

The other legacy of the 2017 tax cuts is how they boosted our economy by lifting the tax burden on America's job creators. We lowered tax rates for owners of small- and medium-sized businesses, farms and ranches. We made it easier for them to recover the cost of investing in their businesses, which, in turn, freed up cash for them to invest in their operations and their workers. These and other major reforms helped kick-start our economy.

And in the wake of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, our economy grew at a substantially better rate than projected. Real wages increased. Unemployment fell to a 50-year low. The poverty rate fell to the lowest level ever recorded. Business investment increased. Everywhere you looked, there was positive economic news.

Mr. President, we were able to make some of the business tax reforms permanent in 2017. And now we have an opportunity to make the rest of these pro-growth policies permanent. That includes lower rates for small- and medium-sized businesses, the job-creating 199A small business deduction, and full expensing for new equipment and for domestic research and development.

Once again, we are going beyond just making the 2017 tax relief permanent. We are setting our country up for a brighter future by further advancing a pro-opportunity, pro-growth Tax Code.

Our bill includes full expensing for new factories and factory improvements so we can expect to see more growth and more jobs for American workers and more goods made in America. It raises the death tax threshold to \$15 million and links it to inflation permanently, which will spare countless family farms, ranches, and small businesses from a potentially devastating tax and the headaches and expense of planning for it.

And an entire generation of Americans will be able to access new investment accounts when they reach adulthood that can be used toward their education, to start a business, to buy their first home, and to get a running start on the American dream.

Mr. President, this is a good bill. It is going to be great for our country. The Council of Economic Advisers, which accurately predicted the economic growth and higher wages in the wake of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, released its forecast of the Senate bill this morning. It contains a lot of good news, starting with as much as 4.9 percent higher GDP in the next few years. That means more jobs. It means bigger paychecks, as much as \$10,000 per year for a typical family. It means more opportunity. Believe it or not, it means more revenue, revenue that we bring in in the right way—by growing our economy—not by raising taxes. In fact, the same forecasters who got the effects of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act right are estimating as much as \$6 trillion in deficit reduction stemming from the bill's pro-growth policies.

Mr. President, we are well on our way to getting this bill passed this

week, which means we are well on our way to a stronger and more prosperous America. That means Americans keeping more of their hard-earned money; it means American businesses growing and investing in our country and our workers; and it means a thriving economy like we had before the pandemic.

Republicans are ready to deliver.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the Trump administration has failed miserably—miserably—in its responsibility to inform Congress about what is happening right now in the Middle East. Before the strikes, leaders in Congress got virtually no heads up. Then the administration delayed the briefing scheduled yesterday. It was scheduled a week ago. Now they are trying to get away with sending only the Secretary of State and Defense for tomorrow, instead of the usual intelligence officials that attend the briefings.

Let's be very clear: A briefing from only the Secretaries of State and Defense would be woefully insufficient. If they are the only ones in attendance, they will only parrot whatever the President wants them to say.

Sending intelligence officers to briefings in Congress is a longstanding bipartisan practice, and Congress is entitled, as the representatives of the American people, to hear from the administration about matters of national intelligence and national security.

Refusing Congress like this would be egregious, troubling, and a violation. It would make Americans wonder: Why would Donald Trump prefer to send two talking heads to meet with Congress instead of intelligence analysts and policymakers.

Intelligence officials have an obligation to seek the truth, to speak the truth. Perhaps that is why Donald Trump does not want to send the intelligence officials to talk to us. Maybe Donald Trump doesn't want Congress or even America to know the truth about what is going on.

We know there have been a lot of confusing reports—some from intelligence sources—over the last days, suggesting the strikes in Iran were not as successful as the President initially claimed. There may be questions about the accuracy of these reports. I have no idea if these reports are accurate.

And, today, the President said, earlier this morning, that “the intelligence was very inconclusive. The intelligence says we don't know.”

All of this only underscores the need to hear from intelligence analysts and to hear from them directly.

What is the administration hiding? Were the strikes successful? How much enriched uranium does Iran still have? How many months will it take them to make a nuclear device? Are they locating centrifuges in a new place, and what is our knowledge of that? Are our troops safe? Are Americans in the region safe? Is the conflict contained? What happens next? And how will the administration achieve the critical national priority of preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon?

Both parties, by and large, agree that Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon. I do. But if the President is misrepresenting the impact of our military strikes and these reports have some accuracy—we don't know if they do—and if the President is turning away from diplomacy with Iran, as his recent post suggested, then what the hell is going on? What is Donald Trump's plan?

We really don't know the answers to any of these critical questions. The administration refuses to be transparent. All we get are talking points and tweets. We know that Donald Trump makes things up, day to day, and then has to retract and turn around.

And tomorrow, all we are going to get are talking points from Rubio and Hegseth, because that is what we know they are trained to do.

On top of that, today, it was reported the administration may actually start limiting intelligence sharing with Congress. The administration should immediately undo this decision, if it is true.

Are they afraid of the truth? Do they want to hide the truth?

The intelligence Agencies are known to tell the truth. Is that why they are so afraid to get their information out—the information of the intelligence Agencies out?

As I said yesterday, the administration's stonewalling of Congress is outrageous, evasive, and derelict. The administration has no right to stonewall Congress on matters of national security. Senators deserve information, and the administration has a legal obligation to inform Congress precisely about what is happening right now abroad.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. 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. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today because Republicans are making America safer and more prosperous, and, as part of that, we are strengthening Medicaid.

You know, I am a doctor. I practiced medicine in Wyoming for over 20 years,

and I cared for many, many Medicaid patients my entire career. I understand Medicaid's importance—importance for the people that it is intended to serve. I have also seen its shortcomings.

Medicaid became a law in 1965. It was meant to be a safety net for the poor, for pregnant women, for children, and for the disabled.

Today, Medicaid has been stretched way beyond its intended purposes. Today, Medicaid covers 71 million people. Many of these are able-bodied, working-age individuals. As a result, Medicaid has become broken and bloated. Its costs are ballooning. It is going to go bankrupt unless we take action now to strengthen it.

The Republican plan will strengthen Medicaid for those for whom it was originally intended.

Our bill ensures that illegal immigrants do not receive taxpayer-funded healthcare. It was never intended for that. But 14 liberal States currently give free taxpayer funded healthcare to illegal immigrants.

California, of course, is the biggest offender because they set up a money-laundering scheme. The scheme is set up to siphon money from the Federal Treasury to provide free healthcare for illegal immigrants. The 1.4 million illegal immigrants who receive free healthcare, they strangle Medicaid in the funding. They are filling up waiting rooms and clinics. They are making it harder for Americans to get in to see a doctor.

Our bill ends liberal States' magnet for illegal immigrants. Medicaid cannot continue to be a reward for open borders and sanctuary cities.

Additionally, our bill roots out waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption in Medicaid. Experts tell us that, in recent years, Medicaid has wasted over \$1 trillion in improper payments alone.

In 2021, 660,000 people were enrolled in Medicaid in more than one State. How can that be? That is costing lots of money. The Wall Street Journal did a breakdown of this. They found that these double payments alone cost American taxpayers over \$2 billion.

Republicans will not allow scammers to continue to game the system and steal money from taxpayers.

Additionally, our bill puts in place work requirements for these able-bodied, working-age adults. Twenty-one million able-bodied adults are currently on Medicaid.

An American Enterprise Institute study recently found able-bodied adults on Medicaid who don't work. How do they spend their time? Well, they spend over 4 hours every day watching TV and playing video games. That is 125 hours a month. They ought to be working or at least looking for a job.

Our bill requires these people to work or train 80 hours each month to remain on Medicaid. That is a lot less than the time they are currently spending watching TV and playing video games.

Senate Republicans are proposing a responsible path to self-reliance for

able-bodied, working-age people—no more taxpayer-funded coddling.

Let me share with you a story about a man whose son relies on Medicaid. This man's son has autism and epilepsy. Medicaid was designed to serve individuals like this man's son. Yet, today, his son is stuck on a 10-year waiting list for in-home care.

The man wrote about his family's needs. He wrote a whole article about it, entitled "My Son Is Counting on Medicaid Work Requirements"—not for the son but for others, so they start working to make it easier for this man's son to get the benefits that he needs.

Medicaid is often called a lifeline. Years of waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption have pushed those who truly need it to the back of the line.

Republicans are fighting for families like this one. We are making sure Medicaid is there for the vulnerable.

Meanwhile, Democrats are fine with healthy, working-age adults continuing to stay home, play video games, and receive Medicaid forever.

Work requirements work. In the 1990s, Bill Clinton proposed that we end welfare as we know it. President Clinton partnered in a bipartisan way with the Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, to pass bipartisan reform.

Bipartisan welfare reform lifted millions out of poverty. Even President Obama admitted it. He said:

We have to have work as the centerpiece of any social policy.

President Obama was right then, and Republicans are right today.

Today, every Democrat has vowed to oppose our commonsense reforms. Democrats' wasteful approach continues to drain Medicaid.

Medicaid is for the truly needy. Medicaid is not for illegal immigrants or for able-bodied, working-age men who refuse to work.

Republicans are rescuing this lifeline so that it serves those who need it the most now and into the future.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we move ahead with the vote scheduled for 4:15.

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

VOTE ON DABBAR NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Dabbar 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 325 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Murkowski
Britt	Hoeben	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Justice	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	King	Sheehy
Cotton	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cramer	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Lummis	Tuberville
Curtis	Marshall	Warner
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	McCormick	Young
Fischer	Moody	

NAYS—40

Alsobrooks	Hirono	Rosen
Baldwin	Kaine	Schatz
Bennet	Kelly	Schiff
Blumenthal	Kim	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Lujan	Slotkin
Booker	Markey	Smith
Duckworth	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gallo	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Paul	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	
Hickenlooper	Reed	

NOT VOTING—4

Coons	Sanders
Cortez Masto	Shaheen

The nomination was confirmed.

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

The majority whip.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Kies nomination.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF KEN KIES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the motion to invoke cloture on Mr. Ken Kies, who is nominated to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy at the Treasury Department.

The Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy is the senior adviser to the Secretary of the Treasury for analyzing, developing, and implementing Federal tax policies and programs.

Mr. Kies is eminently qualified for this position. He has a total of 47 years of experience as a tax attorney, covering every aspect of the Internal Revenue Code. Mr. Kies has also been involved in every significant piece of Federal tax legislation since 1981.

If confirmed, Mr. Kies will be a valuable partner in our efforts to prevent a \$4 trillion-plus tax hike on American families and businesses and to deliver additional tax relief for middle-class workers and families.