

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, at 2:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Michael D. Weahkee, of New Mexico, to be Director of the Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Jovita Carranza, of Illinois, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Geoffrey Clift, a Navy fellow in Senator CRUZ's office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the Congress.

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Kelly McManus, a military fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges through the end of Congress.

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Leighton Grant, who is the military fellow in our office and has been this last year, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the Congress.

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

APPOINTMENT

PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore and upon the recommendation of the majority leader, pursuant to Public

Law 98-183, as amended by Public Law 103-419, appoints the following individual to the United States Commission on Civil Rights: Gail Heriot of California.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 3009

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3009) to provide for a period of continuing appropriations in the event of a lapse in appropriations under the normal appropriations process, and establish procedures and consequences in the event of a failure to enact appropriations.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2019

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, December 12; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Skipwith nomination under the previous order.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators CARPER and WHITEHOUSE.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

DELAWARE DAY AND HEALTHCARE ENROLLMENT

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise this evening with a very important reminder for many Delawareans and for all Americans, but before I do that, I want to say that today is December 11, and 4 days ago was December 7. A lot of people think of December 7 as Pearl Harbor Day, and for many years of my life, I did as well. It is also Delaware Day. Senator CHRIS COONS, LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER, and I are hosting a reception on Capitol Hill today, and we call

it "A Taste of Delaware." We are inviting folks to come and join us if they would like.

The reason I mention Delaware Day is because that was actually the day Delaware became the first State to ratify the Constitution. For 1 whole week, we were the entire United States of America. We kind of opened things up and let the rest of the other 49 States in, and I think it has worked out pretty well most days since then.

If you look at the preamble of the Constitution, it starts off with these words: "We the people of these United States, in order to form a more perfect Union." That is what it says. It doesn't say "to form a perfect Union; it says "to form a more perfect Union." It goes on to talk about the public welfare and how we should be looking out for the good of all our citizens.

The Constitution was ratified in a place called the Golden Fleece Tavern in Dover, DE, on December 7, 1787, after 3 days of deliberation by about 25 or so Delawareans.

There is a fellow who used to be President of Delaware—now we call him Governor of Delaware—a fellow named Caesar Rodney, who apparently literally rode his horse from Dover, DE, a few years earlier, past very near to where the Golden Fleece Tavern stood for many years. He rode his horse past the Golden Fleece Tavern on his way to Philadelphia to cast the tie-breaking vote in favor of the Declaration of Independence.

The words in the Declaration of Independence were largely written by Thomas Jefferson and include these words: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It is hard to have life, liberty, and much happiness without access to good healthcare or without good health.

I mention these words because that goes back to the founding of our country, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution itself particularly, the preamble of the Constitution, which makes clear that we ought to be looking out for the welfare of our people.

I stand before us today reminding us that if we don't have good health and if we don't have access to healthcare, it is pretty hard to be happy, at least for a lifetime.

I say that as sort of a preface to what I want to say now, which is that not everybody who is eligible for healthcare who needs healthcare is covered. We have a lot of people who get their healthcare from employer-provided plans. We have 300 million people in all who get healthcare coverage in this country—half of them from employer-provided plans, about 25 percent from Medicaid, about 15 percent from Medicare—and there is about another 10 percent who in some cases don't have any coverage. About 20 million people have no coverage.

A lot of people now get their coverage from exchanges. Every State has

its own healthcare exchange or marketplace. A lot of people are getting their healthcare there.

A bunch of people use qualified community health centers in States on the east coast, in the Midwest, and across America. Whether you have 10 cents or \$10,000, you can get healthcare at these places, and that is good.

But a lot of people who could sign up and get their healthcare in marketplaces in each State don't know about it. There is an opportunity to enroll in the marketplaces and get healthcare coverage by midnight on this coming Sunday, on December 15. I just want to spend a couple of minutes reminding people who don't have coverage to do that and tell them why it is a good deal for them and their families.

There is some good news here. The good news is that all across our country, folks have 4 more days to sign up. There is also some more good news, and that is that after going up, up, up for years, the cost of premiums in the exchanges and marketplaces actually dropped this year. In most marketplaces, I think the average reduction is about 4 percent. And for the next year, in more than half a dozen States, premiums will be coming down by double digits. In Delaware, the cost of healthcare in our marketplace, starting with coverage beginning January 1, will be down by 19 percent.

What has happened here is that after a number of years where healthcare insurers were dropping out of the business of offering coverage in the marketplaces, they are starting to offer coverage again. Twenty-three insurers offered coverage in States this year that hadn't been offering coverage. Beginning January 1, I think about 45 more will start providing coverage. That means we are going to have some competition for customers, for folks who need insurance, and that competition will help create what I call a virtuous cycle, helping to bring down costs even more. More choices means more competition. That is a good thing for our consumers and States across America.

But wait, there is more. This year, three out of four customers can find a plan for less than—are you ready for this?—75 bucks a month. Think about that. Customers can find a plan in the marketplace on the exchange for less than 75 bucks a month.

Some people might be wondering whether the Affordable Care Act marketplace is the right choice for them or their loved ones. That is a good question to ask. The marketplace provides quality, affordable healthcare coverage for Americans who don't receive affordable health insurance through their employer.

For instance, last Friday, a couple of people I have been talking to in my State just in the last week or so about healthcare coverage—I was down at a place called Lewes, DE, which was first colonized by the Dutch 400 years ago. It was the first town and the first city,

Lewes, DE—I met there a fellow who is a self-employed artist. His name is G.W. Thompson, and his life was forever changed by the Affordable Care Act when he was able to find affordable and comprehensive health insurance.

For folks that are waiting to start a business and need healthcare insurance, I would encourage you to do this: Visit HealthCare.gov—I will say that again, HealthCare.gov—today. Find a plan that works for you. You have got plenty of choices.

Earlier this year, I met a widower in Delaware named Marie. She lives with a preexisting condition. As it turns out, there are tens of millions of people in this country who live with a preexisting condition. For many, many years, they didn't have access to healthcare because they had a preexisting condition. That is not the case anymore. Folks who do have a preexisting condition, they can get access to healthcare thanks to the excellent staff at a place called Westside Family Healthcare. That is one of the federally qualified community health centers, and they have a great place in Delaware. Marie was able to go there and enroll in an ACA plan that covers her preexisting condition and helps to keep her happy.

Let me just say to the folks across the country, if you are 1 of 133 million Americans living with a preexisting condition, I urge you to visit, again, HealthCare.gov, HealthCare.gov. Find a plan that works for you. If you are a young person who has just turned 26 and can no longer stay on your parents' health plan, visit HealthCare.gov today and find a plan that works for you. If you or your family have tried to enroll in Medicaid but did not qualify, visit HealthCare.gov today and find a plan that works for you.

Don't forget, nearly 9 out of 10 customers are eligible for financial help, which could mean a big savings for you and your family, but to that line, I said this before—I am going to say it again—make the call. The deadline to enroll in affordable healthcare in one of the marketplaces in your State is this Sunday. It is Sunday at midnight. So you have got 4 days and, depending on which time zone you are living in, maybe close to 6 hours in order to sign up.

Don't wait another day, though. Sign up today. Go to HealthCare.gov now through this Sunday, December 15, to shop for a plan that will give you and your family coverage through 2020. If you sign up, sign up before midnight this Sunday. You will have coverage beginning January 1 through December 31 of next year.

I know there are a lot of things that always have to get done before the end of the year. This is one that I think is too important to miss. It is too important to miss. So one more time, visit HealthCare.gov to find healthcare coverage that works for you and your family's needs and your budget, regardless of what State you live in, if you have no coverage.

Mr. President, I want to end this by saying, since the Affordable Care Act was enacted, we have seen some—not all—but some of our Republican friends here in this body and across the country do their dead-level best to undermine the Affordable Care Act. Those efforts have ramped up considerably under the current administration. The President and 18 Republican attorneys general have gone so far as to file a lawsuit that attempts to scrap the healthcare law in its entirety.

That lawsuit is working its way through the courts now, but it is important for everyone to know, despite these efforts to sabotage our Nation's healthcare law, the Affordable Care Act is still the law of the land. If you want to sign up for coverage for the next year, you can still do that until midnight on Sunday. I don't think there is a reason not to sign up, and I would urge anybody who's out there listening, watching, if you don't have coverage, let's do it. Do it today, and you will be glad you did.

The idea of life, liberty, and the pursuit to happiness will be a little bit closer to being realized for you.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise again to call this Chamber to wake up to the threat of climate change, and in this particular case, to say about the Paris agreement and to say in chorus with literally millions of Americans, we are still in.

In truth, America is still in the Paris agreement. When you look at the States that are still in and will honor their commitments, when you look at the cities that are still in and will honor their commitments, when you look at the companies and the universities that are still in, it is the vast majority of the entire American economy. Despite President Trump's fossil fuel nonsense, we really are still in.

Last week, I traveled to Madrid with Speaker PELOSI and the delegation of House committee chairs and climate leaders for the U.N. Conference of the Parties—what is called the COP—to support the Paris agreement climate goals. The mood in Spain was optimistic. There was a somber confidence. The Trump administration, of course, has begun the process of withdrawing the United States from the Paris climate accord.

That is an abandonment from our American tradition of international leadership and adherence to higher ideals. It is abandonment of our own national security imperatives and economy well-being. This abandonment demeans the Nation that has from John Winthrop to Ronald Reagan called itself a "city on a hill."

Our military well understands the national security imperative. Back in 2013, Admiral Samuel Locklear, the commander of the U.S. forces in the Pacific, warned that upheaval related

to climate change “is probably the most likely thing that is going to happen . . . that will cripple the security environment”—“the most likely thing.”

He added, “You have the real potential here in the not-too-distant future of nations displaced by rising sea level . . . If it goes bad, you could have hundreds of thousands or millions of people displaced and then security will start to crumble pretty quickly.”

That command is still concerned about it. Preparing for these risks was a centerpiece of a recent Indo-Pacific Command briefing I attended at their headquarters in Hawaii.

To understand the threat to our economy, we need only ask our government-backed mortgage institution, Freddie Mac. Freddie Mac predicts that rising sea levels will prompt a crash in coastal property values, greater than the housing crash that caused the 2008 financial crisis. That warning by Freddie Mac is echoed by the biggest, most important financial institutions in the world, both in the United States in the Federal Reserve system and abroad.

The Bank of England, the Bank of France, the Bank of Canada, and European Central Bank, are all warning of “systemic” economic risks from climate change. “Systemic,” that is central banker speak for something that poses a risk to the entire economy, perhaps from stranded fossil fuel assets when the market for fossil fuel dries up, perhaps from a coastal property value crash when flood risk becomes uninsurable and properties unmortgageable.

Against this national security imperative and this economic threat, the Trump administration leaving the Paris climate accord is a historically

dumb and destructive move, particularly from a guy—Trump—who one decade ago called climate change “scientifically irrefutable,” that is a quote. “Scientifically irrefutable and its consequences catastrophic and irreversible,” that is a quote as well.

The Pelosi delegation—here we are at the COP25—included powerful House chairmen, like Chairman PALLONE and Chairman GRIJALVA, Chairman JOHNSON and Chairman CASTOR and, of course, the most senior and influential Democrat in America, House Speaker NANCY PELOSI.

Speaker PELOSI’s presence at the COP resounded not only because of her clout and standing, but because it signaled the broad, true consensus of the United States of America in favor of climate action. At the State level, at the city level, across the public, and in much of corporate America, we are indeed still in.

Indeed, at the Madrid conference right now, as I give this speech, are representatives for thousands of American businesses, investors managing trillions of dollars, hundreds of American municipalities and counties, top American colleges and universities, dozens of American faith groups, America’s largest healthcare organizations, and 20 American States and Tribes. Again, all told, it is the vast bulk of the American economy, and it still is.

America, unfortunately, at least in Congress, has to fight our way through a persistent blockade paid for by the fossil fuel industry. Don’t believe their happy talk about acting on climate. There is a slogan that one of their trade groups has come up with. You see it at National Airport. You see it on billboards. It is popping up everywhere. The slogan is: “We are on it.”

No, they are not. They are not even close to on it. In fact, they are the opposite. They are on the wrong side. They are funding false science denial and ridiculous amounts of simple political obstruction. They are paying for that. The statements from their lips do not match the expenditure of their funds. The expenditure of their funds is still dedicated to their political apparatus of denial and obstruction.

Ultimately, however, we will prevail. The America that the international community knows and counts on—the America of leadership, the America of progress, the America of confidence, the America of clean and green energy and innovation—that America will be back and will prevail. “Our commitment to take action on the climate crisis is ironclad,” said Speaker PELOSI in Madrid. It is. Soon enough, that commitment will topple the castle of fossil-fuel-funded climate denial and obstruction that surrounds us today here in Congress.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:28 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, December 12, 2019, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate December 11, 2019:

THE JUDICIARY

LAWRENCE VANDYKE, OF NEVADA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT.