

MEASURE PLACED ON THE
CALENDAR—H.R. 276

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

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

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 276) to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the "Gulf of America".

Mr. THUNE. 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.

REMEMBERING DAVID H. SOUTER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to mention longtime Supreme Court Justice David Souter, who died on Thursday.

My thoughts and prayers are with his family and loved ones.

TRIBUTE TO POPE LEO XIV

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I also want to mention Cardinal Robert Prevost, who on Thursday became Pope Leo XIV, and I want to extend my congratulations on his election and my prayers for his service.

I know that his election is particularly moving for American Catholics, who for the first time in history will be led by an American-born Pope. I am very happy for them, and I look forward to seeing what this son of the Midwest brings to the Catholic Church and to the world.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, on Thursday afternoon, Democrats abruptly ended extensive bipartisan work on the GENIUS Act and filibustered the Senate's attempt to move this bill. Democrats, I should say, who had voted for the bill in committee, inexplicably chose to vote against it here on the Senate floor. That is pretty difficult to understand.

Providing a regulatory framework for stablecoins is a bipartisan issue. The bill is the product of a bipartisan negotiation, and the vote in the Banking Committee was definitely bipartisan—which leads you to wonder, of course, if this was really about the bill at all or if this was about wanting to deny President Trump or Republicans, more generally, a legislative victory, which might be nice for Democrats but leaves stablecoin issuers and Americans who use stablecoins in the same difficult spot that they are currently in. But unfortunately, it is pretty clear that obstructing, not legislating, is the Democrats' priority right now.

Until Democrats come to their senses and allow us to proceed to the GENIUS

Act, we are going to turn to nominations, another area where, unfortunately, Democrats have made obstruction the name of the game. I certainly understand that Democrats are not going to support all the President's nominees; that is their prerogative as Senators. But the way that they are drawing out this process on even non-controversial nominations is serving no one.

Mr. President, 57 out of 58 of the President's civilian nominees have required cloture votes, an unprecedented number for recent administrations; and of those 57 nominees, 17 received 60 or more votes in support on their final confirmation vote—in other words, support from a number of Democrats as well as Republicans. And yet Democrats dragged out those nominations in the same way they dragged out the nominations of individuals that they universally opposed.

Not a single one of President Trump's civilian nominees has been confirmed by unanimous consent or voice vote—again, something entirely unprecedented in recent years. No other President since at least 1977 has failed to have civilian nominees confirmed by unanimous consent or a voice vote at this point of his administration, except for President Trump in his first term in office.

And as I said, this is serving no one, nor is this going to prevent the President's nominees from getting confirmed. Democrats can drag out nominations all they want, but we are going to fill out the President's administration and ensure that his nominees get into place so that they can do their job and that he can do the job that he was elected to do.

I would like to do this the easy way and confirm noncontroversial nominees expeditiously—in batches, for example, and maybe even by unanimous consent. That would give us more time to legislate and give Members more time to spend in their States. But if we have to do this the hard way, we will. We are going to get the President's team in place.

So I guess Democrats have some decisions to make. I hope—I really hope—that they will come back to the table on the GENIUS Act, and I hope that they will cease their pointless obstruction of bipartisan nominees, but I guess we will have to see.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MEDICAID

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week, hospital leaders from every cor-

ner of my State of Illinois came to Washington. What was the reason for the trip? The debate in Washington about the future of Medicaid.

Each and every one of them, from the city of Chicago through the most rural areas in the State, was concerned about the plans by the Republicans in Congress to change the funding for Medicaid. From the South Side of Chicago to Macomb in West Central Illinois, as well as Rockford, 20 miles from the Wisconsin border, and Carbondale, all the way downstate, they came to see me.

These are small, critical access hospitals in rural areas, the safety net hospitals treating the poorest patients and the large teaching hospitals in downtown Chicago. They are all focused on Medicaid.

All of them told me the Medicaid cuts that Republicans have put on the table would be devastating to their hospitals in every corner of my State—devastating to the doctors and nurses that they employ and especially hurtful to the patients and their families.

One told me that it is the only hospital in a 60-mile radius delivering babies. If Republican plans to cut Medicaid go through, this life-or-death care could be out of reach for pregnant mothers.

Another safety net hospital told me they might have to close their doors altogether if the Medicaid cuts happen.

Why? Why would Republicans in Congress even want to jeopardize healthcare and ring alarm bells in hospitals across America? They are trying to "save \$880 billion."

Well, what is the critical need to save that? To perpetuate the tax breaks of the Trump administration for the wealthiest people in America. Yep, that is the game plan. That is right.

President Trump and his billionaire buddy Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, have asked Republicans in Congress to provide a massive giveaway to the wealthiest Americans, and they want to use Medicaid cuts as the piggy bank.

Let's be clear: This is not a healthcare reform plan to improve our healthcare system or lower costs for families and patients. Nope. Republicans are looking to dismantle the basic Medicaid Program to help the tax cuts for billionaires.

Don't take my word for it. It is not just another political speech. Last week, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office issued a bombshell report. I am sure the Republicans in charge of the House and Senate didn't anticipate this. The Congressional Budget Office reviewed the Republican plans to cut Medicaid and determined the only way Republicans can "save money" is by removing millions of Americans from this health insurance, slashing benefits, or cutting access to doctors, nurses, and dentists.

For weeks, Republicans have been adamant that they are only focused on addressing waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicaid. Then comes the CBO report.

I want to agree with the basic premise that, if there is inappropriate spending, fix it. But that is not what is happening here, and I think the Republican majority knows it.

The Congressional Budget Office called their bluff and confirmed that these Medicaid cuts proposed by the Republicans are not about waste or efficiency. They are about restricting access to coverage to patients all across the United States, including in my State of Illinois.

Under Republicans' watch, CBO stated that 13.7 million Americans will have their health insurance coverage terminated. Almost 14 million Americans will lose healthcare coverage if the Republicans go forward with their plan. What is the acceptable number of constituents losing health coverage for Republicans?

Nationwide, half of all rural hospitals are already in the red, and more than 300 rural hospitals are facing immediate closure, including 26 in Kansas, 22 in Alabama, 21 in Texas, and 9 in Missouri. How many rural hospitals closing in their States are Republicans willing to accept to help perpetuate tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans?

Let me tell you, as a person from downstate Illinois, rural hospitals are the backbone of the community. Not only are they critical places for emergency medical care, but they are the anchors of the local economy.

Speaking of the economy, one of the ways Republicans plan to cut Medicaid is by imposing burdensome, redtape requirements.

Put paperwork in the path of an individual looking for medical care. Pile it up. Make it hard. Pitched by the Republicans as just simply "work requirements," this policy withholds healthcare for eligible patients until they meet overly complex paperwork requirements. It is a failing strategy.

In the States that have tried the so-called work requirements, there has been no increase in employment. The only impact is with patients who are ruled ineligible and kicked off Medicaid because they were drowning in paperwork. What a way to run a country.

Here is an example: A waitress with diabetes misses a paperwork deadline because the forms were sent to her old address. She loses her Medicaid coverage and can't access her medications and is forced to miss work to deal with it.

One analysis determined that approximately 3 million manufacturing, agricultural, and service sector workers could become uninsured under the simply "Make sure they are going to work" plan. Who thinks that is a good idea?

Yesterday, House Republicans spent Mother's Day scheming on how to advance these Medicaid cuts, finally releasing a copy of their legislation so we could see the detail. It is as catastrophic as we feared. It is the largest cut in Medicaid in the Nation's health

history, ripping health insurance away from millions of Americans in every single State.

But it is not too late for a few Republicans—and it only takes a few: four in the House, four in the Senate—to step up and say they don't want to be part of this, if they will stand up and say: No, we will not risk the healthcare for millions of Americans as bargaining chips for billionaire tax breaks.

Medicaid provides health insurance for 1 out of every 4 people in my State of Illinois—3.4 million people, including 1.5 million children. Medicaid pays to deliver half of all the babies in my State—half of them. Two-thirds of the seniors in nursing homes depend on Medicaid. If Medicaid is not helping to pay for that nursing home or care for seniors, what is going to happen to grandma, grandfathers, those that are affected by it? It is the largest funder of opioid addiction treatment.

Remember the image of Elon Musk—the richest man in the world—laughing gleefully as he danced around a stage with a chain saw in his hand? The richest man in the world was laughing out loud about his chain saw cuts to Medicaid. Well, these cuts are no laughing matter for that rural hospital worried about having to close its mental health services. They are no laughing matter for the pregnant woman forced to drive more than an hour to deliver a baby because the local hospital shuttered its obstetrics unit.

Wipe that smile off your face, Mr. Musk. We are talking about life-and-death healthcare for America's working families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). The Senator from Texas.

UKRAINE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, America is an exceptional nation: freedom of religion, freedom of speech and of the press; private property rights; free and fair elections; the rule of law and an independent judiciary. All of these help make us exceptional, but we Americans often take this for granted because these principles, these values, are so ingrained in our way of life. That is who we are. But it also makes it more challenging for us to understand how different other countries may be from us. It shouldn't be a surprise, though, if you think about it. History, culture, economics all matter, but, sadly, this is a lesson that seems like we and others need to learn over and over again.

When it comes to Russia, it is worth recalling Churchill's description of the former Soviet Union. He called it a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma, but when it comes to negotiating peace in Ukraine, we might be tempted to assume that Vladimir Putin is working from the same playbook as other stakeholders. But that is simply not the case. The fundamental differences between Russia and the

West have become all that much more apparent in the negotiations to end the war in Ukraine. This is precisely what has made it such a difficult challenge to end the war, and that is what makes President Trump's efforts all that much more noble when we consider the monumental task that he is seeking to accomplish.

As I have said before—and I will say it again—I am grateful to President Trump for his leadership and his efforts to end the conflict that has lasted far too long—for more than 3 years now. During his first 100 days, President Trump has done more than President Biden did in 4 years. He has made clear to the Europeans that they need to step up and assume greater ownership of their continental security, and he successfully persuaded them to increase their defense spending and enhance deterrents against future aggression.

The President's representatives have led several rounds of negotiations between the Ukrainians and the Russians—something that President Biden did not even attempt—and President Trump has secured a key critical minerals deal with Ukraine, which will help fund the reconstruction of that country. It will help compensate America for its investments in Ukraine's defense and dissuade future Russian aggression.

But there is one significant obstacle in achieving a lasting end to this conflict, and that, of course, is Vladimir Putin.

Succinctly stated, Vladimir Putin's Russia is a police state. In Russia, people who buck the government mysteriously disappear or fall out of windows to their deaths or are poisoned, imprisoned, or die of suspect causes like Alexei Navalny. In Russia, the government targets religious minorities, imposing fines and criminal charges. In Russia, the government controls the media. Independent media outlets are censored, suppressed, or shuttered if they do not conform to the party line. Under Vladimir Putin, government redistributes private property based on political loyalties, giving rise to the oligarchs that we have heard so much about.

Then there are the alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Russia during its invasion of Ukraine. Take, for example, the bombing of Ukraine's civilian energy infrastructure during the first winter of Russia's full-scale invasion or consider the mass abduction of Ukrainian children. Thousands of Ukrainian children have been deported to Russia since the start of the full-scale invasion, with many having been adopted into Russian families or sent to camps, where they are subjected to ideological indoctrination designed to erase their Ukrainian identity.

The bombing of Ukraine's power grid, which was part of a state policy of widespread attacks on the civilian population, further illustrates the point.