

\$400 billion this year much less do it every single year for 30 years in a row.

So my simple push is this. We have to get to a real conversation about what we are going to do about our debt and how we are going to respond to this.

I have committed, around any kind of debt ceiling conversation, that the conversation should not be about just raising it and going on; it should be about how we are going to address our debt. I cannot support a debt ceiling that just raises the debt ceiling without any consideration about what we are going to do to actually pay off that debt or how we are going to get on top of it.

We have a broken process. We are not dealing with debt when we talk about debt ceilings anymore, and we are facing a September 30 deadline. There is already an ongoing rumor and conversation around the hallways about could we have another government shutdown.

In the last 40 years, we have had 21 government shutdowns—21—under Republican and Democratic Presidents and under Republican and Democratic Congresses—21 government shutdowns. The one that happened earlier this year was the longest one in history, but that doesn't mean it is the longest one that will ever happen. There may be a longer one coming. The challenge is, how do we solve this issue about debt? How do we deal with some of the simple processes like government shutdowns and how do we stop those?

Government shutdowns actually cause more spending to happen because it costs so much to prepare for it. When it happens, there is a greater cost, and when restarting it, there is greater cost again. All of that is lost money. It is just a waste.

So Senator MAGGIE HASSAN, the Democratic Senator from New Hampshire, and I have worked together to put a simple proposal together to stop government shutdowns. This is not rocket science. Most Americans can't leave their work and walk away, especially if they are small business owners. They can't walk away from their jobs unless the job is done. That is just the nature of it. So our simple idea is this. If we get to October 1—and the end of the fiscal year ends on September 30—and the work is not done on all the appropriations bills, we would have what is called a continuing resolution kick in. The funding would continue to go the same as it did the year before. It basically is putting everybody on hold but is still moving. That would protect Federal workers and make sure Federal workers and their families are not affected by the government shutdown. It would protect the taxpayers, making sure they are not having to deal with "I can't get a permit" and "I can't get an answer on the phone from a government agency because there is a Federal shutdown." So the Federal workers and American people would be held harmless, but Mem-

bers of Congress, our staffs, and the staff of the White House Office of Management and Budget, in both the House and the Senate, would all be here in Washington, DC, with no travel.

Now that may not seem like a big issue. You may say: So what. It would mean we are in session every weekday, every weekend, and cannot leave to go back and see our families. We cannot do our work that has to be done in the States, and we have work to do in our States as well. We cannot go on any kind of codel travel. We cannot take any other travel of any sort, and every day we have what is called a mandatory quorum call in the Senate and in the House. We are in session weekdays and weekends continually until the budget work is done.

I had folks say: Well, that doesn't seem like that big of an incentive.

I can assure you, the most precious commodity to Members of the House and Senate, our staff, and to members of the Office of Management and Budget is the same precious commodity every American has. It is time—time.

If we lose the time so we can't do all of the other things we need to do until we get the budget work done, we will get the budget work done because there are a lot of things on our schedule, but our first priority should be the budget work that needs to be done.

This puts us in a position to basically do what my mom did to my brother and me. When my brother and I had an argument, my mom would lock the two of us in a room and say: You guys work this out. When you are done, you can come out of the room, but you guys keep talking until you settle it. Quite frankly, my mom would be a pretty good role model for this Congress. Lock us in the room, keep us debating until we solve it.

We had the longest shutdown in American history this past time, and it started right before Christmas. What did the Members of Congress do? They left. They left. They went home for Christmas. They went away. While Federal workers did not have their paychecks coming in, Members of Congress left town.

It is as simple and straightforward as this: Federal workers should be held harmless, and Members of Congress should be kept to stay and work it out.

Senator HASSAN and I continue to work through this. We gained wide bipartisan support. It went through the first of two committees—10 to 2 as it passed the committee. Now it has a second committee to go through before it comes here. We want to build bipartisan support to say: We will have disagreements on budget. We will have disagreements on spending. But we should keep debating until we solve it. But do not loop the Federal workers and their families into this, and certainly don't harm the taxpayers in the process.

We look forward to trying to get some things resolved in this place and to keeping the debate going until we do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to ask my colleagues a simple question. There is a lawsuit that is proceeding through the court system right now that has succeeded the district court level, that has had a hearing at the appellate court level, and may be speeding toward the Supreme Court. It is a lawsuit that was brought by 20 Republican attorneys general. It is a lawsuit that is being supported by the Trump administration. It is a lawsuit that many of my colleagues have gone on record saying they support. It is a lawsuit to undo the entirety of the Affordable Care Act, to throw out insurance for 20 million Americans and to end protections for people with preexisting conditions. It is an attempt to do through the court system what this Congress refused to do, which is to obliterate the Affordable Care Act and all the insurance it provides for people without any plan for what comes next.

I have served in both the House and the Senate, and I listened for a long time to my Republican colleagues say that while they don't like the Affordable Care Act, they certainly understand that there has to be something else, and that something else should be just as good as the Affordable Care Act. In fact, the President himself said that whatever plan he supported in substitute of the Affordable Care Act would have better insurance, cheaper insurance, and would insure more people.

Republicans never came up with that plan. In fact, the replacement they jammed through the House of Representatives in 2017 was much worse than the Affordable Care Act. The Congressional Budget Office said that 24 million people would lose insurance because of that piece of legislation and rates would potentially skyrocket for people with preexisting conditions.

There has never been a replacement for the Affordable Care Act. The only plan from the beginning has been to repeal it. Now that Congress has said it won't repeal the Affordable Care Act—why? because Americans do not want the Affordable Care Act repealed with nothing to replace it—now that Congress won't do it because the American people don't support the repeal of the protections for sick people in the Affordable Care Act, Republicans are trying to get the courts to do it.

We are perhaps 60 days away from the Sixth Circuit invalidating the entirety of the Affordable Care Act. Likely, if that is the case, the judgment will ultimately be rendered by the Supreme Court. But that could come as soon as the beginning of next year. We could still be months away from a humanitarian catastrophe in this country in which the entirety of the Affordable Care Act is invalidated and what to do about it is put back before Congress.

It would stand to reason that if your plan is to try to get the entire Affordable Care Act thrown out in Congress, you would maybe start thinking about what would replace it. As far as I can tell, Republicans have no plan for what happens if the Affordable Care Act is overturned. As far as I can tell, my Republican colleagues have spent no time thinking about what would happen if they actually end up catching the car they have been chasing.

What happens if the lawsuit succeeds? What happens if the Affordable Care Act is struck down? What comes next? We can't accept—and I don't think my Republican colleagues would want to accept—millions of people losing coverage overnight or insurance companies being able to discriminate against you because your child has a history of cancer or an insurance company being able to go back to capping the amount of insurance you get on an annual or lifetime basis.

It is mere fantasy to think that we can reproduce the protections in the Affordable Care Act if we are not talking about it ahead of time.

I am coming back on the floor today, as I have several times in the last few months, to ask my Republican colleagues to either withdraw your support for this lawsuit, stop the administration from being able to pursue it in court, or start a serious discussion about how you are going to protect care for everyone who has it today—not a handful of people who have it today but all the people who have it today—while this lawsuit is moving through the system.

My Republican colleagues have been queried as to whether they support this lawsuit. The answers are all over the map, which tells you once again that nobody on the Republican side has really thought this one through.

One Republican Senator says: I actually don't think the courts are eventually ever going to strike it down.

Another says: I am ready for the lawsuit to succeed. I would love to go back in and actually deal with healthcare again.

Another one says: Do I hope the lawsuit succeeds? I do.

Another says: I can't say I hope it succeeds. I think the strategy from here on that I have adopted in my own mind is repair.

Another says: My hope and belief is we won't strike the law down.

The answers are all over the map. That is fine. The Republicans can have a varied set of opinions on whether the lawsuit should succeed, but none of those individuals who are quoted giving various opinions as to whether they would like the lawsuit to succeed have a concrete plan for what comes next.

Let's just be honest. It is mere fantasy to think that a divided Congress is going to be able to, in an emergency, come up with a plan to keep 20 million people insured and keep preexisting conditions protections for the 133 million Americans who depend on them.

We can't pass a budget through Congress. We have trouble passing a Higher Education Act reauthorization or the Violence Against Women Act. How on Earth are we going to pass a reordering of the American healthcare system when it is blown to bits by a Supreme Court decision that no one is ready for?

That is why I am down on the floor today. I am going to keep on bringing this up because I just can't accept this world in which we live today in which half of this Chamber is just sort of boxing their ears and closing their eyes to this legal strategy. If it succeeds, as many Republicans hope it does, all we are going to be talking about here is healthcare. Overnight, we will be consumed by this topic, and we will not be able to come up with a solution that involves the same amount of protections that exist today.

Why repeal it? Why not continue to work on making the system better without holding hostage all of the Americans who rely on it today? That is a much better path of action. Keep the Affordable Care Act in place. Work together on ways that we can fix the existing healthcare system. Don't create a chaotic situation with the wholesale repeal of the entire act, putting lives in jeopardy.

There is no plan on behalf of the Republicans as to what to do if the ACA is overturned. I feel that we need to remind the country of that over and over again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

REMEMBERING CORPORAL BENJAMIN KOPP

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, 10 years ago today, CPL Benjamin Kopp's spirit departed from this world, but he remains with us in far more than memory.

Ben was raised in Minnesota, where his mother described him as a boy's boy. He played in the dirt with toy trucks and revered his great-grandfather, a decorated veteran from World War II.

Then came 9/11, which changed Ben's life forever, just as it changed the lives of so many Americans. Ben was only 13—little more than a boy—but on that day of tragedy, he felt the call of duty to his country. Moreover, he sensed a rendezvous with destiny. Remembering his great-grandfather, the heroic veteran, Ben enlisted in the U.S. Army at the age of 18, shipping off for basic training at Fort Benning not long after his high school graduation. There, he grew into a man and an Army Ranger. He was assigned to fight with the Army's famed 75th Ranger Regiment.

He served two deployments in Iraq and then went to Afghanistan in 2009. There, Ben and his buddies were exposed to heavy combat, as Rangers usually are. On June 10, 2009, they were engaged in an hours-long, intense firefight with Taliban insurgents in Helmand Province. Ben was leading a machine gun crew, providing suppressive fire for a group of Rangers amid

enemy onslaught. Ben exposed himself and was shot behind the knee right in an artery. He was evacuated from the battlefield and placed in an induced coma.

Despite the surgeon's best efforts, Ben never recovered from the loss of blood and cardiac arrest he had suffered. Eight days later, on July 18, 2009, at the age of only 21, at Walter Reed Medical Center, Ben Kopp returned home to the Lord. Yet Ben is with us still. The heart of this Ranger beats on even today. Let me explain.

Before deploying, Ben did a lot of paperwork, as all soldiers do. On one form, he checked the box to be an organ donor. Where it asked which organs he wished to donate, he simply wrote "any that are needed." In death, as in life, Ben lived up to the Ranger creed. He shouldered more than his share of the task, "one-hundred-percent and then some." So just 2 days after Ben's heart stopped beating, it beat anew in the chest of Judy Meikle, an Illinois woman who waited 7 months just to get on the organ donation list. "How can you have a better heart," Judy said as she recovered. "I have the heart of a 21-year-old Army Ranger war hero beating in me."

Ultimately, scores of people came to benefit from the sacrifice of this young soldier in Minnesota from his very blood and bones. Four lives were saved, all told, because Ben gave his all, his very body, for their sake. Ben departed 10 years ago, but his legacy lives on in the patients whose lives he touched and through the brave work of his mother, Jill, who has devoted her life to veterans' causes. This year, she organized the second annual Freedom Walk to the Wall and challenged America to walk 1 million miles in honor of our fallen heroes.

The tragedy of Ben's loss has touched Jill in unexpected ways as well. She has remained close with the Army Rangers who served alongside Ben and even with those who had never met him. Just recently, two freshly minted Rangers from Minnesota reached out to speak with Jill. You could say that she lost her son but gained a family of Rangers.

In Genesis, it is written that the Lord God created Eve in the rib of Adam, the first man. When God brought her to Adam, He said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." That mysterious passage takes on new meaning when we reflect on stories like Ben's.

Thanks to his willing sacrifice, Ben connected with scores of his countrymen in one of the most intimate ways imaginable. For all time, they will remain bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. Rangers lead the way. That is what new Rangers learn at Fort Benning. In life and in death, CPL Ben Kopp led the way, and his story will inspire us for many years to come, for, indeed, he is with us still.

I yield the floor.