

created in June, the latest piece of good news about our strong economy. Thanks to the historic tax reform we passed in 2017 and our efforts to lift burdensome regulations, our economy has been thriving. Economic growth is up, and wages are growing at the strongest rate in a decade. Personal income is up, and unemployment is near its lowest level in half a century.

The benefits of this progress are being spread far and wide. Wages for the lowest earning workers are rising faster than for the highest earning workers. Hundreds of thousands of new blue-collar jobs have been created. Unemployment rates for minorities have fallen. The unemployment rates for Asian Americans, African Americans, and Hispanic Americans are all at or near record lows.

The Wall Street Journal notes, “Nearly one million more blacks and 2 million more Hispanics are employed than when Barack Obama left office, and minorities account for more than half of all new jobs created during the Trump Presidency.”

When Republicans took control of the Congress and the White House 2½ years ago, we had one goal: Make life better for hard-working Americans. We knew that Americans had a tough time during President Obama’s administration, and we were determined to put more money in Americans’ pockets and to expand opportunities for working families. That is exactly what we did. Our tax reform legislation, combined with other Republican economic policies, has created an economy that has lifted up Americans from across the economic spectrum.

There is still more work, of course, that needs to be done. Farmers and ranchers, for example, in places like my home State of South Dakota, are still struggling thanks to years of commodity and livestock prices below production costs, protracted trade disputes, and natural disasters. But overall, American workers are doing better than they have in a long time.

Now we need to focus on preserving and building on the policies that have made life better for American workers over the past 2 years, but that is not what will happen if Democrats have their way. Democrats are not only interested in eliminating a large portion, if not all, of the tax relief that Republicans passed; they are pushing proposals that would result in massive tax hikes on ordinary Americans.

Take Medicare for All, as I mentioned earlier, which is a Democratic proposal for government-run healthcare. A conservative estimate sets the pricetag for this proposal at \$32 trillion over 10 years—more money than the U.S. Government has spent in the past 8 years combined on everything. A more realistic estimate is likely substantially higher, given that the Senator from Vermont’s current Medicare for All plan includes coverage for long-term care, which is an enormously expensive benefit.

On top of that, most of the Democratic Presidential candidates have endorsed providing government-funded healthcare to illegal immigrants as well. It is not just a matter of providing healthcare to the millions of undocumented immigrants already here in the United States. More and more Democrats are embracing what is effectively an open-border policy, which means the number of individuals here legally can skyrocket, further driving up the massive costs of the one-size-fits-all, government-run healthcare proposal the Democrats are putting forward. The final pricetag, I am suggesting, could be far more than \$32 trillion.

Of course, Democrats’ proposals are not limited to putting the government in charge of healthcare. They have lots of other ideas for more government spending, such as having the government pay for millions of students’ college education or eliminating student loan debt—although they don’t mention any benefits for Americans who have already done a lot of work to help pay off their student loans.

As expensive as paying for these proposals would be, they pale in comparison to the Democrats’ most expansive socialist fantasy, the Green New Deal, which has been estimated to cost somewhere between \$51 and \$93 trillion over 10 years—\$93 trillion. That is more money than the economic output of every country in the entire world in 2017 combined.

How are Democrats going to pay for these policies? Well, when they have an answer, it usually involves taxing the rich. That is all very well, until one realizes there is no way to pay for these policies just by taxing the rich. Medicare for All alone would ultimately require massive tax hikes on ordinary Americans and on American businesses.

What will be the consequences of that? Well, a substantially lower standard of living for American families who would see their tax bill soar and their take-home pay shrink, plus massive tax hikes would wreak devastation on the economy. Load a small or larger business with new taxes, and its ability to grow, invest, expand, and hire new workers shrinks dramatically. That would mean lower wages, fewer jobs, and reduced opportunities for American families already burdened with new tax hikes.

Lowering taxes for American families and American businesses has grown Americans’ paychecks and provided them with access to new and better jobs and opportunities. Raising their taxes would have the opposite effect. Yet raising Americans’ taxes is exactly what would happen under the Democrats’ plans.

Let’s hope that Democrats think better of their proposals before the American people are forced to foot the bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the previously scheduled vote at 11 o’clock, I be allowed to complete my remarks before that vote occurs.

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

DEBBIE SMITH ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, throughout my career, dating back to my days as Texas attorney general, I have long been a proud advocate for crime victims’ rights. I believe we all have a responsibility to provide men and women impacted by such traumatic events the resources and care they need when they need it.

Right now the Congress has an opportunity to pass two separate pieces of legislation to support victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. Sadly, both bills have been caught in the crosshairs of political jockeying in the House, with Democrats using a tit-for-tat strategy that has frozen both bills.

One of those bills is called the Debbie Smith Act. The namesake of this legislation is a woman whom I have had the honor of working with many times over the years. She is a fierce advocate for victims of sexual assault.

Like so many victims, her advocacy was born from a personal experience. In 1989, she was abducted from her home and raped in a wooded area. She reported the crime to police and went to the emergency room for a forensic examination, but there were no immediate answers. Though exact numbers are difficult to estimate, some experts believe that there are hundreds of thousands of untested rape kits that remain across the United States.

For 6½ years the DNA evidence of Debbie’s attacker sat on a shelf in an evidence locker while she constantly wondered who her attacker was and when he would appear again. Channelling that fear and frustration, Debbie made it her mission in life to eliminate the rape kit backlog. I have no doubt that because of her and the important legislation this Congress has passed for the past 15 years, we were making some pretty incredible progress toward her goal.

In 2004, the Debbie Smith Act was signed into law to provide State and local crime labs with the resources to end the backlog of unsolved crimes. More than \$1 billion has been provided to these forensic labs because of this law, and the legislation passed by the Senate in May will provide even greater resources for the program.

While the original purpose of the legislation was to reduce the rape kit backlog, this DNA evidence serves multiple purposes. It enables law enforcement to identify and convict people who commit other violent crimes and takes more criminals off the street. It also has a corresponding benefit for the wrongfully accused. It can actually exclude people based on the DNA test results in the forensic rape kit.

Because of the Debbie Smith Act, more than 860,000 DNA cases have been

processed, and 360,000 DNA profiles have been uploaded into the FBI's database. This accounts for 43 percent of all forensic profiles in the FBI's DNA database. The benefits of this law cannot be overstated. That is why the Debbie Smith Act was easily reauthorized in both 2008 and 2014.

Now it is time once again to reauthorize this important legislation. Earlier this year, Senator FEINSTEIN and I introduced the Debbie Smith Act of 2019, which reauthorizes the important funding that supports the testing of this DNA evidence. Things like training for law enforcement, correctional officers, training for forensic nurses and other professionals who assist victims of sexual assault are also included in this bill. When the Senate voted in May, not a single Senator voted against it—not one. It was unanimous. But here we are nearly 2 months later and the House of Representatives hasn't lifted a finger.

The bill isn't partisan. It is not divisive. It is not controversial. So why do they refuse to bring the bill up for a vote? Well, they are not holding this bill up because they are working on a different version or because they disagree with any of the provisions or because they simply don't like it. No, they are actually holding it hostage to try to force a vote on their ultrapartisan version of the Violence Against Women Act, or VAWA, the second piece of legislation they are stopping. Actually, Democrats allowed the current Violence Against Women Act to expire over Republican objections so that they could maintain this leverage to pass their ultrapartisan version of VAWA sometime later.

Folks on both sides of the aisle can agree it is time to make some important improvements in VAWA, and our colleague Senator ERNST from Iowa has been working very hard to try to come up with a good bipartisan bill. It deserves to be reauthorized and strengthened to ensure victims have access to the services and protections they need.

Going through the regular order is something I support, and it is an effort that has been led by, as I said, Senator ERNST from Iowa. But the version of the bill that has passed in the House is a far cry from any kind of consensus legislation. It includes provisions that would never pass in the Senate, and that is why it passed the House, in order to create that conflict and that obstacle.

It is not fair to Debbie Smith and other victims of sexual assault for House Democrats to hold them hostage over a separate bill that is still being negotiated in good faith by Members on both sides of the aisle.

Despite repeated requests from advocates and victims' rights groups to pass the Debbie Smith Act freestanding, the House has, once again, chosen to play politics.

I understand Debbie has requested to meet with leadership in the House, and I strongly encourage them to take the

time to talk to Debbie and hear her perspective on why this legislation is so critical and why it must be passed now. House Democrats refuse to pass the Debbie Smith Act and help crime labs eliminate the rape kit backlog. They refuse to negotiate in good faith on VAWA, Violence Against Women Act, reauthorization and what that might look like. Unfortunately, they have succumbed to the temptation of playing partisan politics with pretty important legislation and hurting a lot of innocent people in the meantime. I find that absolutely unacceptable.

I would urge our colleague Speaker PELOSI to bring the Debbie Smith Act up for a vote and quit using sexual assault victims as a bargaining chip.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF T. KENT WETHERELL II

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I proudly support the confirmation of Judge T. Kent Wetherell II to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida today. He earned his undergraduate and juris doctor degrees from the Florida State University and has committed himself to public service for the past 20 years. He has served as deputy solicitor general in the Office of the Florida Attorney General; an administrative law judge in Florida's division of administrative hearings; and, for the past decade, as an appellate judge on Florida's First District Court of Appeal. Judge Wetherell will continue to serve our State and Nation well, and I am proud to support his confirmation to the Federal bench.

VOTE ON WETHERELL NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). All time has expired.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 78, nays 15, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 195 Ex.]

YEAS—78

Alexander	Ernst	Murray
Barrasso	Feinstein	Paul
Bennet	Fischer	Perdue
Blackburn	Gardner	Peters
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Reed
Braun	Hassan	Risch
Brown	Hawley	Roberts
Burr	Hooven	Romney
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Capito	Inhofe	Rounds
Cardin	Isakson	Rubio
Carper	Johnson	Sasse
Casey	Jones	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shaheen
Coons	King	Shea
Cornyn	Lankford	Sinema
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Tester
Cramer	Manchin	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	McSally	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Udall
Durbin	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murphy	Wicker

NAYS—15

Baldwin	Markey	Smith
Blumenthal	Menendez	Stabenow
Harris	Merkley	Van Hollen
Hirono	Schatz	Warren
Klobuchar	Schumer	Wyden

NOT VOTING—7

Booker	Heinrich	Young
Duckworth	Sanders	
Gillibrand	Warner	

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of J. Nicholas Ranjan, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Ranjan nomination?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, 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 senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 80, nays 14, as follows: