

of the American people want. Poll after poll tells us exactly that.

According to a poll conducted by Data for Progress last year, it found that 92 percent of the American people support expanding Medicare to provide dental, vision, and hearing benefits, and that is why I have introduced legislation today with Senators WARREN, BOOKER, WELCH, MARKEY, DUCKWORTH, MERKLEY, and BLUMENTHAL to do just that. Congressman LLOYD DOGETT, in the House, has introduced similar legislation, which has more than 110 cosponsors.

Now, I am sure that some of my Republican colleagues may say: Well, you know, it is an interesting idea. It is a good idea, but how are you going to pay for it?

So let me tell you how we are going to pay for it. We are going to pay for it by requiring Medicare to pay no more for prescription drugs than the VA. Right now, we pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs, and that means significantly increased expenses for Medicare. By making sure that Medicare pays no more than the VA, which has for years—for decades—negotiated prices with the pharmaceutical industry, we could not only cut the price of prescription drugs for our seniors in half, we will save over \$800 billion over the next decade, which would more—more—than pay for this legislation. Lower the costs of prescription drugs, and get the revenue we need to cover dental, vision, and hearing for seniors.

Now, some of my Republican friends may also argue that this bill is not needed. Some Medicare Advantage plans already offer dental, vision, and hearing benefits, yes, but what my Republican friends may not tell you is, one, seniors still pay thousands of dollars out of pocket because these private Medicare Advantage benefits are totally inadequate. Further, the non-partisan Medicare Payment Advisory Commission has estimated that Medicare Advantage plans overcharge the Federal Government by \$83 billion a year.

In other words, if we are serious about waste, fraud, and abuse—hear a lot about that—we may want to take a look at the massive waste and fraud that is taking place with private Medicare Advantage plans. Those savings would also more than fully pay for this legislation.

Therefore, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 939, which was introduced earlier today, that the bill be considered read three times and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I share my colleague's frustration with the Medicare system that far too often fails our seniors. Medicare's coverage and reim-

bursement paradigms routinely prioritize treating the symptoms instead of the underlying causes of chronic stress and disease. Research shows that patients with diminished vision, hearing, or oral health are more likely to suffer chronic conditions like kidney, Alzheimer's, and heart disease.

We should modernize Medicare to focus on prevention and maintenance interventions. Patients should have access to a full spectrum of specialized providers working together as a team, from nutritionists, to dentists, to psychologists and surgeons. However, we must tackle these reforms without increasing the costs for patients or taxpayers. My colleague's proposal would increase the deficit by tens of billions of dollars and risk spiking seniors' premiums.

After years of record inflation, we cannot rush to enact a policy that has not been carefully considered and appropriately integrated into Medicare. This bill was just introduced today. It hasn't even been looked at by the Finance Committee. No hearing has been held, and no evaluation of how to effectively integrate these types of policies has been made.

I welcome the opportunity to work with my colleague to enact meaningful improvements to Medicare that deliver better outcomes for Americans. However, simply introducing a bill and then moving to have it passed on the floor of the Senate before there has been any consideration is not the way to proceed. We must proceed within the committee and floor process, within the regular order that this Senate requires.

Therefore, for these reasons, Mr. President, I object to the request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. SANDERS. I ask my colleague, my friend, the chairman of the Finance Committee a question. I hear what you are saying. Do I hear you correctly that you are prepared to discuss this legislation in committee?

Mr. CRAPO. I am prepared to discuss the issue. I am not telling you that I will limit the discussion to this piece of legislation. But, yes, we are prepared to discuss significant approaches to how we improve and expand proper healthcare treatment in America.

Mr. SANDERS. Look, I understand that this bill would bring forth serious debate and discussion, but I would appreciate if we could have a starting point. This bill is pretty simple. It says—and I hear you saying that you need—am I hearing you correctly to say that the idea of covering dental, vision, and hearing is something that you entertain, you think is a good idea, or am I not hearing that?

Mr. CRAPO. I do think that idea—that outcome is a good outcome to seek to achieve. I can't say that I want to have your legislation or even my legislation—

Mr. SANDERS. Right. OK. Fair enough. That is fair enough. But what

I would like to do—and I appreciate—you know, I think you and I can agree that we don't use the committee structure here in the Senate as effectively as we might. That is the place to have serious debate and discussion, correct?

Mr. CRAPO. Correct.

Mr. SANDERS. OK. I would hope in one way or another—I would appreciate if we could start off with my bill. You could come in and tell me what you don't like about it, and we can go from there. But this is a crisis situation—I think you and I agree—that too many of our seniors are suffering because of lack of dental, hearing, and vision. I look forward to hearing what you have to say. Let's debate it. But can we get this into the committee and have a serious discussion on it?

Mr. CRAPO. I assume that this bill will be referred to the Finance Committee.

Mr. SANDERS. It will.

Mr. CRAPO. If this bill is referred to the Finance Committee, then it, like all other legislation in this area that is referred to the Finance Committee, will be reviewed by us. I can't tell you that it will have a specific hearing. I can't tell you exactly how that will work.

We will look at developing a very significant and I hope broad and successful approach to reducing the cost of our healthcare system and increasing the focus and successes in our healthcare system, and I look forward to working with you on that.

Mr. SANDERS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON SLATER NOMINATION

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

Mr. BARRASSO. 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. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 78, nays 19, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 115 Ex.]

YEAS—78

Baldwin	Collins	Fischer
Banks	Coons	Gallego
Barrasso	Cornyn	Graham
Bennet	Cortez Masto	Grassley
Blackburn	Cotton	Hagerty
Booker	Cramer	Hassan
Boozman	Crapo	Hawley
Britt	Cruz	Hickenlooper
Budd	Curtis	Hoeben
Cantwell	Daines	Husted
Capito	Durbin	Hyde-Smith
Cassidy	Ernst	Johnson

Kaine	Moreno	Sheehy
Kelly	Mullin	Smith
Kennedy	Murkowski	Sullivan
Kim	Padilla	Thune
King	Peters	Tillis
Klobuchar	Ricketts	Tuberville
Lankford	Risch	Warner
Lee	Rosen	Warnock
Lummis	Rounds	Warren
Marshall	Schiff	Welch
McConnell	Schmitt	Whitehouse
McCormick	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Moody	Scott (SC)	Wyden
Moran	Shaheen	Young

NAYS—19

Alsobrooks	Markey	Sanders
Blumenthal	Merkley	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Murphy	Schumer
Gillibrand	Murray	Slotkin
Heinrich	Ossoff	Van Hollen
Hirono	Paul	
Luján	Reed	

NOT VOTING—3

Duckworth	Fetterman	Justice
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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 majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 30.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of William Pulte, of Florida, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency for a term of five years.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 30, William Pulte, of Florida, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency for a term of five years.

John Thune, Tim Sheehy, Lindsey Graham, Cynthia M. Lummis, Dan Sullivan, Ashley Moody, Pete Ricketts, Bill Cassidy, Jon Husted, Mike Rounds, James Lankford, Todd Young, Joni

Ernst, John R. Curtis, John Kennedy, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 32.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jeffrey Kessler, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Security.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 32, Jeffrey Kessler, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Security.

John Thune, Tim Sheehy, Lindsey Graham, Dan Sullivan, Ashley Moody, Pete Ricketts, Bill Cassidy, Jon Husted, Mike Rounds, James Lankford, Todd Young, Joni Ernst, John R. Curtis, John Kennedy, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Ted Cruz.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

HALT ALL LETHAL TRAFFICKING OF FENTANYL ACT—Continued

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 331) to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for Calendar No. 18, S. 331.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented

under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Calendar No. 18, S. 331, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes.

John Thune, Ted Budd, Tom Cotton, Tim Sheehy, Lindsey Graham, Cynthia M. Lummis, Dan Sullivan, Ashley Moody, Pete Ricketts, Bill Cassidy, Jon Husted, Mike Rounds, James Lankford, Todd Young, Joni Ernst, John R. Curtis, John Kennedy.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS OF THE SENATE NATO OBSERVER GROUP

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, for the 119th Congress, I ask that the Democratic cochair of the Senate NATO Observer Group be Senator SHAHEEN and, at her recommendation, the following Democratic Senators participate in the group: Senators MERKLEY, COONS, KING, BOOKER, VAN HOLLEN, and ROSEN.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING AND JOINT COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS ON THE LIBRARY RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the rules of procedure for the Joint Committee on Printing and the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library for the 119th Congress be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

119TH CONGRESS—JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING

RULES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING FOR THE 119TH CONGRESS

Rule 1.—Committee Rules

(a) The rules of the Senate and House insofar as they are applicable, shall govern the Committee.

(b) The Committee's rules shall be published in the Congressional Record as soon as possible following the Committee's organizational meeting in each odd-numbered year.

(c) Where these rules require a vote of the members of the Committee, polling of members either in writing or by telephone shall not be permitted to substitute for a vote taken at a Committee meeting, unless the Ranking Minority Member assents to waiver of this requirement.