

No question, this Medicaid cut will result in rural hospitals being shut down in increasing numbers.

Further, I hope my colleagues will listen to what Bruce Siegel, the president and CEO of America's Essential Hospitals, said in opposition to this bill:

Hospitals, which already operate on thin margins, cannot absorb such losses without reducing services or closing their doors altogether.

That is exactly what rural America does not need. We don't need more hospitals shutting down. We cannot allow that to happen.

Let's be clear. It is not just hospitals and community health centers that are opposed to this legislation; physicians throughout this country have also come out in strong opposition to this legislation.

Let me read from a statement issued today—today—in opposition to this bill from the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians, and the American Psychiatric Association:

Our organizations, representing more than 400,000 physicians who serve millions of patients, are alarmed by proposals to implement cuts or other structural changes to Medicaid during the budget reconciliation process. Cuts to Medicaid will have grave consequences for patients, communities and the entire health care system. With reduced federal funding, it will be harder for patients to access care, states will be forced to drop enrollees from coverage, and it will limit the health care services patients can access and cut payment rates.

The impact of cuts to Medicaid funding is significant and wide-reaching, and it must be reconsidered.

That is what medical organizations in our country, representing 400,000 doctors, are saying about this disastrous piece of legislation.

Further, at a time when some 22 percent of our seniors are trying to survive on less than \$15,000 a year—I will never understand how anybody, let alone a senior, can survive on less than \$15,000 a year—this legislation will make it much harder for seniors and people with disabilities to receive the care they desperately need in nursing homes.

When Medicaid provides over 60 percent of the revenue nursing homes rely on, slashing Medicaid will be a disaster for seniors and the disabled who need to be in nursing homes and their kids as well.

When you cut Medicaid, it is not just throwing up to 13 million people off of the health insurance they have; it is going to be very destructive for community health centers to provide the healthcare they need, very destructive to hospitals all over this country, especially small rural hospitals, and destructive to nursing homes as well.

That is not all that this legislation is doing. For the vast majority of Americans, including myself, who believe that women should have the right to

control their own bodies, this bill essentially defunds Planned Parenthood, which provides vital healthcare to millions of women.

It is not just our healthcare system that would be devastated under this legislation. While this bill provides massive tax breaks to billionaires, it would cut \$290 billion from nutrition programs. That would take food away from an estimated 4 million children and about half a million seniors.

I don't know if there is any religion in this world where it would be morally appropriate to take food out of the mouths of hungry kids and frail seniors in order to provide more tax breaks to billionaires. That is simply and grossly immoral.

Further, for the many young people in our country struggling with student debt and others who wonder how they will ever be able to afford to go to college, this bill cuts Federal funding for education by more than \$350 billion.

Now, what does that mean? Among other things, it means that the average student loan borrower with a bachelor's degree in America would see his or her loan payments increase by about \$3,000 a year or some \$244 a month. So at a time when college is now unaffordable for millions of young people, at a time when we desperately need a well-educated population and the best educated workforce in the world, this bill moves us in precisely the wrong direction.

Finally, at a time when we already spend more on the military than the next nine nations combined and when everyone knows—whether you are Republican, Democrat, or Independent, everyone knows there is massive waste and fraud in the Pentagon. The Pentagon has not been able to take an independent audit for God knows how many years. This bill increases defense spending by \$150 billion.

Let's be clear. This is just some of what is in this terrible bill. There are other provisions equally damaging which I have not touched upon.

It seems clear to me and I expect the majority of Americans that this bill reflects exactly what is wrong with our current corrupt political system.

When we have massive income and wealth inequality, our job is to demand that the wealthy and large corporations start paying their fair share of taxes, not do as this bill provides—give huge tax breaks to the very rich.

When 85 million Americans are uninsured or underinsured, our job should be to guarantee healthcare to every man, woman, and child in this country, not throw 13 million Americans off of the healthcare they currently have.

When children and seniors in this country go hungry here in the wealthiest country on Earth, our job should be to make sure that all Americans have the nutrition they need to live healthy lives, not increase the level of hunger in our country.

In many respects, this bill represents exactly why so many Americans are

giving up on democracy and have such contempt for Congress. At a time when the richest people have never ever had it so good, they see Republican leadership working overtime to make the billionaire class even richer.

At a time when a majority of Americans are struggling to put food on the table and pay for healthcare, they see Republican leadership making life even more difficult for average Americans.

This is a disastrous piece of legislation. I urge my colleagues to oppose it. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, President Trump has been in office for 113 days. On nearly every one of those days, he has announced another very dangerous attack on the Constitution and on our system of justice.

The recent shocking news that the administration plans to deport migrants to Libya—a country that is in chaos, where the prisons are a version of hell—is just a recent example.

I hate to say this, but it is true. It is not just what the Trump administration does; it is the cavalier cruelty by which the administration does it. That cruelty is described in heart-wrenching detail by the Washington Post in a recent article entitled “Trump's 48-hour scramble to fly migrants to a Salvadoran prison.”

The article describes the Trump administration officials who, in their rush to deport a million migrants, have knowingly and flagrantly trampled on the rights of people who are in this country legally—in this country legally.

The Post reviewed court records and conducted interviews of more than 50 men who are believed to be held at the Terrorism Confinement Center, or CECOT, in El Salvador. The Post found:

[D]espite the administration's claims, many of the immigrants sent to El Salvador had entered the United States legally and were actively complying with U.S. immigration rules.

The review by the Post also found:

At least two of the men imprisoned in El Salvador had been approved—

Approved—

by the State Department to resettle as refugees in the United States after [very] extensive vetting by federal law enforcement authorities. . . . At least four had protections against removal through temporary protected status . . . granted to those fleeing Venezuela's humanitarian crisis. . . . Others had been active members of Venezuela's opposition and had open asylum claims.

In other words, these were folks who were friends of freedom. Suddenly, without producing any credible evidence, they are now called “terrorists”—no new evidence.

Prisoners at CECOT—they are abandoned, they are lost, and they are forgotten. They have no access to family or lawyers, no semblance of due process to prove their innocence, and no idea

when they will be released, if they will ever be released.

According to the Post article, Secretary of State Rubio told Bukele that the migrant prisoners would remain there for a year “or until a determination concerning their long-term disposition is made.” No end in sight. It is a very chilling statement.

The Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the White House Press Secretary repeatedly referred to these migrants as “the worst of the worst” terrorists and criminals. These are folks who were here legally, following the rules.

Multiple investigations have determined that many of the migrants sent to CECOT in El Salvador literally have never been charged, let alone convicted of anything. The administration’s own lawyers have acknowledged this.

According to the Washington Post report, U.S. officials have refused to provide the names of those who were sent to CECOT. So our government has picked up people, spirited them away to El Salvador, and won’t even disclose the identity of the people who were arrested and deported.

The Washington Post asked three El Salvadoran officials for the identities of deportees who were sent there but received absolutely no response. That is why lawyers and journalists have described CECOT as a Kafkaesque dungeon. Once someone is led in chains through those iron gates, he is as good as disappeared forever.

One person the Trump administration disappeared to El Salvador was Andry Hernandez. He is a 31-year-old makeup artist. He left Venezuela to escape persecution, partly because of his sexual orientation, for which he was persecuted, and his political views, for which he was persecuted.

Andry opposed the Maduro regime. He did not cross the border illegally. He went to Mexico. He obtained an appointment—according to the rules—for an asylum interview. He had an interview, and he was found to have a credible fear of persecution. So he did everything right. Now we see photographs of Andry in CECOT, and they are gut-wrenching. He cries for his mother as guards slap him and forcibly shave his head. He yells out:

I’m not a gang member. I’m gay. I’m a stylist.

The photos also show our government’s alleged evidence for sending Andry to CECOT: tattoos of crowns, which are a symbol of a religious festival for Three Kings Day and have nothing to do with any gang-related activity.

The Trump administration officials have openly praised El Salvador’s President Bukele for receiving these migrants. He is a man who proudly calls himself a dictator—and he is. His rubberstamp legislature and the judiciary caved in to him and allowed him to circumvent their own constitution and run for a second term. Then he imposed a state of emergency, empowering him

to arrest and imprison anyone without charge—indefinitely.

The Trump administration officials have no qualms about paying millions of dollars to President Bukele to jail these migrants, who include folks who were here in this country legally.

The Washington Post article describes the Trump administration scrambling to arrest hundreds of people like Andry, often at their places of employment. And President Trump is then having them secretly and quickly often deported to El Salvador before the courts can even provide a hearing.

Amid these rampant violations of fundamental due process, the administration continues to just dis the Federal courts. And according to a Justice Department spokesperson, “Activist judges do not have jurisdiction to seize control of the President’s authority to conduct foreign policy, remove dangerous illegal aliens from our country, and keep Americans safe.”

This has nothing to do with that. It has to do with the rule of law and the role of the judiciary in our frame of government.

Multiple judges, by the way, appointed by Republicans and Democrats, including President Trump, have ruled against the administration’s efforts to forcibly deport people without any hearing whatsoever. And, by the way, how does forcibly disappearing somebody like Andry Hernandez Romero make us more safe?

Just last week, a Federal judge appointed by President Trump blocked the administration from summarily removing migrants in South Texas under a bogus assertion of the application of the Alien Enemies Act. This should not be happening in this country, and it shouldn’t be happening in El Salvador. It should not happen in Libya. It should not happen anywhere.

Laws matter. Due process matters. Justice matters. How we treat other human beings says more about us than it says about them.

It was Nelson Mandela who said:

No one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but the lowest ones.

The Trump administration has made a clear decision to disrespect our laws, to disregard the rights of citizens and individuals who are entitled to due process, and to do it in a way that is cruel and disrespectful of the United States and its commitment to freedom and the rule of law.

Our Supreme Court has ruled that all people, including migrants, are entitled to due process, to an opportunity to rebut allegations against them before being deported. The Trump administration attack is not just on the rights of these individuals, but it really goes to the core of principles and practices established in law that are the foundation of our democracy. And it threatens, therefore, the rights and privileges of all American citizens.

I stand here on behalf of Vermonters who are appalled by this action. I stand

here as a Member of the U.S. Senate who believes it is my responsibility, in the face of these Trump actions, to stand up for the rights of people to have a hearing, to have a right to be brought before a magistrate or a judge, and not be deported without any due process whatsoever. This is important to our commitment as Members of the U.S. Senate to preserve the traditions of the Constitution, the rule of law, and the rights of individuals and the freedom that has been the blessing of our liberty since the founding of our country.

(The remarks of Mr. WELCH pertaining to the introduction of S. Res. 224 are printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

Mr. WELCH. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LUMMIS. 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.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee’s intention to see that relevant information is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JAMES E. RISCH,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(C) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 24-0Q. This transmittal notifies a cost increase in excess of the total value previously described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 19-60 of April 23, 2020.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.