

colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE and others. It is bipartisan legislation. I thank Senators TILLIS and GRAHAM, as well as Senators COONS and BOOKER, for joining in this legislation. That legislation has already had a hearing. It should be voted to the floor and passed by the Congress so that there is no question that the special counsel will be protected against interference or firing.

As that investigation moves closer to the Oval Office, as it tightens its grip on members of the administration, there will be increasing threats and efforts to intimidate. The FBI and the Department of Justice, as well as the special counsel, have a well-earned reputation for integrity and zeal. It is part of our rule of law that a law is enforced. Enforcement of a law depends on thorough and independent investigations that are pursued without fear or favor, without efforts to distract or demean. This body, the U.S. Congress, has an obligation to support those kinds of values. They are uniquely American values. They are the underpinning of all of our laws, all that we hold dear, and all that we celebrate in this body and in this country.

My hope is that we will be part of the effort to avoid politicizing the pursuit of justice. Politicization of the pursuit of justice diverts energy and attention away from credible criminal investigations. It sends a message to this President and future Presidents—and everybody who occupies any office—that there are no repercussions for diverting and distracting and for the ploys and rabbit holes that may be used to squander resources or undermine credibility.

Republicans and Democrats alike should join in the effort to preserve the rule of law. My hope is that we will and will do so without delay because every day that passes when these kinds of false, baseless, and biased innuendos and rumors are raised and given credence is a day that undermines those values that we hold dear.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank Senators WHITEHOUSE and BLUMENTHAL for their remarks.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. President, it has been 100 days since this Congress allowed the Children's Health Insurance Program to expire. Congress did nothing in September, October, November, and December, and now we are more than a week into January—100 days of anxiety for parents, 100 days of wondering if their kids will be kicked off their coverage, 100 days of worrying if they will be able to afford their child's prescriptions or worrying whether they can take them to the doctor if they get the flu.

Members of Congress—new Members, such as Senators SMITH and JONES, Members like Senator HATCH, who has been here for 40 years, and all of us—have healthcare paid for by taxpayers.

We remember the discussion of the tax bill written down the hall in the office of Majority Leader MCCONNELL. The Senate found plenty of time in December to pass a massive handout for corporations. The Presiding Officer, the Senator from Florida, has since questioned whether too much of this bill went to corporate interests. More than 80 percent of the tax cut bill went to the richest 1 percent.

In addition, we know it was a massive handout for corporations that sent jobs overseas. We are going to see more companies shut down in Mansfield, Lima, Zanesville, Chillicothe, Portsmouth, and in big cities like Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati. We are going to see more plants close and move overseas because this Senate and the House passed a tax bill that encourages more corporations to ship jobs overseas. All the while, this body couldn't be bothered to give families more than a short-term funding Band-Aid for CHIP, which experts have said will not even last the last 3 months they promised.

I applaud the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Florida, for his efforts to enlarge at least some of the tax bill to put more money into the pockets of working families, particularly low-income working families. It was not enough, but at least some effort was made.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services are reporting that some States will run out of money by January 19, next week. In my State of Ohio, 209,000 children rely on CHIP. Who are these kids? These are sons and daughters of Ohioans, who are working, in most cases, making \$8, \$10, or \$12 an hour. They are the sons and daughters of parents who don't have insurance not because they aren't working as hard or harder than we do, but they don't have insurance simply because their parents happen to work at a job where they are not provided insurance.

There are 209,000 Ohio children who rely on CHIP, a program that has been bipartisan for 20 years. It was without controversy in the past. Families in some States already got letters last year and early this year warning them that their children could lose their healthcare.

Think about these families. The parents of some of these millions of children around the country come home from work, working in a \$10-an-hour job, not making a lot of money. They are working every bit as hard as we do. They go to the mailbox and see a letter from their State government. I will read one of these letters, a copy of which went to tens of thousands of parents: Because Congress has not acted yet, we need to let you know there is a chance that the CHIP Program may have to be shut down. In other words, there is a chance that your children's health insurance will be cut off.

Remember, this is because of the inaction in this body. This is because Senators, who have insurance paid for

by taxpayers, would rather vote for tax cuts, would rather do whatever we do all day instead of renewing the Children's Health Insurance Program.

This letter goes on: If Congress does not renew Federal funds for CHIP in time, you will get another letter in January telling you your benefits will end.

So first, it is a warning. Some parents got this warning right around Christmastime. They are already struggling financially. They are not giving their children nearly as much as they want for Christmas because they are making \$8, \$10, or \$12 an hour. They are just trying to stay above water. They are just trying to raise their kids. They get a letter like this at Christmastime saying: If Congress doesn't act, there is really bad news; your kids are going to lose their insurance. Then the same letter says: If Congress doesn't act, in January you will get another letter saying your insurance is cut off.

It is already an expensive time of year. There is record cold in Ohio. Several of our grandchildren live in Columbus, one of them in St. Croix, and two in Providence, RI. When a number of our grandchildren were around, it was too cold to go outside. It was that kind of winter in Ohio. The day after Christmas, temperatures dropped to single digits for 5, 6, or 7 days running. Families are paying more for their heating bill. At Christmastime, of course, it is more expensive. Now their government adds to this list of worries.

How do they plan their budget for this year if they don't know whether or not they will have to shell out thousands of dollars more for care for their kids? Remember, 9 million children are at risk because of Republican inaction.

Senator PORTMAN, my Republican colleague from Ohio, and I and almost every other Senator on the Finance Committee voted to move forward on CHIP, to renew it for these 9 million children for 5 years. That was a good thing. It passed out of committee, but Senator MCCONNELL, for whatever reason, didn't think this was important enough to actually put it on the floor, move on it, and get it to the President.

I have no idea if the President will sign it. I don't think he knows much about the Children's Health Insurance Program, but I assume his advisers will say that it is probably a good idea to sign it. But he hasn't had a chance to sign it because the majority leader doesn't think this bill is important enough—that these 9 million children are important enough—that Congress should take action.

These are often families with two working parents. They might make \$8, \$10, or \$12 an hour, but they are working in jobs where they are not lucky enough to have health insurance. They work for companies or many for small businesses that, for whatever reason, can't afford it. Whatever the reason, they are working for companies that don't offer health insurance coverage

for their families, or they are families with children with special needs.

I have introduced to my colleagues before Crystal Lett. This is Crystal's son Noble, a first-grader in Dublin, OH, a small, prosperous suburb west and northwest of Columbus.

I met Crystal and Noble last year, when they made the trip from Ohio to Washington to talk to Members of Congress about CHIP. Crystal's life is not easy because she is taking care of a child with a disability whom she so clearly and dearly loves. I could see, watching Noble, how much he loves his mother and how important they are to each other.

Noble was born with a rare genetic disorder. He needs three therapy sessions every week. He gets daily hormone injections. His medications cost \$1,500 a month. I talked to Crystal when she visited. I talked to her again. We talked about how she and her family are scared to death about what will happen to them if Congress doesn't save CHIP.

This is not difficult. Congress has renewed it every year for 20 years. It is bipartisan. It has never had much of any opposition. There are a lot of people like Noble's mother. Crystal said CHIP is "the difference between living a middle class lifestyle, or being part of the poverty line."

Congress had time to hand out massive permanent tax cuts to the richest Americans and the biggest corporations that send job overseas, but it could only manage to scrape together just a little short-term 3 months of funding for these families.

It is really what is wrong with this city. Folks here listen too much to the lobbyists. I remember—and the Presiding Officer remembers, too—seeing the stream of lobbyists from drug companies, from insurance companies, from the big banks, and from the oil industry, in and out of Senator McConnell's office, writing a tax bill. We remember that from just a couple of months ago. But for some reason, Crystal and Noble couldn't get in that line—the line of lobbyists asking for huge tax breaks, saving billions of dollars for their employers while these lobbyists are paid very well. But, frankly, there was nobody having the political wherewithal to convince the majority leader that we ought to move on the CHIP bill.

Healthcare for our kids shouldn't be controversial. It never was until this recent Senate and until this recent President was sworn in. It shouldn't be partisan. It should be easy. It is a program created 20 years ago. It was bipartisan. It has always been bipartisan. It still has bipartisan support today, except that the Speaker of the House down the hall and the majority leader a little closer to us just simply don't want to pass it.

We passed the CHIP extension out of the Finance Committee. It is ready to go. Republican leaders could put it on the floor today, and it would pass. I am

guessing that it would pass with no more than 5 or 10 "no" votes.

I want my colleagues to explain to Noble's mother Crystal and to explain to other mothers and fathers like her why corporate tax cuts are more important than their children's health.

This is about whose side you are on. Do we work for the corporations that send our jobs overseas, do we work for those companies that line up hungrily for tax breaks, or do we work for families who just want the peace of mind so they can take their kids to the doctor?

It is past time for folks in Congress, with taxpayer-funded healthcare, to do their jobs and extend CHIP. I don't want more families to get a letter like this from their capital city, from the Department of Welfare or the Department of Job and Family Services, whatever it is in each community in each State. I don't want any more parents to go to the mailbox, to open this letter, and to have that fear and anxiety hit them in their gut, thinking: Oh, my God, my children's health insurance may be canceled.

We can do better than that.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17-69, concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Japan for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$133.3 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

CHARLES W. HOOPER,
Lieutenant General, USA,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-69

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Japan.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment * \$123.0 million.

Other \$10.3 million.

Total \$133.3 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Four (4) Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IIA Missiles.

Non-MDE: Also included are four (4) MK 29 missile canisters, U.S. Government and contractor representatives' technical assistance, transportation, engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistical and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Navy (JA-P-ATB).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: January 9, 2018.

* As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Japan—Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IIA Missiles

Government of Japan has requested a possible sale of four (4) Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IIA missiles. Also included are four (4) MK 29 missile canisters, U.S. Government and contractor representatives' technical assistance, transportation, engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistical and program support. The estimated total case value is \$133.3 million.

This proposed sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the United States by improving the security of a major ally that has been, and continues to be, a force for political stability and economic progress in the Asia-Pacific region.

The proposed sale will provide Japan with an increased ballistic missile defense capability to assist in defending the Japanese homeland and U.S. personnel stationed there. Japan will have no difficulty absorbing these additional munitions and support into the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF).