

single year than ever before. In my home State, that translated to a record-low uninsured rate of just 4 percent. That means 96 percent of Minnesotans have health insurance, which is a great improvement over where it was.

Millions more Minnesotans and Americans now have the peace of mind that comes with affordable, quality health coverage. Eligible households in Minnesota have an annual average ACA tax credit of \$3,600. That is \$3,600 freed up for housing, gas, and groceries, while maintaining access to healthcare. But unless Congress acts to make the enhanced, family-friendly tax credits currently set to expire at the end of 2022 permanent, millions of Americans will have the rug pulled out from under them, likely seeing a double-digit hike on their health insurance premiums. Karen Tumulty, a columnist for the Washington Post, called it a “ticking time bomb.”

If these tax credits are not made permanent, 70,000 Minnesotans—or 61 percent of Minnesota families—purchasing health insurance on their own could see a 35- to 41-percent increase in their health insurance premiums, and over 10,000 Minnesotans could lose their health insurance tax credits in 2023 unless Congress acts.

In my State, Americans between the ages of 55 and 64 would be most affected, and you think about this with cost issues and inflation and all the things people are already facing. Right now, a 60-year-old Minnesota couple with a household income of \$75,000 is saving \$773 in monthly premiums. Taking away those tax credits would increase their annual health spending by at least \$9,000. That is like taking away multiple paychecks.

It is no wonder that Americans overwhelmingly support making these tax credits permanent. Doctors and patients have called on us to protect these historic gains in affordability, coverage, and equity. Families can't afford to go back to paying upwards of 20 percent or more of their monthly income toward healthcare premiums.

This is important for patients, and it is also important for providers. We know—hearing when we are back home—that many hospitals are stretched thin right now, and putting millions of Americans' healthcare in jeopardy is going to create a lot of volatility as patients are forced to disrupt their care and cancel procedures.

At a time when so many families are struggling to make ends meet, we just can't sit back and let those ACA tax credits expire. More Americans insured is good for patients, good for families, good for communities, and good for our country.

I would note one other thing I would do when it comes to healthcare, and that is making sure that we allow Medicare to negotiate prices under Medicare Part D for pharmaceuticals. While our communities are facing the potential of this—what the Washington

Post called a “ticking time bomb”—we also must act when it comes to pharmaceuticals because those prices are also going up.

I have just presented two really straightforward ways that we can help families with costs when it comes to healthcare. One is making sure we keep in place the tax credits that protect middle-class families in this country, and the second is to make sure we allow Medicare to negotiate better prices under Medicare Part D because when you look at what is happening right now, we continue to see major drugs—major drugs—go up, doubling, go up 200 percent, 300 percent, to the point where we are already paying double what they pay in Canada for a significant number of drugs. For Minnesota, that is right across the border.

We must allow, in my mind, reimportation of less expensive drugs, but the biggest game changer would be to lift the ban that the pharmaceutical companies got in place in law that says Medicare, representing tens of millions of seniors, is not allowed to negotiate cheaper prices. That is what the VA does, and it has been really good for our veterans. We should allow the same help for 46 million seniors. It will be good for all Americans because it will bring down the taxpayer expense in part of the payment of drugs, and it will be good for individual consumers. So let's get these two things done.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I just want to say I know many of us recognized your enormous service yesterday, and we really appreciate it and so much today, the day after your 50th birthday, appreciate the fact that you are presiding over this august body.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON GOMEZ NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gomez nomination?

Ms. BALDWIN. 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.

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 219 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Baldwin	Brown	Casey
Bennet	Cantwell	Coons
Blumenthal	Cardin	Cortez Masto
Booker	Carper	Duckworth

Durbin
Feinstein
Gillibrand
Hassan
Heinrich
Hickenlooper
Hirono
Kaine
Kelly
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Lujan

Manchin
Markey
Menendez
Merkley
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Peters
Reed
Rosen
Sanders
Schatz

Shaheen
Sinema
Smith
Stabenow
Tester
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—51

Barrasso
Blackburn
Blunt
Boozman
Braun
Burr
Capito
Cassidy
Collins
Cornyn
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Ernst
Fischer

Graham
Grassley
Hagerty
Hawley
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith
Inhofe
Johnson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McConnell
Moran
Murkowski
Paul

Portman
Risch
Romney
Rounds
Rubio
Sasse
Schumer
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Shelby
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Toomey
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

The nomination was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The majority leader.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Nina Morrison, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

VOTE ON MORRISON NOMINATION

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

Ms. SMITH. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY).

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 220 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Booker
Brown
Cantwell
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Collins
Coons
Cortez Masto
Duckworth
Durbin
Feinstein
Gillibrand

Graham
Hassan
Heinrich
Hickenlooper
Hirono
Kaine
Kelly
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Lujan
Manchin
Markey
Menendez
Merkley
Murkowski

Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Peters
Reed
Rosen
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Sinema
Smith
Stabenow
Tester

Van Hollen
Warner

Warnock
Warren

Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—46

Barrasso
Blackburn
Blunt
Boozman
Braun
Burr
Capito
Cassidy
Cornyn
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Ernst
Fischer

Grassley
Hagerty
Hawley
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith
Inhofe
Johnson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McConnell
Moran
Paul
Portman

Risch
Rounds
Rubio
Sasse
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Shelby
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Toomey
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

NOT VOTING—1

Romney

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 675, the nomination of Todd Harper, and that upon disposition of the Harper nomination, the Senate resume consideration of the Loyd nomination, as provided under the previous order.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Todd M. Harper, of Virginia, to be a Member of the National Credit Union Administration Board for a term expiring April 10, 2027 (Reappointment).

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. STABENOW. For the information of Senators, at 4:30 p.m. today, the Senate will vote on confirmation of the Harper and Loyd nominations, in the order listed.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, in 1946, the National School Lunch Program was signed into law by President Truman—broadly supported in a bipartisan manner. And for 76 years, we have been providing food for our children's schools so they have every opportunity to learn and to be successful. Over the years, we have added school breakfast, and then summer meals, and other support.

At the beginning of COVID, we worked together on a bipartisan basis to make sure our children still had access to healthy meals, even though they weren't able to physically be in school. We have worked together to provide critical funding and flexibility until now. Our kids are counting on us to do this again.

In 22 days—22 days—healthy meals for many American children will stop if we can't get the bipartisan support necessary to extend the flexibilities and the funding that allows schools and summer programs to keep feeding our children healthy meals—22 days.

Again, critical funding will stop in 22 days. That is not very far. Summer programs need to be planning right now. And many children are already starting those summer programs. Critical funding is going to stop in 22 days, even though supply chains are still broken and costs are still rising.

In July 2020, with bipartisan changes we made in the middle of the pandemic, almost 6 million children received summer meals, and that was double the year before. This was a great thing for children and families across the country.

During the school year, the roughly 30 million children who participate in school meals knew that they could count on breakfast and lunch each day. They may not get supper, they may not get other food, but they could count on breakfast and lunch.

These are real kids, the same as my grandchildren and yours, and they need our continued support to be healthy and to be successful. That is what this is about. They want to spend their summers playing with their friends and their school days focusing on learning, not just trying to ignore a headache and a growling tummy.

There is a little boy in Coopersville, MI, who got summer meals for the first time because his school district could deliver to his neighborhood. If local sites can't open or flexibility doesn't happen, if these options end at the end of the month in just 22 days, 20 percent of the meal providers in Michigan will likely no longer be able to provide that healthy food in the summer.

Kids have always been able to count on healthy meals at school, but next year is going to bring new challenges for children, for families, for schools.

Take the little girl in Port Huron, MI, whose family is doing their very best to make ends meet as they recover from the pandemic. Over the past 2 years, she has been able to get school meals without her parents and her school having to worry about lots and lots of paperwork and redtape. But when the flexibilities end, schools will be right back at it, having mounds of paperwork for too many families, which, too often, result in kids who need help being missed or left hungry. Schools may also be forced to increase the price of meals for children, and that is going to be very difficult for many working families.

This lack of action is not only about our children, which, of course, that should be enough that this is about our children; but, too often, when we talk about the budgets and the programs, we lose sight of the people who are doing the work to feed our children, and they have to make the hard choices on how they are going to continue to do that.

For example, 357,000 students get their meals at a school in the Miami-Dade school district. It is the fourth largest school district in the country serving more than 35 million meals each year to young people. But because of the uncertainty in the supply chains, Miami-Dade has struggled to find a single distributor to serve their school district.

While this contract has since been addressed, many districts have not been so lucky, because if we go back to low reimbursements in the fall, they are finding they can't find vendors, providers, that will bid for those contracts.

Issues are popping up all over the country. In Fort Worth, TX, kids have increasingly limited options for food. Again, supply chains have broken down; food supply chains have broken down. The school district is reporting over 400 options out of stock, things as simple as orange juice or chicken wings.

In a Cleveland school nutrition program, they have got 67 open positions they are trying to fill, which is the other issue right now coming out of the pandemic as we look at our labor shortage.

Outside Portland, OR, school food staff are going to grocery stores to get the food and supplies they need when their distributor cancels their order, and they are paying up to 10 times more doing that in a retail store.

Starting this month, kids will have fewer options for healthy milk and other dairy products when the main dairy serving Northern Virginia schools is going out of business. There are a lot of challenges.

When Senator MCCONNELL, Leader MCCONNELL, said he didn't want to extend the funding and flexibilities because the pandemic is over—the effects of the pandemic are not over, nor is the pandemic. We are managing it better. Thank you to the President's leadership and all of our hard work to make sure we have the vaccines, and the testing, and the therapeutic medicines, and so on, but the supply chains that broke down when you shut down an entire economy—not just an American economy, by the way, but global economy. These are still trying to be fixed in so many different ways to try to get things up and going, which, of course, has led to the increased cost in inflation.

So we are in a situation where our schools, going into next year—not only this summer but next year—are going to have a very, very difficult time making sure they can provide healthy meals to our children, and there is no excuse for that to be happening if we come together and act.

The fact is, we are seeing shortages across the board. Healthy options are hard to find, and there are delays for new equipment so schools could safely store prepared food. What happens when school food staff are faced with challenges like this? Kids don't eat;