

I just totaled up the projected 2018 tax savings to eight of the biggest insurance companies in the country, and it is over \$4 billion. At the same time that these companies are passing along rate increases of 64 percent or 90 percent, they are getting billions of dollars in tax savings from this Congress. It appears none of the tax breaks this Congress bestowed on the insurance industry is going to consumers.

When you look at the drug industry, where we have a little bit more mature information, you know why. One report, I believe released by the Finance Committee, showed that pharmaceutical companies already have announced \$50–50–billion in stock buybacks and share buybacks as a result of the tax bill. These drug companies aren't announcing price cuts to insurance companies; these drug companies are not announcing price cuts for consumers; these drug companies are announcing massive share and stock buybacks that will largely benefit the millionaire and billionaire investors in those drug companies. This is insult to injury for the people in my State and people all across the country because they are watching their healthcare insurance premiums skyrocket, while the windfall of the tax bill accrues to the owners of the insurance companies and the drug companies.

What a great time to be in the healthcare business today. You get a giant tax break, and you get to pass along gigantic premium increases to consumers all across this country.

Think about it. Somebody in Maryland, making \$30,000, \$40,000 a year and being told the insurance company he does business with is going to get \$1 billion in new tax relief from this Congress, and he is going to get a 91-percent increase in his premium. That is outrageous. That is outrageous, and yet it is just going to get worse.

As this spring and summer plays out—I think every single week there is a new State or set of States unveiling rate filings—I will come down and update this chart so everybody knows what the numbers are. It starts with rate increases as high—and I am not saying every single increase is this high, but in Virginia it is 64 percent, and in Maryland it is 91 percent. I have a feeling there are going to be a lot of very big numbers on this board, and I want to make sure everybody understands that if you want to know why premiums are going up at the rate they are, you don't have to look any further than this campaign of healthcare sabotage that has been waged by the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I listened carefully to the distinguished Senator, and I am going to come back to the floor and explain why he is wrong on every point. I am just really amazed that they make these arguments when

they are the ones who really caused the healthcare bill to come forth, which is just eating us alive, but I am here for another reason.

WELCOMING HOME AMERICANS HELD IN NORTH KOREA

I would like to open my remarks by joining the President and the American people in welcoming home three courageous individuals who have been held in captivity in North Korea.

We are all grateful for their safe return, but even as we celebrate their homecoming, we cannot forget about another brave American who has been unlawfully detained abroad—Joshua Holt.

For 2 years, Joshua and his wife Thamy have been held on spurious charges in a prison in Venezuela, and for 2 years I have been working hard to bring them home. Rest assured that I will continue to work closely with the administration to secure their release.

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Now, Mr. President, I would like to turn to another matter as President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate and as the longest serving Republican on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. I ask my colleagues to come together in voting to support Gina Haspel's nomination to serve as the next Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

I took to the floor just 2 weeks ago to speak on behalf of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. While I am delighted we were able to get behind his nomination, I am shocked and embarrassed by the scale of partisanship and enmity that marked his confirmation process.

On the day of Ms. Haspel's hearing, I am once again disappointed at how poorly a dedicated servant has been treated by the press and by some in this Chamber.

This is someone who has served her organization faithfully for over three decades. She is one, among a very small group, who rose up through the ranks within the Directorate of Operations during the Agency's transition from the Cold War to the War on Terror.

The job of the CIA operative—our Nation's first line of defense—is a thankless one. For generations, the American people will never know the length of the sacrifices these men and women make to keep us all safe. For these men and women, public service is not only a profession but a lifestyle—a commitment that often requires the sacrifice of family and loved ones as well. It is a life of constantly being on the frontlines, being in the arena in every sense of the expression.

Ms. Haspel embodies all these qualities and has given of herself in ways we can never imagine or begin to do ourselves. In turn, she has not only acquired the needed experience and expertise for this job but has also gained the respect of men and women of the organization she is to head.

She has also worked closely with Secretary Pompeo as his Deputy for

the year during which he was Director—a level of trust that would be critical in her new role as Director working with the Secretary of State.

It is worth pointing out to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle the words of praise offered for Ms. Haspel's nomination by security officials who served under President Obama.

James Clapper, the former Director of National Intelligence, said: "I think the world of Gina; she is capable, smart, very experienced, well respected by the Agency rank and file, and a great person."

Leon Panetta, who served as both CIA Director and Secretary of Defense, said: "I'm glad that they have a first woman as head of CIA, and I'm glad that it's Gina because frankly she is someone who really knows the CIA inside out."

John Brennan, who also served as President Obama's CIA Director, said: "She will be able to provide that unvarnished, apolitical, objective intelligence input to Donald Trump and to others."

If these words do not represent a seal of approval, then I don't know what does. Never have I seen someone receive such widespread praise from such a distinguished and bipartisan group of seasoned authorities, and never did I think I would live to see the day that the CIA would receive its first female Director.

I know we will all come together, ultimately, to vote to confirm Ms. Gina Haspel as Director of the CIA, but I would like to take this opportunity to again remind my colleagues in the Senate of the destructive nature of this partisanship. Two weeks ago, we were on the cusp of not having a Secretary of State all because we were more concerned with political loyalties.

Today we see the same dynamic in play. We are again divided along party lines and, once again, on a candidate who is supremely qualified to lead the organization for which she was nominated. This type of partisanship is unprecedented in our history, and it is destructive for our future. It represents a true national security threat of the highest order.

We can disagree about specific policies, we can have our political stakes, but let's keep those out of our first responsibility of serving the American people, whose physical well-being and safety should be our first priority. Who better understands this than Gina Haspel, a distinguished public servant who has kept our country safe during the most dangerous times in recent memory.

I ask my colleagues to stop with this dangerous behavior. Enough of the partisan games. We will be able to hold Ms. Haspel, as other Cabinet members, accountable for specific policies, as is our job, but let's get them into their jobs first. Our Nation needs them, and our Nation needs us to behave as the representatives and stewards of our democracy that we ought to be.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote in favor of Ms. Haspel's nomination.

REMEMBERING MICHAEL BEAVER

Now, Mr. President, on another subject—indeed, a deeply somber one—I would like to address a tragic loss we experienced in the Senate. Last week, Michael Beaver, a beloved member of the Senate family, passed away unexpectedly. We will all miss him dearly.

Michael served us as the Assistant Parliamentarian of the U.S. Senate, following a prior record of accomplishment in his legal career and a vibrant life which was tragically cut short at the young age of 39.

I am sure I speak for all of us in saying our hearts go out to Michael's family, including his beloved wife, young children, and parents.

Michael was known and admired by us all for his legal and parliamentary talents, as well as for his sharp wit and humor. Parliamentarians in the Senate work hard for the American people and often face long hours and extended debates. They are an integral part of the fabric that holds the Senate in order and allows us to achieve results. With Michael's talents and demeanor, our accomplishments were made all the more rigorous and our work all the more pleasurable.

It was not unusual for Michael to provide comment or advice on Senate work in progress that included a unique and brilliant mixture of insight, wit, and humor. Succinctly stated, working with Michael was refreshing.

Michael engaged with my staff and Members of the Senate on a daily basis when the Senate debated healthcare reform and then tax legislation. There were many late nights, and work often spilled over into the weekends. Michael was always there to help us through and would often make us smile with his ever-present sharp wit.

Without the dedication of public servants like Michael, it would simply be impossible for the rest of us in the Senate to function as we should.

Michael's passing is hard on all of us, from his colleagues in the Office of the Parliamentarian to every committee in the Senate, and to those of us who saw him regularly seated directly below where the Presiding Officer sits. We all benefited from his counsel.

My heartfelt condolences and prayers go out to Michael's family in their time of grief. He will be sorely missed. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, competition is the lifeblood of the American economy. Competition is what makes capitalism work. It is competi-

tion that has established the United States as the world's dominant economic force for over a century.

American competition is driven by innovation. We created the light bulb, the automobile, and the internet.

We all know that the internet has revolutionized the way we communicate, learn, and do business. A free and open internet allows students in Houghton, Lansing, and Mount Pleasant to access research and to collaborate internationally. A free and open internet allows startups in Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Flint to reach customers across the globe. A free and open internet allows a small bed and breakfast in Traverse City or Muskegon to reach millions of potential guests that they couldn't otherwise reach.

While the internet has been a potent force for innovation and economic growth in recent decades, our economy has been facing some serious headwinds. I am deeply concerned that we are seeing increased business consolidation—big firms are getting bigger—and we are seeing fewer new small businesses and startups. A recent study found that across 900 different industries, over two-thirds have become more concentrated in the past decade. The formation of new companies is falling. The number of jobs created by new businesses has fallen, even as our workforce has grown.

We have seen a large national internet service provider acquire a similarly large media company. We have recently seen the largest online retailer acquire one of our Nation's most successful grocery chains. Now we are seeing two of the four largest wireless carriers making preparations to merge.

Certainly, consolidations and mergers are a part of our economy, but we need rules of the road to level the playing field, to help small businesses and startups to compete, and to drive innovation. This is exactly why we need net neutrality.

Net neutrality protections prevented internet service providers from blocking, slowing, or prioritizing web traffic for their own financial gain. Without net neutrality, we could be subject to a two-tiered internet. Without net neutrality, large corporations, which keep getting larger and larger, can pay for a fast lane and buy the power to slow down or to block content. Without net neutrality, consumers, small businesses, and startups can be forced into the slow lane. Simply put, net neutrality keeps America competitive.

Unfortunately, net neutrality is under attack by the Trump administration. In December, the FCC voted to repeal crucial net neutrality protections, despite the fact that 86 percent of Americans wanted the rules to stay in place. The decision to scrap these net neutrality protections is anti-consumer, anti-innovation, and anti-competitive. It disadvantages small businesses, startups, and families all across our country.

While the FCC vote to repeal net neutrality rules is over, we are still here in the Senate fighting. In fact, we are closer than ever to reinstating the rules of the road that will keep the internet free, open, and competitive.

Fifty Senators, including the entire Democratic caucus, have signed a petition that would force a vote on legislation that would reinstate these crucial protections. With 51 votes, we could overturn the FCC's original repeal and move one step closer to restoring fairness.

Students, artists, advocates, entrepreneurs, and other visionaries who could be inventing the future and creating the next big thing could once again be on an equal playing field with multinational corporations when it comes to using the internet.

We need net neutrality to keep our economy dynamic, growing, and innovative. We need net neutrality to keep our startups and small businesses competitive.

Five months ago, I stood here in this Chamber urging the FCC to abandon their dangerous vote. Now I stand here urging my colleagues to reverse this dangerous and disastrous decision.

We have the power to do it, and we must. We need one more vote.

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. SCHATZ. 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.

Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Engelhardt nomination?

Mr. INHOFE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 62, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 87 Ex.]

YEAS—62

Alexander	Blunt	Capito
Barrasso	Boozman	Cassidy
Bennet	Burr	Collins