

this program and the bureaucracy and inefficiency that would come with any government attempt to take over healthcare.

Then there is the rationing of care that would inevitably come along. Democrats are promising that these would be plans with generous coverage, but what happens when Democrats don't have the money to pay for that coverage? Well, they can raise taxes higher, of course.

Yet they will also undoubtedly turn to the rationing of care that we have seen in other countries with socialized medicine. The majority leader noted on the floor last week that Britain's National Health Service canceled 25,000 surgeries in the first quarter of last year alone.

I could go on. I could talk about the long wait times Americans would experience under Medicare for All. I could talk about the fact that the Democrats' proposal would end the prohibition on government funding for abortion, meaning that your tax dollars would go toward ending the lives of preborn babies, whether you want them to or not.

I can talk about the threat that Medicare for All represents for seniors because, make no mistake, this program would do away with Medicare as we know it and the promises that have been made to seniors in this country. Seniors would receive care under the new plan, but it would not be the plan they signed up for, and there is no guarantee that they would receive the benefits the Democrats are promising.

If I went on about all the ways that Medicare for All is a bad idea, none of my colleagues would have a chance to speak for the rest of the day or probably tomorrow, for that matter, either. Suffice it to say that Medicare for All would be a very bad deal for the American people.

Let's hope that our colleagues across the aisle halt their mad rush toward socialism before the American people get stuck with this government-run nightmare.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

NOMINATION OF JOHN FLEMING

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today in support of Dr. John Fleming's nomination to be the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, otherwise known as the Administrator of the Economic Development Administration, or EDA.

I view this as an opportunity not only to speak about the qualifications of a former colleague of mine—we served in the House together—but also to highlight the EDA's work in my home State of West Virginia.

The EDA did not always play an active role in West Virginia, which is really odd when you consider that we have no shortage of economic development and infrastructure needs and challenges in our State. Yet, at my insistence and through the collaboration

of my staff, we have turned a corner. Today, we are beginning to see real investments that will make a lasting difference in West Virginia.

To highlight the insignificant amount West Virginia received before I became a Senator, in the 2 years prior to my swearing in—2013 and 2014—the State received a total of \$200,000 from EDA outside of normal planning grants. These were mostly for technical assistance.

When I came to the Senate and realized this, I made it a top priority of mine to ensure that West Virginia secured more Federal dollars to develop our economy and create new opportunities. I made it clear to EDA at the time that the status quo was absolutely unacceptable.

I am glad to say we are now achieving results, as evidenced by the close to \$30 million that EDA has invested in West Virginia since 2015. By bringing everyone to the table and working with State and local economic development officials, we were able to foster a renewed focus on West Virginia needs to the benefit of these local projects.

In addition to EDA's bringing on a State representative, which was crucial—a State representative to focus just on our State, to directly interface with our communities—we are ensuring dollars will go toward projects that will contribute to the future of West Virginia.

At a time when my State and other parts of the country are seeking to reorient their economies toward industries of the future—like technology and advanced manufacturing—these are the kinds of projects that the Federal Government should be prioritizing.

Let me give you a few examples. Just last month, I joined local officials in Greenbrier County to announce \$1.5 million in EDA funding to bring potable water to 50 homes and a new business that will employ over 200 people. Keep in mind, these are projects that are collaborative projects. It is not just solely Federal dollars that go into it. There are city, county, and private dollars as well.

In November of last year, EDA announced that it would invest \$1 million in the city of Bluefield for the Exit 1 project, a 15-acre development that will serve as a catalyst for business growth and create almost 250 jobs. And 1 year ago in March, the EDA invested close to \$5 million in just 1 day to make infrastructure improvements at three separate sites across the State. This funding will promote job growth and retention of jobs in these three counties through added efficiencies in essential infrastructure.

One of these projects I will talk about is in northern West Virginia, where I am originally from, and it will be to rehabilitate the Wheeling Corrugating steel plant complex in Brooke County, all the way near the top of the northern panhandle. This project will, at a minimum, create 95 new jobs, retain 45 jobs, and attract

private capital beyond an initial investment of more than \$1 million. This isn't funding for a conference of stakeholders or another study just to sit on a shelf and collect dust. These are real dollars going toward real projects. Our local leaders know what they need, and many of the local economic development officials tell me they have been "studied to death."

I am happy to say that through our efforts, local and State officials are getting the help they have been asking for. Dr. Fleming and I spoke at length about these efforts when he visited my office and during his nomination hearing before the EPW Committee. He assured me of his commitment to follow Congress's intent to continue the programs under EDA, as evidenced by the increased in funding EDA received through the appropriations process.

As a successful businessman and former Member of Congress from Louisiana—and as he has made clear in his conversations with me and through his testimony—I trust that Dr. Fleming understands the needs of communities like those in West Virginia. I look forward to working with him after he is confirmed, and I invite him, as I have before, to come to my home State to see the great work that is being done with the investments that the EDA has chosen to make in West Virginia.

When the Federal Government serves as a willing partner for all parts of the country, regardless of whether they are urban or rural, we can promote economic growth and opportunities for all Americans. As chair of the EPW Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee and as a member of the Appropriations and Commerce Committees, I will continue to advocate for programs that contribute not just to a brighter future for my State of West Virginia but also for the entire country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

TITLE X

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, since day one of the Trump administration, the Republicans have done everything they can to cater to an extreme rightwing base by undermining women's access to the healthcare they need and the healthcare providers they trust.

They have moved to roll back requirements that insurance companies include birth control as an essential health benefit, which would mean millions of women would go back to paying extra for birth control on top of their coverage. They have held votes on extreme abortion bans that would get in between a woman and her doctor. They have jammed the courts, even the Supreme Court, with partisans who have made clear they share

the extreme and frightening goal of overturning *Roe v. Wade* and of taking away a woman's constitutional right to safe, legal abortion in the United States of America.

Most recently, the Trump administration has put forward a deeply harmful rule that would jeopardize access to affordable reproductive healthcare for the millions of men and women who depend on title X, our Nation's family planning program, which historically has had bipartisan support. If this rule goes into effect, providers at health centers that receive title X funding will be blocked—gagged—from even telling patients about where and how to get a safe, legal abortion as part of a discussion of reproductive healthcare options.

The rule would also impose new, medically unnecessary requirements that would make it impossible for Planned Parenthood centers, which serve 41 percent of the title X patients, to continue to participate. Four million people—disproportionately young people, low-income women, and women of color—go to title X-funded centers, including to Planned Parenthood centers, for birth control, for lifesaving cancer screenings, for STD tests, and more each year, and this rule puts the care they depend on in jeopardy.

The Republicans here in the Capitol may have no idea what it would mean for patients to lose access to the providers they trust and the affordable care they need, but that is not because those patients and their doctors and their communities have not been speaking up—they have been. People across the country—women and men, doctors, city and county health officials, religious groups, advocates—told this administration as it was developing this rule that they did not want to see providers at title X barred from giving them medically sound information or have patients be denied access to providers they trust at Planned Parenthood because the Republicans think they know better.

The final rule the Trump administration released shows it ignored those who personally know how much it matters to have unbiased, quality care at title X centers, including at Planned Parenthood. The Republicans might have ignored those voices, but we Democrats are not going to. So I am releasing a memo today that will highlight statements that were submitted in strong opposition to this rule by people from across the country. I want to make absolutely sure that the Republicans have every opportunity to hear what patients and providers have to say. I want to give a few examples.

One patient called her visit to a Planned Parenthood to get a Pap smear a “lifesaver.”

Another wrote: “Young people like me rely on Title X for access to family planning services at the provider of our choice.”

A mother and sister from Nevada told the Trump administration:

I too have sisters and four daughters. We are capable, adept, and able to make decisions for ourselves. We want to make informed decisions. . . . Withholding information is misinformation and manipulation.

County health officials and healthcare providers repeatedly urged the administration that this rule would “interfere in the doctor-patient relationship” and was “an infringement on the ethical principles that medical providers adhere to” with potentially “irreversible” impacts in struggling communities.

Since it, apparently, needs to be said on the Senate floor, I would like to remind my colleagues that what these patients, healthcare providers, and community leaders are saying about the importance of a woman's ability to make her own healthcare decisions is not controversial. People in this country overwhelmingly agree that women should be able to get birth control. They agree that no matter how much money you make or where you live, you should be able to get a cancer screening that could save your life and, yes, that women should be able to exercise their constitutional right to safe, legal abortion.

I challenge the Republicans today to read the memo I am releasing. Listen to the women and men whom this rule hurts and from the people who are working to help them get the care they need. Then join the Democrats in standing up against this dangerous, unethical step backward because, right now, it is pretty clear, once again, that the Republicans want to make women's health a political battlefield instead of a serious priority.

Let me be clear. The Democrats are going to keep standing up for a woman's right to the care that is right for her. We are going to continue to stand up for women's access to affordable birth control, for women's constitutionally protected rights, and against those who want to put politicians in the doctor's office, where they do not ever belong. If that is a fight the Republicans want to have, we are ready and so are people across the country, like the brave ones who spoke up against this very harmful rule.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about what I believe is a real crisis at the southern border. I think there is even a case to be made that we have challenges at the northern border, but I want to focus on what the narrative here in the country has been over the past couple of

months, weeks, or really years since I have been here—sworn in in 2015.

I think it is very important. We all know that we have the Executive order from the President or the emergency declaration. He clearly believes there is a crisis at the border—so much so that he was willing to invoke an authority Congress granted beginning in 1976—the National Emergencies Act—and then amended throughout the 1980s. He believes he is within his authority to declare an emergency so that he can get resources down to the southern border as quickly as possible.

It is no secret that I disagree with the method the President is using to provide funding down at the southern border, but make no mistake about it—I do believe there is a crisis at the border, and I take exception to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who say the President is manufacturing a crisis.

I serve on the Judiciary Committee. I have since 2015. Yesterday, we got a briefing from Homeland Security that was truly startling in terms of the statistics on the number of crossings—a record number of crossings; severalfold; in one case, 10 times—over the past few months. I believe one of the reasons we are seeing the increase in illegal crossings is that those who are coming from countries other than Mexico—who are the majority of illegal crossings today—believe that if they get across the border, there is a very low chance they will be returned to their country of origin.

Speaker PELOSI said it is a manufactured crisis. It is not a manufactured crisis. Take a look at the data. It is a real crisis. The majority leader said the same thing. I think it is a crisis on several levels. One has to do with the number of people coming across the border today.

There is something that is very important that I think was missed by many people in the committee hearing yesterday. There were a number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle whom I work with—in fact, I worked with Senator DURBIN on a solution for the DACA population. I am not necessarily considered a hawk on all things immigration. But I will tell you that when I hear the senior Senator from Illinois say that everyone who is coming across the border is fleeing a dangerous situation in their country of origin, that doesn't necessarily reconcile with the fact that almost 80 percent—8 out of 10 claims of asylum are adjudicated not to be valid. Eight out of ten claims for asylum are adjudicated not to be valid. And I don't hear anybody on the other side of the aisle saying that we should change the standard for an asylum claim. So for someone to say that everyone coming from these countries is fleeing a fear of some sort of harm by staying in their country or maybe staying in Mexico while they sort things out—that is simply not true.

If you take a look at the severalfold increase in illegal crossings, 80 percent