

won't see flooding as extreme as losing a home. I sure hope you don't. But I am not just talking about the worst case scenario.

Let's imagine going back to this picture. The family didn't get their home completely flooded. The family got 4 inches of water in their living room. Their carpets are destroyed. If their floor is anything but concrete, it is destroyed. If you have furniture in there that is cloth, it is destroyed. If you get mold, then you are going to have to rip out the sheetrock and replace wherever you had sheetrock. Two to 3 inches destroys the carpet. In fact, the most expensive 3 inches in a flood are the first 3 inches. And that is what makes flooding so difficult for a middle-income family to recover from.

And for many, the National Flood Insurance Program is the only option they have. Now, by the way, the program designed to help them is failing them, and when millions of Americans are being impacted, Washington should act.

Let me be clear: the National Flood Insurance Program is a Federal program, meaning that Congress and the President can change and improve it. We just need to have the will.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in working with the Trump administration to end Risk Rating 2.0.

In 2019, my office worked with the Trump administration to successfully delay Risk Rating 2.0 because of the lack of transparency as to how FEMA was calculating the rates. President Trump understood then and understands now that Americans are tired of being ripped off.

When rivers swell, when coastlines have rising water, Americans should not have to fear the cost of rebuilding without affordable insurance. So let's make the National Flood Insurance Program affordable, accountable, and sustainable.

Severe weather is relentless. We must be too.

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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

MEDICAID

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. President, according to Secretary Kennedy, the Trump administration is committed to building the most compassionate Department of Health and Human Services in the history of the United States.

So I went to the dictionary and looked up the term "compassionate." It means: "a sympathetic consciousness of others' distress, together with a desire to alleviate it."

Yet the proposed Republican budget would make historic billion-dollar cuts to the programs real Americans rely on. Instead of alleviating distress, this "Big Bad Bill" would actually exacerbate it.

And late, late last night, House Republicans added even more distress to their Medicaid cuts, changes that would cut care and prevent access to care for millions of Americans; changes that would cut funding that ensures safe, healthy births for newborns; changes that will endanger our parents and grandparents who live in nursing homes.

So I rise today and seek true compassion from my colleagues and ask in the words of the famous song: "Where is the love?"

I rise today because I have been getting call after call, email after email, meeting with person after person, all worried sick about cuts to Medicaid. And I want to share some of their stories today. I want my colleagues to hear their names and understand the trade-offs they are making to support tax cuts for the wealthy, while failing to shrink the national debt.

Again, I am going to say that again: while failing to shrink the national debt.

Here are their stories.

Emmanuel lives in Sussex County. When I met with him recently, he told me that if we pull the thread of Medicaid, his whole life would unravel. Emmanuel calls himself a CP warrior, and he doesn't let cerebral palsy or his wheelchair stop him.

For Emmanuel, Medicaid is more than prescriptions and doctors' appointments. It is about freedom and independence. Participating in Medicaid allowed him to get and keep a job. Access to Medicaid is how he went from being homeless to being employed, housed, and financially secure. It is what enables his wife to be his primary caretaker, while also allowing them to live together as husband and wife.

He struggles to plan for his future and that of his family because his life depends on decisions that we make here in this body.

Joy. Joy lives in Wilmington with her 34-year-old son, who she says is severely autistic. He received amazing services from the Delaware Autism Program when he was in school and now attends their day program at Point of Hope. And you guessed it; Point of Hope is funded through Medicaid.

Joy is literally terrified of what could happen if these cuts close that program. She doesn't know where her son will end up if they lose the support that Medicaid provides and she can no longer take care of him.

And Nancy. Nancy lives in Dover with her 19-year-old son Christopher, who was born prematurely. Christopher coded in the NICU and suffered a brain injury. As a result, he is on a Medicaid waiver since he was 8 months old.

For the last 19 years, Nancy has advocated for her family, as well as countless Delawareans. She built her life around caring for Christopher in their home versus an expensive long-term care facility.

Medicaid covers the medical equipment Nancy rents to keep Christopher alive. Medicaid covers the skilled medical professionals that help Nancy care for her son and give her respite. Nancy told me that Christopher's life depends on this budget.

In her words, this debate about funding cuts feels like the rug is being pulled from under her.

Emmanuel, Joy, Nancy, and Christopher—these are just a few of the stories that I have been told since our Republican colleagues started their crusade against care. These are real people with real needs that Medicaid fills—real people whom we shine the light on and not ignore.

And I want my colleagues to hear their names. I want them to remember the names of the people in their own States who are imploring us to stand up and protect their access to care: the Emmanuels, the Joys, Nancys, the Christophers.

So whether you are a person of faith or just somebody who cares about your neighbor, now is the time to move from the Golden Rule of treating others as you would like to be treated to the "Platinum Rule"—to treat others the way they want to be treated, with real compassion, and to start with protecting Medicaid.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, colleagues, using the Congressional Review Act to overturn waivers puts polluters in charge of government policy.

In 1970, Congress passed the Clean Air Act. The law explicitly states that individual States like California can enact stricter emission standards to protect the environment if they receive from the Environmental Protection Agency a waiver. And States like Oregon can adopt those standards if they so choose.

Since then, California has applied for, well, about 100 waivers. They have made vehicle emissions 99 percent cleaner than they were in 1970.

I remember going down to Southern California in the early eighties and seeing how incredibly polluted the air was near L.A., and I thought, How can anyone live here?

It hurt your eyes; it hurt your lungs. People don't have that impression today, despite the amount of vehicle miles going way up, because of the incredible efforts California made to clean up their air from auto emissions.

You know, in the last 50 years, California has never had a waiver revoked. That tells me they put together very competent proposals and that the Nation supported their effort to clean up their air.

But something different is happening right now. Senate Republicans are using the Congressional Review Act in ways that Congress never intended. Of course, the Congressional Review Act says if a rule is implemented and you are within 60 legislative days, it can be brought to the floor and it can be overturned by the House and the Senate and that if it is vetoed, well, then the House and Senate can overturn the veto, if they have enough votes—but all about rules; no mention of waivers.

Both the Government Accountability Office and the Senate Parliamentarian said the Congressional Review Act cannot be used to overturn waivers because, quite simply, they are not rules.

You know, here is the thing, words have meanings, and you can only trust the law if those words are honored. And to magically say a waiver is a rule is a real travesty of lawmaking, but that is where we are at now.

So what is this really all about—this Republican decision to invent new meanings to existing words when every bit of common sense and every bit of legal knowledge knows that that is a lie. Why did my colleagues engage in this massive deception? It is an end-run around the policymaking process.

They could have easily said: We want to expand the Congressional Review Act to cover waivers. And then you simply craft a bill. Republicans being in charge of the Senate and the House, they bring it to the floor; we debate it; it either passes or it doesn't pass.

It has the advantage of going through committee and being considered and having people weigh in on whether it is a good idea or not. But to simply reinvent and pretend, if you will, that the color black is the color white or an orange is an apple—because everyone understands a waiver is not a rule.

So it is unfortunate that the colleagues in charge of the legislative process have so corrupted it yesterday and today, not even trying to actually enact the law to accomplish what they want but instead saying: Let's use an expedited process that doesn't go through committee, where there is very limited debate, where there are no amendments allowed, in order to do a favor for a powerful special interest.

What does that tell us about government in the United States? My colleagues are choosing to be the agents for the powerful by inventing new meanings to words that don't exist, meanings that are not supported by the Parliamentarian; they are not supported by the Government Accountability Office, GAO, because they are so dedicated to pulling the strings of government on behalf of the fossil fuel industry. That is corruption plain and simple, on full display before the American public. That is what has happened.

Think about what this means for the future of this Nation. You can't count on a waiver staying in place so how do you make decisions based on getting that waiver?

Well, you get a license from the government. But the license, maybe that looks a lot like a rule. It is an act of government. It is a decision. How is that different from a waiver? You can't count on that license not being taken away by this body.

What about a grant? A grant is a government decision. Kind of like a waiver, except it has money coming in. So now a grant can be brought here to the floor and wiped out.

What about a permit? A permit is very close to being a waiver, saying: Hey, you can undertake this process. We are giving you permission. Well, that is what a waiver does. It says: Yes, you can undertake that process.

So now no one has a foundation for pursuing projects because they know that if the majority wants to play favors for a powerful special interest, they can wipe you out with no foundation of law.

That is what happened here, and that is a travesty. It is a travesty that none of my colleagues, I would hope—if they reflected on it outside the pressure of having their arms twisted—would engage in.

And I know they would be highly critical if the parties were reversed.

In addition, once that waiver is struck down, it is suggested under the rules of the CRA that a similar waiver might not be able to be granted in the future.

So now you have two laws in conflict with each other. One law says you can grant the waiver, and the other law says if something was struck down through the CRA, nothing similar can be done.

How are we to resolve this? My colleagues have no answer. They have taken us down a path where words have no meaning and where sheer power by one of the richest enterprises in America—the fossil fuel industry—is all that matters. They are the puppet masters of my Republican colleagues. They have pulled the strings, and now we are in deep trouble to have an honest foundation for legislative action.

This one waiver was something that the fossil fuel industry really hated because when cars became more efficient, they used less oil, and therefore the oil companies made less money. When these waivers were enacted, people were incentivized to buy cars that didn't even burn gasoline, and the oil companies were like: Oh, my goodness, we are not going to make as much money. Help us. Help us, dear Republicans. Help us out here. Invent something. Change the meaning of some words. Find some way to go past the normal legislative process to somehow deliver what we want.

And my colleagues obliged.

The damage is done. It is going to be extremely difficult to fix it. It has eviscerated half a century of California's clean air protections.

It was the wrong thing to do to blow up the good work of a State seeking to solve its air pollution problem. It was

absolutely the wrong thing to do to blow up the integrity of this body by deciding that a waiver is a rule and undermining the ability of any group to act with confidence based on decisions made by the Government of the United States because whether you have a waiver or you have a permit or you have a license, now you don't know whether some powerful interest is going to have this body rip it away from you.

Let's work together to reestablish integrity in this Chamber, integrity in our legislative process that was so badly damaged yesterday and last night.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). The Senator from Oklahoma.

HISTORIC GREENWOOD DISTRICT—BLACK WALL STREET NATIONAL MONUMENT ESTABLISHMENT ACT

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of S. 1051 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1051) to establish the Historic Greenwood District-Black Wall Street National Monument in the State of Oklahoma, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. LANKFORD. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 1051) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 1051

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Historic Greenwood District—Black Wall Street National Monument Establishment Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COMMISSION.—The term "Commission" means the Historic Greenwood District—Black Wall Street National Monument Advisory Commission established by section 5(a).

(2) MAP.—The term "Map" means the map entitled "Greenwood Historic District—Black Wall Street National Monument, Proposed Boundary", numbered 196/188,275, and dated August 2024.

(3) NATIONAL MONUMENT.—The term "National Monument" means the Historic Greenwood District—Black Wall Street National Monument established by section 3(a).

(4) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.