oil companies and from the oil industry. There were lobbyists walking in and out of Senator McCONNELL's office, the leader's office, from the tobacco companies. The lobbyists from the big drug companies and the lobbyists from Wall Street were going in and out of his office.

When you look down the hall to Senator McCONNELL's office, do you know who didn't come out of his office? There were no lobbyists for the Children's Health Insurance Program because, you know what, children like Noble don't have lobbyists. They can't hire lobbyists. Parents are just hoping to keep their head above water because they have a child who needs medical attention, and any child obviously can need medical attention. That is the importance of CHIP.

So CHIP doesn't have a lobbyist. CHIP has people like Crystal Lett, who stands up for her family, who stands up for her children, but she can't come to Washington full time. She came here with a delegation from Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus.

Congress had time to hand out these massive tax cuts, but they don't have time for Noble Lett. It is a disgrace. It is a program that was bipartisan, and it has always been bipartisan. It was voted out of committee bipartisanly, but I guess the right crowd of lobbyists hasn't visited Senator McCONNELL down the hall in his office. It is despicable.

We passed a bipartisan CHIP extension out of the Finance Committee. It is ready to go. If Republican leaders would put it on the floor today, it would pass. I assume it would pass with at least 90 votes. There is no excuse for this delay.

There is talk the House is going to pass a 3-month CHIP extension. We have never done that. We have extended CHIP 1 year, 2 years, 3 years. This is going to get a 5-year extension. That is what we ought to do. They are going to do a 3-month extension.

Three months provides no certainty to the States that are running CHIP. It provides no certainty to Crystal Lett to take care of Noble and manage his healthcare. It provides no certainty to anybody. The Presiding Officer's State of Alabama is already taking steps to close down their programs and freeze enrollment. I know Senator STRANGE doesn't want that to happen, but I also know Senate Republicans need to talk to their leader to make this happen.

States have to give families a heads-up so these parents have time to do what they can. Maybe some of these parents can find an alternative source of coverage, maybe they are going to fit in one more doctor's appointment before their coverage lapses. Think of that. You get this letter in the mail saying the insurance for your children is about to expire, so what do you do? You start dialing the hospital and dialing the doctor's office because you have CHIP coverage for another month or another 5 weeks or whatever, and you start scheduling any possible appointment you can, the Christmas season notwithstanding.

Providing a 3-month extension doesn't solve this problem; it just makes the situation more complicated. This body can pass massive permanent tax cuts, but they can't give families certainty? I know the tax cuts are permanent for corporations, and I know they are temporary for individual people in this country. Of course, this Congress—as special-interest controlled as it is—first takes care of corporations, but it would be nice if they gave some certainty to these children's families.

I want my colleagues to explain to the Crystal Letts in your State—because every State has thousands of concerned parents who don't know what to do with the expiration of this. My State has 209,000 children who rely on this program.

Senator HATCH said last month: We are going to get it done. Now we are hearing that Senator McCONNELL is only going to let us vote on a 3-month extension.

This is about whose side you are on. Do we work for corporations that send our jobs overseas, or do we work for families, such as Crystal Lett and her son Noble? Do we work for families who might wake up on Christmas morning without health insurance? I guess the answer is pretty clear: Most people in this body are working for large corporations that are getting huge tax cuts and that send their jobs overseas, and they are turning their backs on those families who need us to simply do our jobs and pass this extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, yesterday President Trump and congressional Republicans went to the White House to celebrate the passage of tax legislation that was partisan and that was rammed through the Senate earlier this week without one public hearing.

Debate on this bill in the Senate is over, but I think we must not lose sight of the impact this legislation will have on so many families and on our economy.

Make no mistake—this tax bill is not tax reform. Instead, it asks middle-class families and future generations to foot the bill for massive tax breaks for large corporations and the wealthy. By adding over \$1 trillion to the national debt, this tax plan will undermine our ability to address so many of the real challenges that face this country and middle-class families in America.

Indeed, Republicans have already made clear that this tax bill is just step No. 1. What we have already heard from Members of the House is that step No. 2 is going to be next year, and that includes deep cuts to Social Security, to Medicare, and to Medicaid. They are saying we are going to have to do that to address the deficits that have been made far worse by this bill.

Meanwhile, the majority's headlong rush to ram through this tax bill has meant they jeopardized access to healthcare for tens of millions of Americans.

My colleague from Ohio just talked about so many families in his State who are worried about losing their children's health insurance. We are seeing that in New Hampshire, as well, and across this country. By considering only stop-gap, short-term reauthorizations of critical healthcare programs, fear and uncertainty have been created for countless American families.

Because the Congress has failed to enact a long-term reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program, health coverage for nearly 9 million children across the United States is at risk. Congress has failed to enact a long-term reauthorization of the