

Now comes the administration's budget—this current budget proposal by the administration, which I predict will be rejected by the Congress. But we have to make sure it gets rejected because one of the proposals in that budget is to cut Medicaid by a trillion and a half—\$1.5 trillion—over 10 years.

The other reality here is that the official Republican position on the Affordable Care Act and related issues is that they, the Republican Members of Congress, want to eliminate Medicaid expansion over time—not just to cut it, not to change it, but to eliminate it. They want to eliminate Medicaid expansion, and, of course, based upon the \$1.5 trillion proposed cut, along with other proposals, one after another, they want to cut Medicaid itself.

So when Mr. Park uses words like his concern about the Medicaid expansion being greatly enlarged Medicaid programs, or the program itself, overall, I worry what he might do as a judge, not just on Medicaid expansion, but what he might do and decisions he might make based upon Medicaid itself.

So my original concerns about his arguments about the Affordable Care Act are now greatly and significantly increased because of what he has said about Medicaid itself, indirectly saying that he is not sure whether Medicaid itself would be worthy of the kind of support that it is going to require over time.

So I have real concerns on Medicaid. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

#### WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, back in 1876, Ann Reeves Jarvis was teaching her Sunday school class about notable mothers in the Bible. She ended that class with this prayer:

I hope and pray that someone, sometime, will found a memorial mother's day commemorating her for the matchless service she renders to humanity in every field of life. She is entitled to it.

That was the prayer of Ann Reeves Jarvis. Her 12-year-old daughter Anna, who was then a student in the class, took that prayer to heart and went on to help establish Mother's Day in the United States in 1914.

As we approach Mother's Day this upcoming Sunday, I am gathered with many of my Senate colleagues to urge our Republican friends here in the Senate to reject many of the policies coming down from the Trump administration that put women's health and well-being at risk. Americans need access to family planning services. An investment in family planning is money well spent because it helps families cope with reproductive health planning and can help prevent health crises. This is a win-win for those who receive these services and for all Americans who, in the long run, must pay for health services that are the inevitable result of neglect and failure to provide resources for family planning.

While the Trump administration would have you believe that their ef-

forts are solely focused on eliminating access to abortion, the reality is their actions are harmful to a broad array of family planning services. For example, just in 2017, the administration tried to eliminate the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program grants more than a year early. I want to point out that the city of Baltimore had one of those grants, and with the help of programming from the Teen Pregnancy and Prevention Program, Baltimore saw a 61-percent drop in teen pregnancy between the years 2000 and 2016. The good news is that the city of Baltimore and other grantees prevailed in Federal court, so that money was restored.

We now see repeated steps by the Trump administration through its recent title X Federal rulemaking that represent another attempt to restrict access to quality, affordable reproductive healthcare and prevent women from receiving the information they need to make informed decisions for themselves about their healthcare. It would jeopardize the entire title X health network.

Specifically, the rule would block the availability of Federal funds to family planning providers, even if those family planning providers separately offer access to abortion services. In other words, despite the fact that Federal law is already crystal clear about no public funds being used to pay for abortion, the administration policy would ignore that reality.

Under the status quo, title X-funded clinics that provide abortion must keep those services financially separate from their title X activities. So this rule would interfere with the ability of women throughout America to get that unbiased family planning service and counseling. The rule would specifically prohibit any referral for abortion services and end the longstanding guarantee that pregnant title X patients receive comprehensive, unbiased counseling.

A primary goal of this regulation—and there has been no secret about this—is to prevent Federal funds from going to comprehensive family planning providers, like Planned Parenthood, with little or no regard for the impact this has on women throughout the country—and men and families. In fact, Planned Parenthood provides health services to 4 in 10 women in America. For many women and men, Planned Parenthood is the only source of care in their community.

I want to recount a couple of stories I have received from my Maryland constituents. One is from Caitlyn. She lives in Severna Park. She shared with me the impact that Planned Parenthood had in her life. She says that while growing up, she did not have a basic education when it came to reproductive health services and options. She writes:

I knew I wasn't getting the whole story and I decided [to] do my own research. Planned Parenthood had the answers to my questions with no agenda, just facts.

She went on to share a different firsthand experience she had with Planned Parenthood as a patient.

I needed services that were quick, affordable, and compassionate, and that's exactly what I received. When it came time to pay my bill, I was surprised to find that they just asked for a small donation. This donation-for-services is possible through Title X. Because of Title X, patients like me and more than 30,000 other Marylanders can access care, no matter what, regardless of our ability to pay.

That was Caitlyn.

I also heard from Tamara from Takoma Park, MD. She moved back to Maryland to care for her aging mother and accepted her dream job. Her dream job was directing a training and education fund for healthcare workers. She hesitated to accept her dream job because the employer-provided insurance plan was grandfathered into pre-Affordable Care Act regulations, meaning that her preferred form of birth control wasn't covered. Her prescription would cost her \$125 a month, something she could not afford. Through her local Planned Parenthood, she was able to get the prescription for \$20 a month. She wrote to me saying:

Without my local Title X-funded community clinic, I—a graduate of Wellesley College, a Master's Degree holder, an engaged community member, a daughter, a passionate person on a meaningful career path—would be unable to afford my prescription, leaving me in the uncomfortable and, quite frankly, unfair position of having to choose between my health or quality of life.

If you look at these stories, you will find that the proposed regulations coming down from the Trump administration prioritize ideology over patient health and safety and fiction over healthcare facts. So that is something about title X.

I want to say a word about the Affordable Care Act, as well, and the important protections it provides for people throughout our country, but I want to focus for a minute on the protections it provides to women.

It became the law of the land 9 years ago. I don't think any of us expected we would still be fighting as hard as we are to try to protect those essential healthcare protections. Despite the failure in this body and this Senate just last year to overturn the Affordable Care Act, we still see a constant effort from the administration, both through nonstop, harmful, regulatory efforts and a wholesale effort through the Federal courts. So I think it is important to remind all of us about what the consequences of stripping away all those protections would be. With respect to women's healthcare, it would do away with the provision that requires coverage of maternity care as an essential health benefit. It would reverse the provisions that ended gender discrimination, which previously allowed insurance companies to charge women higher premiums than men for their healthcare. It also would eliminate the requirement to provide coverage for preventive health services

like mammograms, screenings for cervical cancer, prenatal care, and regular well-baby and well-child visits with no cost-sharing.

So it is important, as we look at the ongoing efforts to sabotage the Affordable Care Act in pieces or get rid of it wholesale, that the consequences of getting rid of that for women's health would be devastating.

I heard from a constituent at that time; her name was Pamela. She had aged off her parents' insurance in college and became uninsured and, therefore, put off her medical care until she ended up in the emergency room, had to declare bankruptcy to get out from under her medical bills. She wrote me during that debate over the Affordable Care Act, as follows:

Today my asthma medicine is covered with a nominal copay. I can see my doctor before a case of bronchitis becomes something worse, and I do not need to go to the ER for treatment. Now I have a twenty year old in college who has pre-existing conditions, unlike me she is still covered under our health insurance and her prescriptions are affordable. What happens to me, my daughter, and my husband who all have pre-existing conditions if our insurance is allowed to go back to the old days of charging more for our coverage? What happens to my daughter if she can no longer be on our policy?

Like many of us, I have other stories I have received from Marylanders who are either worried about losing their access to healthcare through title X or worried about losing coverage under the Affordable Care Act. I hope, as we reflect on all of the challenges we are facing and as we honor mothers on Mother's Day, we don't support actions that would actually degrade their access to important quality healthcare.

I will close by urging my colleagues to reflect on the words of Ann Reeves Jarvis, who I mentioned earlier was the one who had uttered that prayer that led to the establishment of Mother's Day. What she also said was that we need to honor the "matchless service" that mothers and other women in this country "render to humanity in every field of life."

I believe it is our obligation to make sure we provide access to quality healthcare and choices for all of our constituents and for every American. As we reflect on Mother's Day, be very aware of the impact our actions will have on women throughout the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Dhillon nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

#### NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, this week is Small Business Week.

For over a half a century now, the country has officially recognized Small Business Week, but in our country, small businesses have always accounted for and still account for most of the jobs created—certainly, for most of the new jobs created. In Missouri, that is absolutely the case. We ought to be doing all we can to create an environment in which people can get those new jobs and often get their first jobs, and I think we are doing that.

There is nothing better for small business than a strong overall economy. Almost daily now, we see some new number that sets a new record for the last 40 years or maybe for the last 50 years. In the case of the unemployment number, just this week, for the 13th month in a row, we have had more jobs available than people who have been looking for work, and that had never happened a single time—not one single time—until 13 months ago. The best thing, obviously, for small business is to be part of a growing economy, a vibrant economy. We are seeing that, and there are reasons for that.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 is one of those. Almost every small business now pays less in taxes on its business than it did before. Businesses are allowed to fully deduct the cost of new equipment so they can reinvest and reinvent and grow their businesses. That means more jobs.

The tax cuts also allow people to keep more of their money, and that means they have more of their money to spend. In my State of Missouri, we found that in the first 12 months of the tax cut—so these numbers are now about 6 months old, and I think, if anything, they have gotten better—the sales tax and use tax were up 2.5 percent.

We know the last quarter of the overall gross domestic product was up 3.2 percent, but 2.5 percent of real growth in just tax income is one of the ways one measures whether people are spending their money or not, and they are.

People in this economy feel more confident about their jobs, and that makes a big difference. In the previous 8 or 10 years, the fear that people had of losing their jobs has really gone. People now go to work believing there is a better chance they will get promotions than they will lose their jobs, and that makes a real difference. So we have done things that are helpful in cutting taxes.

We have also done things that are helpful in reducing regulation. The President has been particularly helpful in leading the recovery after removing regulatory redtape. Actually, small businesses are much more affected by regulatory redtape than are big businesses. Big businesses can hire somebody to go through the regulations and stay totally focused on that, and small businesses can't. If you are afraid you are going to violate some Federal regulation, you are less likely to go ahead and make the kind of investment you

would like to make than you otherwise would be. We have also created more access to credit by cutting down some of the overregulation of community banks.

There is more we ought to be doing. One thing we could have that a lot of small businesses could really benefit from is the New Markets Tax Credit Program. This is a program that was first authorized in 2000. It encourages investment in high-poverty areas or in low-income areas. Again, in Missouri, 42,000 new jobs have been created as a result of the New Markets Tax Credit Program. The other day, I went to the first new supermarket since 1968 in North St. Louis. This new supermarket opened because it was able to use the New Markets Tax Credit Program. It is a program we clearly need to extend. Once again, I and Senator CARDIN, from Maryland, introduced that legislation, and we hope that can happen.

On the health front, there is nothing better for small business than the idea of association health plans. It has been challenged in court, but I will tell you what. In Missouri, we have had experience with this for a long time. It does work. It just, frankly, makes sense. If you are a small restaurant owner, you are not going to have as good a program for your employees as if you could get that program through the Missouri Restaurant Association, through the National Restaurant Association, or through some other association that would allow you to be the kind of group from which 180 million Americans already get their insurance. We need to continue to work on this as we honor small business with things like we have done in the last couple of days.

The Ex-Im Bank is often not thought of as a thing that small business uses, but there are more small business Ex-Im Bank loans that are processed than there are of big business loans. Even when there are big business loans, those big businesses almost always have small business providers for what they do. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission can't fully work in a way that people can count on if it doesn't have the people there to make it work. We did that today.

So my colleagues and I are here today to talk about small business. It is the engine that drives America. This is the week in which we honor it, but, frankly, our economy is dependent on it every single week, and I am glad to be here to talk about it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, our Nation's economy is booming. Last Friday's jobs report far exceeded anyone's expectations. It showed that we added 263,000 jobs last month and that unemployment was sitting at the lowest since 1969. At the backbone of it all are our small businesses.

Just look at my home State of Iowa, where 99 percent of our businesses are small businesses. With our State's