

Tax reform bonuses and more take-home pay aren't the only ways tax reform will help American workers. The law also includes a creative new solution to directly help the communities that are struggling the most. We all know that too few new jobs were created during the Obama years. Through heavy taxing and excessive regulation, Washington had its foot on the brake of the U.S. economy. Job creation and wage growth were weaker than they should have been, but another aspect of this often goes overlooked.

Of the new jobs that were created from 2010 to 2016, according to one estimate, three-quarters went to major metropolitan areas. Let me say that again. Of the new jobs that were created between 2010 and 2016, three-quarters went to major metropolitan areas. Only 3 percent of those new jobs went to rural America. Across the Nation—including my home State of Kentucky, particularly in Eastern Kentucky—many rural areas, small cities, and suburbs were left behind in the Obama economy. It is time to change that.

That is why my colleague the junior Senator from South Carolina made sure that tax reform included a provision to create "opportunity zones" across the United States. My Republican colleagues and I were proud to support this policy. It allows State Governors to designate economically depressed areas for special tax incentives that will make them more attractive places to invest and create jobs. It will empower communities that have been passed over time and again to put up, in effect, big neon signs that say: "We are open for business." It will help these struggling communities reach their full potential.

This Congress is determined to reignite an economy that works for everyone. That is why tax reform lets families across the country keep more of what they earn. That is why tax reform makes America a more attractive place to create jobs, and it gives our businesses a fairer fight with foreign competitors. That is why tax reform includes this "opportunity zones" provision, which will help deliver targeted relief to communities that need it the most.

To most Americans, all this sounds like common sense. Republicans in Congress thought so too. We came together to deliver these historic achievements for the American people. It is too bad that not one single Democrat got on board with any of this.

But at least the bigger paychecks, new bonuses, and new investments will continue to roll in, and our constituents know exactly who stood up for them.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1551, H.R. 2372, and H.R. 2579

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that there are three bills at the desk due for a second reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1551) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities.

A bill (H.R. 2372) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the rules relating to veteran health insurance and eligibility for the premium tax credit.

A bill (H.R. 2579) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the premium tax credit with respect to unsubsidized COBRA continuation coverage.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, here is just a brief note on taxes in answer to what my friend the Republican leader has said. The reason that 48 Democrats voted against the bill and the reason that at this point, despite huge amounts of ads paid for by the wealthiest of Americans, the bill is still unpopular with the American people is very simple: The vast majority of the breaks go to the very wealthy and to big, powerful corporations and their lobbyists. That is who wins on this bill more than anybody else.

If a bill focused on the middle class gave 80 percent of the breaks to the middle class, there would be loads of Democrats voting for it. We are happy that there are a lot of wealthy people in America. God bless them. They don't need the huge tax break—the disproportionate tax break that our Republican friends gave them. That is why the bill is unpopular.

Again, people like the Koch brothers and the thousand very, very wealthy—many of them so greedy—billionaires who don't want to pay any taxes put all of these ads on TV and have a whole propaganda machine. They still can't convince the American people.

Our Republican colleagues are afraid to talk about what they really mean in the tax bill—trickle-down economics. When they talk among themselves, they say: Give the wealthy a lot of money, give the big corporations a lot of money, and everyone will do fine. They don't have an honest debate on this because they are afraid to say it. So they act like they aim most of this at the middle class.

The only way this is aimed at the middle class is trickle down: Give the money disproportionately to the

wealthy and the big corporations, and the middle class will benefit. We don't believe that. We would rather give the money directly to the middle class and be sure they are getting the benefit.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, as we continue discussions about another extension of government funding, Senate negotiators are working on a deal to lift the spending caps for both defense and urgent domestic priorities.

From the very beginning of the budget debate, Democrats have made our position in these negotiations very clear. We support an increase in funding for our military and our middle class. The two are not mutually exclusive. We don't want to do just one and leave the other behind. The sequester caps have arbitrarily imposed austerity on both sides of the ledger, defense and the nondefense programs that benefit middle-class people, such as education, infrastructure, and medical research. The caps have hamstrung the Pentagon's ability to make reliable investments, no doubt, but they have also cut support harshly and unintelligently from middle-class programs.

We ought to get out from sequestration entirely because our men and women in uniform deserve the resources they need to keep our country safe—as do our veterans waiting for better healthcare; as do young men and women, many of them veterans, seeking treatment for opioid addiction; as do rural families waiting for high-speed internet to connect themselves and their kids to the world; as do hard-working pensioners who forewent salary increases and bonuses to secure a pension that is now evaporating before their very eyes.

That is why Democrats have pushed consistently to increase funding to fight the scourge of opioids, to improve veterans healthcare, to build rural infrastructure, to shore up pensions, and to deal with childcare. These are the kinds of things we are pushing for in addition to, not to the exclusion of, increasing defense.

Some of our Republican colleagues, particularly in the House, think that only defense should get the help it needs, not the middle class. We Democrats have stood against that for years and will continue to stand against it.

House Republicans continue marching down a very partisan road, proposing a CROmnibus that will raise defense spending but leave everything else behind. As I have said many times before, a CROmnibus will not pass the Senate.

Speaker RYAN and House Republicans keep running into the same brick wall. When will House Republicans learn that they must chart a bipartisan course to get a bill through the Senate? I don't think a single Democrat—that I am aware of, at least—has been consulted on the Republican bill. It is done because Speaker RYAN is in a

pickle. How is he going to pass a bill with just Republican votes? It is not easy. So they come up with this distorted, unfair proposal—unfair to so many people in the middle class who depend on our help.

Hopefully, House Republicans will change their tune, because even though a deal has eluded us for months, negotiators are now making significant progress. The Republican leader and I have been working together quite productively. Of course, there are still some outstanding issues to be resolved, but we are closer to an agreement than we have ever been.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Republican leader, in addition, for his invitation to address the McConnell Center next week in Louisville, which I have accepted.

As leaders, the two of us can work together to get things done around here, and the best opportunity to work together is the budget. It is an opportunity not just for us but for our country, not only to escape the terrible damage of sequestration but to condemn it to the past, and we should seize that opportunity.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now for a word on the Russia investigation, last night the House Intelligence Committee voted to release the contents of the Schiff memo. Now that the House Intelligence Committee has acted, President Trump should move—in conjunction with the DOJ and the FBI—and release the Schiff memo to the public. The American people deserve the chance to make their own judgment on the facts of this small piece of the broader case of Russia's interference in our election.

The President decided the public deserved to see the Nunes memo before he had even read it. So he ought to be just as eager for the American people to see this memo, which refutes—effectively, devastatingly—so much in the Nunes memo.

Given that the Schiff memo is based on the same underlying documents as the Republicans' partisan memo, there should be no question as to whether or not the President should approve its release. If he decides to keep the Democratic memo under wraps, the American people are going to be forced to wonder: What is the President trying to hide? What is he afraid of?

President Trump should release the Schiff memo—and quickly. It will illustrate what a sham the Nunes memo is. Then, we can all move on and, as some of my good Republican colleagues have had the courage to say—not enough, but some: Let Mueller do his investigation unimpeded, and let's see where the results end up.

We need to move on. The Nunes memo is only the latest in a long line of distractions manufactured by the most extreme elements of the Republican Party and the conservative media

to distract from the special counsel's investigation. It started with conspiracies about “deep state” leaks and unmasking requests, phone taps at Trump Tower, and Uranium One, and now it is this memo. They don't quit with all these conspiracy theories, with all these ridiculous fomentations. They don't quit, perhaps because they are afraid of what a real investigation, which Mueller is doing and will continue to do, will reveal.

What the American people want to know are three simple things: One, what did the Russians do to interfere in our elections; two, were there Americans involved in helping the Russians; and three, what are we doing to prevent the Russians from interfering in 2018 and beyond? To that point, Americans should be much more concerned about this administration's tepid response to Putin's interference in our election than about a memo of Republican talking points.

Any other administration, any other President, I believe, would have made punishing Putin and protecting our democracy a primary issue in the first term, but this President began his first year in office by downplaying Putin's involvement in the 2016 election, and then he repeatedly accepted Putin's words of denial over the consensus of the American intelligence community.

When the administration tried to wiggle out of existing sanctions against Russia, Congress overwhelmingly and almost unanimously passed legislation strengthening the existing sanctions and adding new ones to address the interference. We are still waiting for President Trump to implement the new round of sanctions. What is he waiting for? Why does he refuse to get tough with Putin? We look to the President of the United States to stand up for our democracy against all threats, but unfortunately and sadly—bad for America—President Trump has abdicated this responsibility when it comes to Putin.

I yield the floor.

I know my good friend from Illinois will have his usual thoughtful and articulate remarks to give.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I don't know if you want to announce the business of the day or if you have already done that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in a period of morning business.

The assistant Democratic leader is recognized.

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak of an issue which really defines America. With the exception of Native Americans who preceded us, with the exception of many African Americans who were brought here in bondage, virtually all of the rest of us are the sons and daughters of immigrants to America, immigrants from literally all over the world who have come to this Nation

and made us different—different in a positive way. They have given life to this democracy. They have given hope when it comes to our future. They have inspired us.

I will be the first to admit that I do not come to this debate without strong personal feelings. Like millions of Americans, I am the son of an immigrant. In 1911—107 years ago—my grandmother came to this country with three little kids. One of those kids was my mother. She was 2 years old when their ship landed in Baltimore. My grandmother didn't speak a word of English, but somehow she managed to take those three kids and make her way to join my grandfather in East St. Louis, IL.

On the credenza behind my desk in the Capitol is my mother's naturalization certificate. I keep that as a reminder of my heritage. That is my story. That is my family's story. That is America's story. Because of my family history, I really believe in immigration. I believe it has been a positive force in America.

I remember going to Jurbarkas, Lithuania, which was a tiny village in 1911, and being taken on a tour of my mom's birthplace. She never made it back there, but I was able to see the church where she was baptized. They pointed out the well in the town square which people used. I thought to myself what it must have been like that evening when my grandparents called their friends and relatives together to tell them the news: They were leaving their home in Lithuania. They were leaving the church that had served their family for generations. They were leaving all of their friends and relatives. They were leaving behind every stick of furniture, the dogs, the cats, the chickens—everything—to go to a place where they didn't speak the language. They were going to this place called America. They had heard great stories about the land of opportunity, and they had heard about some Lithuanians who had gone to the city of East St. Louis, IL, and that is where they were headed.

I am sure those friends and relatives, walking away from that meeting, turned to one another and said: What ever got into their minds? They are giving up everything to go to a place where they don't even speak the language. They will be back.

Well, they never returned. Like millions and millions of Americans, they had the courage to come to America and to weather crisis after crisis in our family and to build a future. I stand here because of that decision.

How can you tell when a country is in decline? When immigrants stop wanting to come to that country, when they can't wait to leave that country. Many other developed countries have had this experience and watched their economies decline as a result. That has never been our experience in the history of America.

Look at our history. In every generation, immigrants have come to our