

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

economy continuing to grow and our unemployment amongst the lowest in the Nation, it is clear that our small businesses' success is Iowa's success. These job creators in our State are leading the way by finding innovative solutions and creating new opportunities for our workforce. Too often, small businesses struggle to comply with some of the most costly and burdensome regulations that come out of Washington, DC.

As a way to rein in these regulations and to foster a more thoughtful rulemaking process, this week, I reintroduced my PROVE IT Act. This bipartisan legislation gives the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy an opportunity to ask Agencies to prove their regulatory analyses when proposing a rule that may be economically harmful to small businesses. It gives Iowa's small businesses a voice in the rulemaking process.

One increasingly important component of our country's labor market is women-owned small businesses. Iowa ranks in the top 10 for growth in employment and revenues in women-owned businesses. However, these businesses still face many challenges. That is why I recently introduced the Expanding Contracting Opportunities for Small Businesses Act, which addresses the discrepancy in sole-source manufacturing contracts that puts women-owned small businesses at a disadvantage. This bipartisan bill is a sensible and simple fix to help ensure all of Iowa's small business owners get a fair shot at competing and succeeding.

Commonsense deregulation, coupled with tax reform, has helped to fuel economic growth and has contributed to high levels of consumer and business confidence. Yet, folks, there is still a lot of work to be done. While many of Iowa's small businesses would absolutely love to provide their employees with the option of having paid parental leave, it is just far too costly. That is one reason I am working with Senator MIKE LEE on a proposal that would allow new moms and dads who work at one of these small businesses the opportunity to receive paid parental leave.

As a member of the Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, I am excited to celebrate National Small Business Week and to continue fighting for pro-growth policies and a regulatory system that encourages innovation and job growth—one in which Iowa's small businesses are heard loud and clear. As I have said before, when Iowa's small businesses are successful, Iowa also succeeds.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join many of my colleagues today to celebrate National Small Business Week.

Nearly every day, we do business with these local retailers or use products they had a hand in creating some-

where along the supply chain. Still, it can be easy to focus on the larger companies that dominate America's economic landscape, but this week is a time to shift our attention to the entrepreneurs and innovators who reach for their pieces of the American dream and work tirelessly to achieve them. This is no small feat, but it happens over and over again each day as it has throughout our Nation's history.

This week, we have the opportunity to recognize and commend those who take this leap of faith while generating positive economic activity and benefits that help to strengthen and sustain the system that has created more wealth for more people than any other in human history. This system is capitalism. It underpins our society and is marked by the freedom and ability to make our own economic decisions. Those decisions have often led Americans to start businesses and become their own bosses. As a result, America's small businesses are now, without question, the backbone of our country.

As the Small Business Administration has reported, more than half of Americans either own or work for a small business, and they create about two out of every three new jobs in the United States each year. It is clear that small businesses drive the U.S. economy.

I was recently in North Central Arkansas, where I met with several small business owners and their employees. This time last year, I toured small businesses in South and Southwest Arkansas to highlight and learn more about the impact they have on our State. Representatives from the Small Business Administration were on hand for some of these visits to underscore the Agency's willingness and desire to help promote and assist small businesses, owners, and entrepreneurs with establishing or expanding their companies.

At each stop, the conversations provided me with invaluable insight as to the challenges and opportunities businesses face. Inevitably, the discussions also turned to how the economic climate has changed for the better in recent years. Whether they have been changes in the Tax Code that have helped to make small businesses even more competitive, including the qualified business deduction, altering the estate tax, or increasing bonus depreciation, as well as having provided regulatory relief and certainty, we have witnessed how these pro-growth policies have not only helped to drastically uplift and improve America's economy but how they have also given business owners and entrepreneurs the confidence they have been lacking for so many years about whether to invest or expand their opportunities.

According to the Small Business Administration, Arkansas is home to over 247,000 small businesses, which is over 99.3 percent of all businesses in the State. These enterprises employ over 479,000 Arkansans, which makes it easy

to see how much of an impact they have on our State's economic climate. In addition to powering the economy, small businesses also contribute to the communities they operate in. They embody the American values and ideals that have helped to build our country—hard work, a willingness to take risks, and a vision for opportunity. That is why we recognized the importance of entrepreneurs by passing a resolution designating May 5 through 11 as National Small Business Week.

I encourage people across my home State and throughout the country to support small businesses in their communities, especially this week. I also encourage my colleagues to continue listening to the concerns and to the advice of our entrepreneurs and of those they employ.

We can build on our positive economic growth by pursuing more policies that will help our small businesses succeed. The show of support certainly means a lot to the folks who own these companies and their employees who count on them to earn their livelihoods. It also serves as a way to further cultivate and reward the entrepreneurial spirit that is at the very heart of America.

I applaud the men and women in Arkansas and across the United States who work incredibly hard as they run their own businesses and chase the American dream. This week, we celebrate them and our Nation's intrepid, enterprising legacy that helps make us who we are.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues and celebrate National Small Business Week. I love this poster that they have prepared today because Tennessee is right at the heart of this.

For over five decades, National Small Business Week has been an opportunity to recognize the tremendous contribution of small businesses and entrepreneurs to the American economy.

We know and we hear it said so often that there is nothing small about small business because of the economic impact it has. I tell you, the statistics really do bear that out.

According to the most recent report from the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy for my home State of Tennessee, there are over 603,000 small businesses located in our State. Now, 99.4 percent of all the businesses in our State are small businesses. That speaks to the health and vitality of our economy.

Collectively, these small businesses employ over 1.1 million people, and that accounts for 42.3 percent of the entire workforce in the State. So small business has an enormous footprint in the State of Tennessee.

Now, we have heard a lot about the booming economy in recent weeks, and as we celebrate Mother's Day this week—and I do hope it is a happy Mother's Day for everyone. We know

this economy that is booming, that is growing, with record-low unemployment numbers, with economic vitality, wage growth that we have not seen—we know this is an economy that makes the lives of millions of working women and those families' lives better, and we celebrate what this economy is doing for the Nation as a whole.

Specific to Tennessee, as we celebrate Mother's Day, we celebrate these women-owned businesses. What we do know from the research that is out is that Tennessee is the fifth best State in the country for female-owned small businesses and that they are seeing dynamic growth in both revenue and employment.

Now, the economic gains that have come about because of the tax cuts and the regulatory reforms that have been enacted by President Trump, voted on, pushed through by congressional Republicans, have changed the economic landscape of millions of Americans.

Since tax reform was signed into law, 3.2 million new jobs were created, 90 percent of the taxpayers have received a bigger paycheck, and jobless claims are at the lowest they have been in 50 years.

Here is the connective tissue between these encouraging stats and what I hear back in Tennessee. Because the economy is strong, now is a great time to grow or to expand or to start a new business. Entrepreneurs feel confident so they are betting on themselves and making decisions that they need to make in order to succeed: They are hiring that new employee, adding a new store or a new location, and daring to turn their dreams into a reality.

Small businesses are the key driver of our turbocharged economy, and we will continue to do all we can to help them thrive.

I will tell you also, as a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, that I want to thank those entrepreneurs who are veterans, who are stepping up at record rates in our State and are starting their small businesses.

Some of these deal with services that are needed and products that are needed by our military post or used by our National Guard. These veterans make great small business owners, and they also make great employees. The skills they learn defending our Nation while they are in uniform are uniquely well suited to succeed in business: the discipline, the focus, the resilience, the ability to plan, to adapt, to work collaboratively with others in order to get a job done.

Indeed, for themselves and their families, they are getting the job done. These are the hallmarks of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, but they are also the qualities of successful entrepreneurs. We are thrilled they choose to call Tennessee home.

The importance of the American small business is gauged not only by facts and figures. The true value of our small businesses comes not just from their contribution to the American

economy but also their contribution to another American Dream fulfilled.

Entrepreneurship is the embodiment of the American dream. It is about men and women pursuing their passions. They work hard, save their money, make a plan, and put that plan into action. Oftentimes, they struggle, sometimes they will end up failing, but they pick themselves up, preserve their right to move forward, push forward, and they never stop trying. Our economy and our Nation are stronger and better for their efforts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, National Small Business Week is about so much more than simply saying thank you to our small business owners and entrepreneurs. It is about recognizing everything they do for our communities. They aren't simply the economic backbone but a common thread that binds us together.

We all remember the stores we visited when we were young or with our families to pick out a new pair of shoes. They host bake sales, donate to local churches and charities, as well as support local youth teams. They invest in us, and we invest in them.

South Carolina is home to more than 400,000 small businesses employing nearly 800,000 people.

Having been a small business owner myself, I have to tell you that one of the more exciting times you could ever have in life is starting a small business. I know Senator BRAUN can talk about what ABC Sports used to call the thrill of victory as well as the agony of defeat. Sometimes, for me, the thrill of victory was when I was signing the front side of a paycheck for my employees, and the agony of defeat was when I was not signing the back side of that paycheck for myself.

Being a small business owner certainly teaches you incredible lessons about life, about people, and certainly about the community you want to serve. Owning your own small business is a rewarding and sometimes challenging experience.

As part of National Small Business Week, it is also my honor to recognize VetFriends of Mount Pleasant, SC, as the Senate's Small Business of the Day.

Dale Sutcliffe, a U.S. Marine veteran of Desert Storm, founded VetFriends nearly 20 years ago with the simple mission of reuniting veterans. Following his service, Dale recognized the benefit that reconnecting veterans could have and quickly set up a platform where veterans can reunite with their fellow servicemembers during the time in which they served our great Nation.

The VetFriends platform has over 2.5 million veteran members and has brought together thousands of veterans. In the process, the platform has helped veterans share their stories, share their photos, as well as stay in-

formed about upcoming events and reunions.

Currently, VetFriends employs over 25 South Carolinians and almost all have a close relationship with a veteran. The team at VetFriends has a longstanding tradition of supporting the veterans community and are regularly seen volunteering at the Ralph Johnson VA Medical Center. Additionally, the business has taken an active role working with the Wounded Warrior Project and Patriots Point in Charleston.

It is clear that VetFriends' values and goals not only enhance their business plan but also improve the community they belong to. VetFriends is an amazing example of what our small businesses are capable of, and I thank Dale Sutcliffe and our small business owners throughout South Carolina for pouring their heart and their soul as well as their dreams back into the community.

Let me finish by saying happy Mother's Day to all the mothers and especially my mama.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN, Madam President, I was asked to bat cleanup on National Small Business Week for our conference. I have been a Main Street entrepreneur my entire life.

My wife and I moved back to our hometown in 1978. She will celebrate her 41st anniversary this September with her only job—a business in our downtown selling home accessories and gifts.

I am very proud of you, Maureen.

Three years later, I had my opportunity to stake out my attempt at being an entrepreneur. As Senator SCOTT mentioned, it is fraught with pitfalls. There is no guarantee, when you stick your neck out and want to do some enterprise—no guarantee it is going to turn out. What a thrill it is, though, when it does, and it is what drives our great country.

Enterprise in this country, from its foundation, was built upon small businesses. We have over 500,000 of them in Indiana. Those businesses created over 38,000 new jobs in the last year, but things aren't as good as they could be because as much as the tax reform did for securing the future of small business, it is not permanent. We need to make sure that is done sometime before 2025.

Manufacturing—the biggest business in Indiana since the Trump economy has created the hottest context for business, small, medium or large. Six times more jobs in President Trump's 2 years have been created in manufacturing than the last 2 years of the prior administration.

Sometimes a little business can get lucky and become a medium-size business and a large business. Mine followed that pathway. I will give you a little detail on that in a moment.

McDonald's started with one location. This summer they will add, in the

State of Indiana, 11,000 summer jobs. International companies even come to the State of Indiana because our door is open and what a great place to have a small, medium, or large business.

Saab will add a \$25 million investment in West Lafayette that will create 200 great-paying jobs.

Now back to my story. We raised a family, and I had the chance to start my business. In 17 years, it never got beyond 15 employees. That is the number of employees I started with in 1981 and that is what I had in 1998.

Perseverance, patience, reinvesting, keeping a low overhead so you can get through the scrapes that inevitably will come in an economy, and someday your day of opportunity will arise.

In the darkest hours of the great recession, when our industry shrunk by over 50 percent literally overnight, every asset I owned was a piece of commercial real estate—a warehouse. Everything I sold was an unnecessary want, not a need—auto and truck accessories. I wondered, what did the future hold?

Well, the future held the greatest opportunity I could have ever imagined because I lived my life in a way that set the stage for opportunity. I make that point because we are not doing it in this institution.

We have set ourselves up to ruin a lot of the good things that are occurring from decades and decades ago to the present if we don't get our house in order. The institution of the Federal Government should be the pride of our country. Running \$850 billion deficits and \$22 trillion in debt, that doesn't bode well for any of us. But the good news is, if we keep this economy going, I think it can go decades into the future, where we keep creating jobs and raising wages like have never been done before. But I mentioned earlier that some of us turn them into medium-size businesses and larger businesses, and so often, what got you there, you forget about.

I tell folks all the time: It doesn't matter what size business you have, if you are successful, share those benefits with your employees. Raise benefits through your 401(k) plan. Lower healthcare costs if you can, and certainly raise wages.

Make sure people look to the real world for what means the most and not to government. If you look to government, especially the Federal Government, you are going to be disappointed. The action in our country is on Main Streets in towns and cities across the country in our States.

My parting comments: The biggest companies in this country sometimes, in my opinion, behave most poorly. I am going to talk about two—Big Ag and Big Healthcare.

I took on the healthcare issue 10 years ago in my own company. Nobody should go broke because they get sick or have a bad accident. All small businesses want to offer good healthcare to their employees but can't. Why? Be-

cause the industry has gotten concentrated with huge corporations, from pharma to hospitals across the board and health insurance companies, which I had to tangle with.

I ask you to get with it, be transparent, and be competitive so you don't have a business partner that may only be the Federal Government down the road.

Big Agriculture—I want to end with this because in Joni's State, a high percentage of small businesses are farmers. Farmers take on the most difficult task of any business in our country—the weather, a high amount of assets for the income they generate. They have regulations like waters of the United States—great intentions but overbearing. There are farmers who now worry about ditch maintenance because ditches that don't have water in them most of the year are now considered waters of the United States. We have to get a better balance to where we have good regulations and not overbearing regulations.

I am asking folks in this Chamber, in this Congress, to look to get this house in order, and I am asking Big Industry—big companies in the agricultural arena and in the healthcare arena—to get their act in order so the doctors who participate within healthcare and the farmers who participate within agriculture can make an honest living. They are all small businesses, and small businesses drive this country.

Thank you.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I might be the luckiest person in the world because I get to wake up on Sunday and spend Mother's Day, well, being a mom. I will probably spend the morning helping my 1-year-old take a few wobbly steps and then the afternoon watching my 4-year-old draw or chasing her around the house, celebrating the holiday surrounded by the people I cherish the most.

But that isn't the case for far too many other moms and kids around the country. That isn't the case for women like Denise Reed, Sybrina Fulton, or Valerie Castile, who lost their children to gun violence. That isn't the case for the hundreds of children born in the past year alone whose mothers died from preventable, pregnancy-related deaths. That certainly isn't the case for the families whom the Trump administration separated at our southern border and who still have not yet been reunited, the kids who were thrown in cages because their parents had the nerve to strive for a better life.

This Mother's Day, I am thinking of those whose hearts are hurting, those moms who would give anything for another lazy Sunday with their sons or those daughters who would do anything to hear their mother's laugh one more time.

The truth is, the women—moms or otherwise—in this country deserve bet-

ter than the status quo. We deserve more than the Trump administration, which in just 2-plus years has already changed title IX sexual assault rules to favor the accused over the survivor, tried to defund health clinics that provide prenatal care and mammograms, pushed forward healthcare proposals that would have gutted maternity coverage, and handed employers the power to decide whether women should have access to birth control.

All this—well, it is shocking but unfortunately not surprising because we knew who Donald Trump was when we elected him. He is the man who has long made clear that he does not care about women or our autonomy. He is the man who once argued that women should be punished for taking up the right to choose; who has taken pride in trying to put the government between us and our doctors; who would rather throw those doctors in jail than even pretend to care about the women who make up 51 percent of this Nation; who just 10 days ago stood on a stage in Wisconsin and lied, lied, lied, prioritizing a roar from the crowd over the safety of patients and providers at health clinics nationwide; and who just last week issued two rules that would make it easier for doctors to either discriminate against women or deny them care altogether.

So don't tell me that Trump is "pro-life" when he is pushing for rules that endanger women's lives and when he spent years trying to strip healthcare away from Americans. Don't claim that he is just trying to protect families when he is the one to blame for the inhumane policy that is ripping toddlers and babies away from mothers' arms. Don't you dare argue that he is leading the "party of life" when he will not lift a finger to stop first graders from getting massacred in classrooms by the dozen. No, Donald Trump's anti-choice stance isn't about looking out for families; it is about getting a slap on the back from his base and exerting even more control over women's bodies. It is sexist, regressive, and flatout dangerous.

But even while this administration's agenda is a travesty, it is not an anomaly; rather, it is just the latest step in the far-right's long march to strip away women's rights. I am tired of it, sick of their trying to shame women when they are the ones who should be ashamed.

So enough with the hypocrisy, with the misogyny, with some men in hallowed halls in DC arguing that they know better than moms in Illinois or Arizona or Missouri. We can and we must do better. That means fighting for everything from equal pay to better parental leave. It means proving that we care about women every day of the year, not just on one Sunday in May. That is the least that our mothers, our daughters, and our sisters deserve.

Thank you.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.