

some reforms. They are reforms that actually would have been—if we were not going to use the Cadillac tax to hold down the cost of premiums—another mechanism by which we could hold down the cost of premiums.

Why is this important? Because not only did we just go poof to almost \$400 billion, but because healthcare expenditures are driving our debt and deficit. It is not just that we lost this \$400 billion. We lost any restraint upon policies going higher and higher.

Now, that is bad for the American patient. It is bad for the American household because our country will continue its indebtedness.

I am a doctor. I know if you put more money into the furnace, it will burn that much higher, and now there is just no excuse to try and rein in those expensive policies.

It is not just that. One thing that my Republicans apparently have agreed with Democrats on is to stop the Trump administration from taking on something called “silver loading.” It is a little technical here, but just hang with me. For the middle-class family in your State who buys their insurance on the exchange and does not get a subsidy, pop, there goes their premium.

How does this happen? When the Trump administration ended the payments from the Federal Government to insurance companies, insurance companies figured out a way around it. They are smart. They know how to get out of taxes that they have agreed to pay for, as an example. So they did what is called “silver loading.” They increased the cost of so-called silver policies on the ObamaCare exchange. So if you are not getting a subsidy, you are paying a lot more. But because if you are not getting a subsidy and you are paying a lot more, that increased the amount of subsidies for people who were. So if you are, you know, getting a subsidy, you are probably pleased with it. If you are the middle-class person making 400 percent of Federal poverty level and you are paying your taxes and you are trying to do it right, you just got stuck with a higher premium.

The administration was trying to take it on. This deal, which we have not discussed, which was not heard in committee, which we have not deliberated on at all, says to the administration: You can't take that on. Yes, that middle class family not getting a subsidy is paying far more, but you can't take it on. Stand down, administration, we are going to stick it to that family, as well as saying poof to \$400 billion.

Now, there are some other issues that are important to me in my State. The National Flood Insurance Program is an important program. We advanced some reforms that would make it more affordable for the homeowner, more sustainable for society, and more accountable to the taxpayer. We haven't had anything in there. We renewed it. I am pleased that we renewed it.

We renewed it without reforms. You have had flooding in your State, and I

have had flooding in my State. You have had yours in yours, and I have had it in mine. We need that program to be sustainable, accountable, and affordable. We have lost the opportunity. I forget how many short-term extensions we have had without reform. I think it is like 10, 12, 14, or 16. You lose count after a while. We have missed that opportunity.

So we started on Friday. Everybody goes home except for a few people. They work on it over the weekend, they come in on Monday, and we get a 2,000-page bill on Monday. We will vote on it tomorrow, and I am the first person to speak on it.

Now, I understand that impeachment is taking a lot of energy and oxygen out of the Chambers. I understand that a lot of attention is addressed elsewhere, but all I can say is that you have just imperiled your country's fiscal health.

On one more thing before I wrap up, there is a little bit of an irony here. Republicans are getting ObamaCare, but it is unpaid for. There is another irony here as well. The courts today ruled that the individual mandate in ObamaCare is unconstitutional. Now, I am not an attorney, but I gather they did not rule that this was so-called severable.

If this is not constitutional, then the rest can stand because we just sever it off. Imagine this. Imagine that the courts decide that that portion of ObamaCare—which is related to Medicaid expansion and is related to the exchanges in which people get subsidies to buy these policies—is unconstitutional but would have allowed the mechanism by which to pay for it to stand, because that is another part of the law. We have just repealed that. Why is that important? Because if this falls, we have to have the money to pay for a replacement.

Democrats have so long screamed that we need to have universal access. By the way, I am a doc. I would like everybody to have insurance. I fought for it, and I worked for it. But the other party, which has said this is such a high priority, has just eliminated the funding that could be used for replacement in *Texas v. Azar*, the court decision that may strike down that portion of ObamaCare.

So, Republicans, we got ObamaCare that is not paid for. Democrats, they may end up with no ObamaCare at all. Patients, whether they are on Medicaid, getting a subsidy, or not getting a subsidy, will lose.

I hope that we can return to being the world's greatest deliberative body, but as regards that, this has to be considered a low point.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, it is a historic day and busy week in the Senate. The historic day happening is happening just south of us right now.

There is debate in the House of Representatives over impeaching the President of the United States. It is only the third time that has ever occurred in our Nation's multicentury history.

Current impeachment conversation is an interpretation of a phone call President Trump had with President Zelensky; that if you twist that phone call just the right way, it sounds like he is trying to influence the President of Ukraine, except the President of Ukraine never said he felt influenced by that, and they never took any action President Trump is being accused of. Five different meetings happened in the days after that phone call and none of those meetings ever included any conversation about Rudy Giuliani or Hunter Biden or Joe Biden. The money did go to Ukraine in time. It was the 11th of September, and the deadline for it to arrive was the 30th of December. The whole time the Ukrainians, who apparently were threatened by President Trump according to the Articles of Impeachment, said they never knew they were threatened.

I have a feeling that if President Trump wanted to threaten somebody, they would know it, but apparently, in this situation, the House is currently impeaching the President because they perceived the President meant to do something he didn't actually do, when the whole time the President said that, no, that was never his intent. The only one fact witness the House called through the entire process—the one fact witness they called—said they actually talked to the President, and the President said: No, there is not any quid pro quo; of course I don't want to do that.

But they are going through impeachment anyway. That will then come to the Senate in January, and all of January will be consumed with walking through the two Articles of Impeachment the House is choosing to send over.

It is ironic to me that earlier today, Michael Horowitz, who is the inspector general for the Department of Justice, was in a hearing in the Senate, talking about the process on the Russia investigation. I happened to be on that committee as we went through the process. It was very ironic to me today, in the line of questions and the issues and things that were coming up in the Horowitz report, one of the things that probably the media will never report on, but Michael Horowitz, the inspector general, pulled out through this process, was, in October of 2016, Christopher Steele—famous for the dossier that was an opposition research project from the Democratic National Committee on President Trump leading up to the election that was supposedly all this dirty information about Russia. Christopher Steele was contacted by someone in the State Department, the Obama-led State Department. In October of 2016, Christopher Steele was invited to the State Department where,

at that time, State Department officials gave Christopher Steele information that they said was from a Turkish businessman who had been visiting with a Russian member of the FSB that was derogatory to President Trump, and they were encouraging Steele to take that back and then use it before the election.

The irony of the day today for me is, while the House is impeaching the President, at the same time that is being debated, Michael Horowitz, the inspector general, is giving testimony about individuals in the Obama-era State Department getting information from foreign individuals, slipping it to individuals working on the Clinton campaign, and literally using foreign sources to fight against Candidate Trump from Hillary Clinton's staff at the State Department.

Sometimes the world feels more upside down than others. This is one of those weeks. A year ago today, the Senate was working in a bipartisan fashion to be able to pass the criminal justice reform bill, called the FIRST STEP Act. It was a landmark piece of legislation dealing with helping us in Federal prisons deal with recidivism. That was a good day for us in Congress.

We started getting more job training to people who are in prison, more opportunities for faith-based programs in our Federal penitentiaries—just like they are in our State penitentiaries—more opportunities for prisoners to connect with their families because the vast majority of prisoners in our Federal prisons will be released one day, and it would be helpful if they had job training and if they had a faith-based background, if they choose to, and if they have connections to make with their families. It helps us bring down the crime rate in the days ahead. That was a year ago today in the Senate, instead of fighting through the impeachment process that is happening now.

There are a lot of people who said to me recently that nothing is getting done. That was true for the past couple of months while we have been waiting on the House to be able to move on other issues, but this week has been a pretty busy week moving through pieces of legislation.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. President, JIM INHOFE, who is the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, has led this Senate and has led, quite frankly, all of Congress through a process on what is called the NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act. That got passed this week. That is an incredibly important bill, not just to us in Oklahoma but to us across the Nation and for our national security. It included things like a pay raise for all of our servicemembers. It included additional benefits of things going to our family members as they move from place to place, living with their servicemember, and helping them in their transition.

It addressed the issue of housing, which is so important to Oklahoma, as

we have had problems with private contractors at some of our bases in Oklahoma not living up to the standards of their contract. JIM INHOFE has been the one actually fighting to get that fixed. He has been the one who has taken the lead on that.

This is incredibly important to us in Oklahoma for our five bases and posts, as well as our National Guard and our reservists. Just in Oklahoma, there will be \$2.2 billion for the KC-46A refueling tankers. They will be trained in Altus, and they will be repaired and serviced at Tinker Air Force Base. The authorization for the T-X Program, which positively impacts Vance Air Force Base, is incredibly important.

The improvements to military family housing, which I have already talked about, included an amendment in the bill which dealt with reservists, in what is called the DD-214 Act of 2019. If you are not in the military, you have no idea what that is. If you are in the military, you know exactly what that is. There was a problem that guards and reservists didn't have the same kind of records in the DD-214 that Active Duty does. We are fixing that now so that when guards and reservists get close to retirement, their records are all in place.

We have a continuation of the Paladin Integrated Management System, which is at Fort Sill. We have the authorization of the Fort Sill barracks that are so incredibly important to be able to have better living facilities there as well.

The fuels storage complex at the Tulsa International Airport is very important for the 138th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard.

Language to enhance our direct higher authority, which is so incredibly important—we expand that again to make sure civilians who are being hired in places like McAlester and Tinker continue to be able to serve there. Those civilian service folks are so incredibly important to our national security.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, that was just in the NDAA that passed this week. There are 12 appropriations bills we have been working on for months that I am glad the House has finally come to a decision to work through this impeachment process, and we can actually get on to the 12 appropriations bills. They affect a lot of things for Oklahoma.

Appropriations bills that are moving through tomorrow will have things like \$50 million for medical student education. That is really important to us for the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University in the awards they have received for medical education.

We have been through our share of disasters this year in flooding in Oklahoma. The funding to continue those grants in that process is in this set of bills.

We have \$710 million for SAFER grants, which deal with fire departments throughout the States. It is in-

credibly important because they are the first responders to acts of terrorism.

The ag bill itself is moving through right now. It deals with a lot of the disaster supplementals that are incredibly important to us—in fact, to many of us in Western Oklahoma.

This set of bills not only does a 3.1-percent increase for our military servicemembers but it also does an increase of 3.1 percent for our civil servants, many of them who work in Oklahoma, and they do a remarkable job of being able to serve our neighbors.

There are a lot of different areas that deal with things like military construction projects that are all over our State that affect not only the military but civilians and those who have retired as well.

There are a lot of changes here, including dramatic funding increases for the Department of Veterans Affairs to fulfill what is called the MISSION Act. That allows more veterans to get care closer to home, where they are not having to drive 100 miles to get radiology work, and they can do that in a rural hospital close by. They can connect with their family doctor, just like their spouse does. This gives them greater opportunity to do this.

This set of bills also deals with the electronic logging delays that are so incredibly important to those who are hauling ag and livestock. This deals with the Fish and Wildlife Service. Those of us who are in Southeast Oklahoma know how incredibly important it is to resolve the American burrowing beetle that no one else will pay attention to but is incredibly important to us so the Fish and Wildlife Service finally gets this downlisted. This gives the instructions for them to do this.

There are oversight dollars that are put in place to USDA to oversee the SNAP program, often called food stamps, which is actually SNAP. That program gives greater oversight to deal with fraud so people who need the help get the help and the people who are abusing are confronted.

The set of bills also deals with what is called the RURAL Act. It is really important to our co-ops across the State. They deal with the cost of doing business, which continues to provide inexpensive energy all across our State.

The border wall funding remains. It is the exact same dollar amount as it was last year. That was quite a fight in the conversation to be able to go through the House and the Senate. There are some who believe we should have no fences and no barriers and open borders. I am amazed at how many people do not know that the last four Presidents—now five in a row, including President Trump—have all built border fencing. For the previous four Presidents, they didn't face the same fight that President Trump does in building border fencing. In the previous four Presidents, it was all about national security. It is important we