

committed several other acts of sabotage—raising premiums and hurting healthcare—all, it seems to me, for a political vendetta.

For a long time, the President refused to guarantee that the administration will honor the cost-sharing program, which reduces premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for low-income Americans. He eventually canceled payments for that program, causing major uncertainty and confusion in the markets.

Then, Republicans repealed the healthcare coverage requirement as a part of their tax bill and put nothing in its place. The CBO projects that repealing the coverage requirement could cause rates to increase by as much as 10 percent and result in millions more people without insurance. So if you can't get insurance, Mr. or Mrs. American, or if your premiums are going up, you know who caused it—the President and congressional Republicans by sabotaging the law that a majority of Americans want to see stay on the books.

Making things worse, earlier this week, the comment period ended for a proposed Trump administration rule that is perhaps the most radical sabotage of our healthcare system yet—a rule that would expand the availability of junk insurance plans. These junk insurance plans would force higher premiums on people with preexisting conditions, impose an age tax on older Americans, and once again could subject Americans to the devastating effects of medical bankruptcy, which too many people go through now. Many plans might not cover essential services, such as prescription drugs, maternity care, and mental health services.

Each of these actions taken by President Trump and Republicans in Congress will raise costs and reduce access. We are truly living under TrumpCare today, with no effort by the President or congressional Republicans to make it better.

Unfortunately, starting next week, the American people could well see the devastating consequences of 1½ years of healthcare sabotage reflected in the 2019 rates.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

Finally, Madam President, I would like to add a word about an event taking place today in Montgomery, AL. Today in Montgomery, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, dedicated to the legacy of enslaved Black people, victims of lynching, and African Americans who have been victimized by White supremacy, will open its doors.

I read about the new memorial in the newspaper. It was touching. It was moving. So many innocent people were lynched for no reason—walking behind a White woman, other kinds of things like that. Having read and watched the accounts about the memorial, it will be a harrowing experience. Much like the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, it forces visitors to confront the

human toll of racism, America's original sin. And it allows each county to get a replica of a list on a block—sort of like a tombstone—of who was lynched. So maybe those counties can look into their souls, too, and do better, as we all can, at trying to eliminate racism.

America's original sin is racism and the vast and terrible numbers of African Americans who were brutally murdered for simply being Black. This museum forces us, as Martin Luther King did, to look into the mirror and see what the country has done wrong and move to correct it.

I truly salute all the folks who put this wonderful, wonderful museum together.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I would like to make a very short comment with regard to the distinguished minority leader's remarks this morning.

In the midst of his remarks, Mr. SCHUMER mentioned something that I think is terribly important. Yesterday, the Rules Committee—and the distinguished Senator used to be the chairman of the Rules Committee. I think I was ranking member at that particular time. He spoke of an agreement to move appropriations bills. I want to thank him for that, and also Senator DURBIN, who indicated that as of yesterday.

We did reach an agreement in a bipartisan way to do something about filing cloture 86 times and other things going on and reducing that time period. We will get to that.

The breakthrough could be an agreement that Mr. SCHUMER has agreed to with regard to appropriations bills. If we can do that, we might be able to get back to the regular order that both of us experienced when we first came to the Senate. Many Members here have not experienced that.

Mr. SCHUMER. The majority, I think.

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes. Consequently, I want to thank you for that. And I know Senator SHELBY is eager to do the 12 appropriations bills, and I know Senator DURBIN is as well. I think that one statement in the midst of your comments, sir, is terribly important, and I want people to be aware of it, and I thank you.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you. I appreciate very much the remarks of my friend from Kansas. I hope these sprouts of bipartisanship can grow into mighty oaks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I take this time because I know that shortly we are going to be voting on Mr. Pompeo's nomination as Secretary of State, and I want to explain to my colleagues why I cannot support his nomination.

As I said in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during his nomination hearing, I appreciate Mr. Pompeo's public service throughout his career—his service in the military and his service in Congress and as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. I also appreciate the fact that he is willing to serve our Nation in this most important post as Secretary of State.

In the United States, we urgently need a confirmed Secretary of State, but it is our responsibility in the U.S. Senate to advise and consent on the President's nominations and to act as an independent branch of government.

I must state that we are in this urgent need because of Mr. Trump's abrupt dismissal of our former Secretary of State in the midst of many international challenges. In my view, though, Mr. Pompeo is not the right person. I reached that conclusion by his actions and his rhetoric.

If Mr. Pompeo is confirmed, he will be the top diplomat for the United States. He must be an independent voice in the White House. I have questions as to whether he will be that independent voice. He needs to engage our allies. That is how our diplomacy works. He has to be the loudest voice for diplomacy in our national security, in the use of our tools, and the military needs to be a matter of last resort.

I was reminded of this challenge for America when President Macron addressed the joint session of Congress yesterday. President Macron pointed out that the United States established multinational world order in the aftermath of World War II, which is embodied in the transatlantic partnership, and we, the United States, must lead in order to preserve that national security blanket. So it is incumbent upon the Secretary of State to work with our allies—particularly our European allies but all of our allies.

As just one example, when I look at Mr. Pompeo's record in regard to the nuclear agreement with Iran, during that discussion as to whether we would have diplomacy, it was Mr. Pompeo who said that the solution rests with 2,000 sorties to destroy the Iran nuclear capacity. That is not diplomacy. That is not leading with diplomacy. Now he is espousing that, if necessary, we should pull out of the agreement if we can't change it, even though Iran is in compliance with the agreement. That is not diplomacy, and that is certainly not working with our European allies.

Yesterday, we heard President Macron assert that it is critically important that that agreement move forward if Iran is in compliance. Yes, we can build on it, but to walk away from it would be wrong.

Another example that gives me great concern is Mr. Pompeo's position in regard to the Paris climate talks. I know we all have different views about climate and what our individual policy should be in order to deal with the realities of climate change, but one thing should be clear: that we want to be in

the discussions with the international community.

In regard to Iran, Mr. Pompeo would isolate us from our European allies, but in regard to withdrawing from the Paris climate talks, he would isolate America from every other nation in the world. We would be the only nation not a part of that discussion. Let me remind my colleagues that the commitments made in Paris are only enforceable by us. There is no international enforcement mechanism.

Words matter. A top diplomat needs to engage a very diverse global community. Mr. Pompeo's words unfortunately make it very challenging for him to be able to have the confidence of the international community.

He associated American Muslims with terrorism by stating that their perceived silence in condemning attacks "has made these Islamic leaders across America potentially complicit." I know that after each of the horrible terrorist activities we have seen in America, Muslim leaders in Maryland and Muslim leaders around the world have stood up and said that they condemn in the strongest possible terms those terrorist acts.

That should have no space. Unfortunately, those types of comments give space to those who are promoting a form of nationalism that allows for hate-mongering, and that cannot be tolerated in our country.

The LGBTQ community is rightly concerned. I go to Mr. Pompeo citing verbatim the following passage from a sermon castrating members of the LGBTQ community.

America has worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism. We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle.

That type of language should have no place for someone who wants to be the top diplomat of America.

So I have come to the conclusion, based upon the necessity of the Secretary of State to engage the national community, to provide leadership and the use of diplomacy, that based upon those—my priorities, policy priorities, not politics or partisanship—that I cannot support Mr. Pompeo for Secretary of State.

I want to conclude with this. I have had the chance to lead the Democrats on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I have been a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee my entire 12 years in this institution. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and its leaders have had a long tradition of bipartisanship, of recognizing the independent role of the legislative branch and the critical role played by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and we are always stronger when we act in unity.

That is a tradition of our committee. I want to just point out that I don't question anyone's motives on how they vote on the nominee for the Secretary of State, but I have great confidence that we in the Senate Foreign Rela-

tions Committee will continue the great tradition we have established as an independent voice and as a voice that tries to work in unity in the best interest of our Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, it was an honor for me to speak in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this month in support of my Kansas friend and colleague, Mike Pompeo, as the President's nominee for Secretary of State. I come to the floor to urge all of my colleagues, despite the previous remarks, to vote in favor of this uniquely qualified nominee in such a vital role in our administration's Cabinet.

The point I would like to make, as we go into the very important topics we have to discuss on an international basis, is that we need Mike Pompeo, and we need him now.

As our Nation's most senior diplomat, Mike, I know, will be forthright, will be forceful and thoughtful and, yes, he will be diplomatic. He will give the President and the Congress very candid counsel. He is a man of his word.

Now, I say all of this because I think I, at least, have the credentials to know Mike and to know who he is and what he is about because I have known him for more than a decade, first as a friend and a business leader, then as a congressional colleague, and most recently as a leader of our intelligence community. We had some long talks before he accepted that offer by the President, and I thought he was very well suited.

Mike will represent American ideals and values backed by the strength of leadership of the free world—yes, the free world and the allies that have been referred to by my colleagues across the aisle. The point is, whenever there is a void, the world pays a price. That is why we need Mike, and that is why we need him now.

I am going to again urge all of my colleagues—all of those who voted in support of his intelligence post last year and those who now have the opportunity to support this extremely qualified candidate—to vote yes and to send our senior diplomat to work on the many challenges that face our Nation.

NOMINATIONS AND THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Madam President, now, let me talk a little bit about bipartisanship and what I have stated with regard to my friend and colleague, the minority leader. I have encouraging news. We met yesterday in the Rules Committee and voted to reduce postcloture debate from 30 hours to 8 hours for certain nominations. I am not sure we have the 60 votes to pass that, but it is something at least we are moving toward with regard to the problem of having 86 cloture votes and delaying the time; that is, 3 months, by the way, with re-

gard to time lost that we could have been working on other issues.

We still have to consider this change to the rules on the Senate floor, but in the course of our debate, the minority whip, Senator DURBIN, who is an appropriator par excellence, has supported Chairman SHELBY's commitment to do all 12 appropriations bills—how long, how long, how long has it been since we have done appropriations bills and voted on amendments on appropriations bills?

The leadership has apparently decided to recommend that we actually return to being a Senate voting on amendments. Many Senators, as I said earlier, do not even know what it is like to serve in a functioning Senate. They hardly know what it is like to operate under regular order, where bills are referred to committee, amended, brought to the floor, debated, amended, and then passed when appropriations bills were on time. Goodness knows we need to get back to that.

Members of the Appropriations Committee, without this agreement—prior to this agreement—were standing on the sidelines, wounded cardinals, if you will, with a shrinking slice of the discretionary pie. So thank you to the minority whip and thank you to the leadership on both sides for our efforts to get back to regular order.

Now you can take one step further and vote for Mike Pompeo, a qualified and honorable candidate to serve as Secretary of State. Most of the statements I have heard—I have not paid too much attention to the colloquy on the floor or the statements on the floor—but people who have reservations have a "while I" speech: while I understand his qualifications, while I understand he has a great background, first in his class at West Point, and while I, and while I, and while I.

Then, there is the catch: But then, on the other hand, I have some concerns. Most of the concerns are in regard to whether Mike Pompeo can be diplomatic. I know him. He can be forceful—sometimes he can be a little stubborn, but he can be forceful. He is well qualified for the job and, yes, he can be diplomatic.

So I hope we can take this step toward a bipartisan Senate and take one further vote and vote for Mike Pompeo, who is certainly qualified. I say that because the cloth of comity in this Senate is pretty threadbare. We have a situation where we need to return to a sense of comity and at least some bipartisanship. Certainly, it would be also to set aside personal and partisan concerns and vote for Mr. Pompeo.

As I said again, we have a void right now. We have a good man to be Secretary of State. I urge my colleagues to vote yes, and let's put a few threads back into the cloth of comity in the Senate and recommit to being the world's greatest deliberative body.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.