

actions of the Trump administration and congressional Republicans as major reasons for the premium increases. The Trump administration and our Republican friends in Congress are the reason these premiums are going up, according to insurers. They suggest that is one of the reasons.

Remember, President Trump canceled payments for the cost-sharing program, which reduces premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for low-income Americans. Republicans in Congress repealed the healthcare coverage requirement, which the CBO itself predicted would raise premiums by 10 percent more each year than they would otherwise be and result in millions more people without insurance.

Sometimes our Republican colleagues make a mistake and speak the truth and admit that they are to blame in good part for these premium increases. Former HHS Secretary Tom Price said he “believes that [repealing the individual mandate] actually will harm the pool in the exchange market, and consequently, that drives up the cost for other folks.”

This is not CHUCK SCHUMER, a Democrat; this is the Republican former Congressman, the Republican-appointed HHS Secretary saying that Republican acts are causing premiums to go up.

The sabotage doesn't end there. As we speak, the Trump administration is finalizing a rule that would expand the availability of junk insurance plans that 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.

Make no mistake, all of this sabotage by Republicans has consequences. TrumpCare is already heralding double-digit premium increases in States across the country. The rates in Virginia are bad, and the rates in Maryland may be worse. Maryland insurance companies are announcing 2019 rates today, and one PPO plan is asking for a 91-percent increase—91 percent.

For the sake of a political vendetta—again, the hard right: Repeal ObamaCare; show it doesn't work—Republicans are taking it out on millions of American families by making the rates higher to prove a political point so that Donald Trump can do a few more tweets. It is not going to stick. It is not going to work. The American people know who is in charge. The Republicans have the Presidency, the House, and the Senate. The buck stops there when the rates go up.

President Trump and Republicans promised Americans a better, cheaper healthcare system. Remember, President Trump said that he is going to “take care of everybody”—those are his words—and deliver “healthcare that is far less expensive and far better.” President Trump simply has not delivered. President Trump talked and talked and talked about making

healthcare better and cheaper as he ran and while he has been President, but in every respect he has failed to deliver. In every respect he has made the problem worse.

Simply put, President Trump has dropped the ball on healthcare, and the public knows it.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, a word on the Republican tax bill. From the very beginning of our debate on taxes, Republicans insisted that their bill was about helping the American worker, even though the GOP tax bill directs 83 percent of its benefits to the top 1 percent. President Trump and the Republicans said it would be “a middle class miracle.”

Their theory was to give the big corporations and the wealthy a massive tax cut, and the benefits would trickle down to everyone else, even though that theory has been debunked over and over and over again. Still, President Trump repeatedly promised that workers would see a raise of \$4,000 or more as a result of the Republican tax bill.

I would like to ask most Americans if they have gotten the \$4,000 raise as the White House promised because, according to the April jobs report, hourly earnings have not increased significantly and are actually up just 2.6 percent over the past 12 months. Last month, average hourly earnings increased by just 4 cents—hardly \$4,000. No matter how you look at it, the Republican tax bill has failed to deliver anywhere close to the wage growth that was promised.

The harsh fact is that corporations aren't using the bulk of their tax savings to boost worker pay or provide additional benefits or hire more workers or buy more equipment. They are using the predominance of tax savings on something called stock buybacks. The CEO says: Let's buy back the stock. His shares go up. The shareholders' shares go up. The American worker is left holding the bag.

According to a recent analysis by JUST Capital, only 6 percent of the capital allocated by companies on the tax bill savings has gone to employees, while nearly 60 percent—10 times as much—has gone to shareholders. More than \$390 billion has been authorized this year on corporate buybacks, something we used to prohibit or make very difficult, while only \$6.7 billion has been spent on one-time bonuses and wage hikes.

There is another Republican truth teller who is now getting pummeled a little, but I respect him—Senator MARCO RUBIO. Here is what he had to say last week:

There is still a lot of thinking on the right that if big corporations are happy, they're going to take the money they're saving and reinvest it in American workers. In fact—

These are his words. They sound like mine.

In fact they bought back shares, a few gave out bonuses; there's no evidence whatsoever that the money's been massively poured back into the American worker.

Let me repeat that. This is MARCO RUBIO, a Republican from Florida, who said: “[T]here's no evidence whatsoever that the money's been massively poured back into the American worker.”

I couldn't have said it better myself. President Trump and the Republicans promised a middle-class miracle, with tremendous raises for workers, but they once again haven't delivered. Instead, the American people have been saddled with higher deficits and a larger debt, while corporations reward wealthy executives and shareholders. Even Republican Senators are starting to admit it.

So I have heard some commentators say: Well, maybe the public says that we don't like the President's tweeting, we don't like that he changes his story, we don't like prevaricating, but at least he is delivering.

Not with the tax bill, where so much of the wealth is going to the top; not on healthcare, where premiums are going up. The American people will have the right to protest come November, which I believe they will.

I yield the floor.
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. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Kurt D. Engelhardt, of Louisiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, one of the items on our to-do list is continuing to confirm the President's nominees, which have faced an unprecedented level of obstruction and down-right foot-dragging. It is maddening to

see our Democratic colleagues insisting that we go through all the motions and the time limits set out in the rules, when nominees are confirmed 99 to 1 or 100 to 0. In other words, these are not controversial nominees, in many cases, and there is simply no reason to drag their feet and to prevent the Senate from doing other important work, including confirming more nominees.

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

We will certainly be revisiting that issue more in the coming days, but one of the important positions we are going to be taking up this week is Gina Haspel, who has been nominated to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Her confirmation hearing will be before the Senate Intelligence Committee this Wednesday. I will proudly support her to be the first female CIA Director in our Nation's history—certainly not for that reason alone but because she is an outstanding nominee.

I hope our colleagues and their ideological soulmates across the aisle will cease and desist from untruthful attacks on this talented, well-respected woman who is much revered by her fellow professionals in the intelligence community.

I still have a hard time accepting the treatment that Dr. Jackson received before he was even allowed to defend himself against the accusations made against him during his nomination process for head of the Veterans' Administration. I think, when people realize their reputation that they worked all their lives to achieve is subject to being torn down by reckless and untruthful attacks, it discourages good people from wanting to serve in the U.S. Government. That is our loss and not just theirs.

I think it is important for the country's women to see someone like Ms. Haspel leading an agency as vital to our national security as the CIA. Women everywhere will be watching this week, and Democrats should show them that ambition, good character, and hard work are always welcome and rewarded in the upper echelons of the U.S. Government.

The CIA is not a partisan agency, but some partisans are endangering our national security to treat it as such when they oppose Ms. Haspel's nomination largely on ideological grounds, with scant attention being paid to the circumstances and the difficult decisions that had to be made immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

In Ms. Haspel's case, we have the benefit of the fact that she served not just for a short period of time—not just in the post-9/11 world—but, literally, for 33 years. We also have the challenge of knowing that a lot of her activities on behalf of the U.S. Government and in defense of our national security were classified. They cannot be publicly disclosed without risking lives, and, certainly, they cannot disclose the methods and the sources by which that in-

formation is obtained for the intelligence community so they can then present it to the policymakers here in Washington.

We do know Ms. Haspel joined the CIA in 1985, during the final years of the Cold War. She is a career intelligence officer and has served more than 30 years, both overseas and here in Washington. She has held various leadership roles, including Deputy Director of the National Clandestine Service. She has worked in the Counterterrorism Center, where her first day of work was—you guessed it—September 11, 2001, the day the Twin Towers fell, the Pentagon was attacked, and approximately 3,000 Americans lost their lives.

Throughout her career, Ms. Haspel has held some of the most demanding assignments in far-off reaches of the globe—places like Africa and the Middle East, which she did not seek out but which she took because she saw them as her duty. That is exactly the kind of person we need leading the Central Intelligence Agency—someone who sees that as their duty.

She has received numerous awards which lend credence to her reputation and illustrate that other accomplished professionals hold her in high regard. These awards include the Presidential Rank Award, the most prestigious award in the Federal civil service. She also received the Intelligence Medal of Merit, and several others.

Her integrity and professionalism are beyond question. Those who know her best, including high-ranking Obama-era officials, are behind her 100 percent. For example, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said he “think[s] the world of [Ms. Haspel]. She is capable, smart, very experienced, well respected by the Agency rank and file, and is a great person.”

Leon Panetta, who was former Chief of Staff to Bill Clinton when he was President, served as CIA Director and then Secretary of Defense, says that he is “glad that [we’ll] have a first woman as [the] head of [the] CIA” and that Ms. Haspel “knows the CIA inside out.”

Former CIA Director John Brennan, who also worked under President Obama, has cited her ability to “provide unvarnished, apolitical, objective intelligence to [President] Trump and to others.”

Earlier this spring, 53 former senior U.S. officials sent the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence a letter in which they expressed their wholehearted support of Ms. Haspel. This group includes people like Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, former Attorney General Michael Mukasey, and many other distinguished Americans.

Now we know, because of what has been reported in the paper by the so-called nameless, faceless sources, that some have sought to distort and twist the historical record regarding the decisions that she and other intelligence officials had to make in the post-9/11

world. I just happened to pick up an account. This is called “Manhunt” by Peter Bergen. It is a New York Times best seller. He talks about the 10-year search for Osama bin Laden from 9/11 to Abbottabad. I think he provides useful context, talking about what the environment was here in Washington and in this country after the terrible attacks of 9/11. He says:

The urgency of finding bin Laden was underlined when the CIA discovered that he had met with retired Pakistani nuclear scientists during the summer of 2001 to discuss the possibility of al Qaeda developing a nuclear device. General Richard Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, says that six weeks after 9/11, Bush told a meeting of his National Security Council that bin Laden “may have a nuclear device” big enough to destroy half of Washington. In fact, al Qaeda had nothing of the sort, but in the panicked aftermath of 9/11, such a threat could not be easily discounted.

Thankfully, while there did not prove to be any credence to the allegation that al-Qaida had potentially acquired a nuclear device that could destroy half of Washington, DC, it just helps us to think back about what the environment was and why it was so important to have professionals like Gina Haspel and others doing their job in accordance with the rule of law and trying their best to keep our country safe.

One of the most ironic complaints by opponents of this nomination is that they don't have enough information about Ms. Haspel and say she has hidden behind a wall of secrecy. Well, for somebody who has been involved as an intelligence officer in some of the most sensitive, secret, classified work on behalf of the U.S. Government for the last 33 years or so, what do they expect? The Agency has done a number of things to try to declassify some information through the Office of the Director of National Intelligence in order to give us some flavor and context to her background and her history, but it is ridiculous to expect somebody who has served their whole professional life in the clandestine service to have a public record that we could talk about in an unclassified setting.

At least organizations like the New York Times believe that “Ms. Haspel . . . is a known quantity in the CIA,” who “knows how to run intelligence operations.” She is seen in the Agency “as having loyally followed lawful orders” during the relevant period of time.

The other thing you hear are questions that have been repeated ad nauseam about some interrogation tactics used in the early days in the War on Terror, when our Nation was bracing itself for additional mass casualty terrorist attacks like the one I mentioned that President Bush feared if al-Qaida had gotten its hands on a nuclear device. The fact is, these questions have already been asked and answered and this is another rehash.

The program was investigated twice by career lawyers at the Justice Department—one under President Bush