

due to much needed death tax relief. We now see that raised—\$15 million for an individual, \$30 million for a couple filing jointly.

Tennessee small businesses make up 99.5 percent of businesses in our State. That is 99.5 percent. They are small businesses. They will keep their tax breaks and be able to hire more workers.

While these tax cuts will benefit all Americans, it is hard-working people—middle-income workers, lower income workers—who are going to see the largest reduction in Federal taxes as a percentage of their previous tax bill. After 4 years of Bidenflation, this is much needed relief for hard-working Americans.

Of course, tax cuts are just one part of the Big Beautiful Bill. We secured the largest ever investment in border security to complete the border wall and hire thousands of Border Patrol agents. We strengthened Medicaid for those who truly need it by enacting commonsense work requirements for able-bodied, childless adults. We restored fiscal sanity by eliminating hundreds of billions of dollars in far-left Green New Deal spending. These are huge wins for the American people.

The good news is that President Trump and congressional Republicans are only getting started on delivering on our mandate to make America great again.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TILLIS. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. TILLIS. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

Some may know and some may not that today is Medicaid's birthday, and I thought it was probably a good time to—or anniversary or whatever you want to call it. But I came down here to reconnect to a discussion that I was having with my colleagues and with the White House on some of the concerns I have with the provisions in the bill that we packaged that was called the Big Beautiful Bill. That is actually not a marketing term. It is literally what the name of the bill is.

First, I have to stipulate that there are aspects of this bill that I would love to vote on 10 times—for example, the tax reform. The tax portions of this bill were something I worked very hard, as a member of the Finance Committee, to get passed back in 2017. What we did there was to avoid the single largest tax increase in U.S. history. For those who say it was tax breaks to billionaires and corporations, you probably ought to read the language or have somebody who has read it explain it better. The tax reform measures help people who grew up like I did, first and

foremost. Go to that trailer park that I lived at on Richards Road in Antioch, TN, which is just south of downtown Nashville, or go to the one that I lived in in Jacksonville, FL, and ask them what happens—when you ever tax businesses—to their jobs.

I could get into a lot of other discussions, but the bottom line is, I didn't have a problem with the tax provisions. I actually wish that the tax had been in the content of the first bill and that we had taken the time to get the Medicaid policy right.

But I am back here again to talk about the Medicaid policy because we have to get it right. One of the reasons I decided to resign when I was confronted with the challenge of opposing this bill—I should say “retire,” not “resign.” I am still here—was to make the point that getting this policy right was more important than my getting reelected. I think the Medicaid policy in this bill is so fundamentally flawed that if we don't correct it that my colleagues—red State or blue State Republicans, purple State Republicans, and red State Republicans—may end up being guilty of almost the identical mistake that Barack Obama made when he forced ObamaCare down our throats without seeking a single Republican vote to get policy that made sense.

I was so convinced that Obama was wrong that I quit my job and worked full time to get the North Carolina legislature ready for only being in the majority for the second time since the Civil War as I was so convinced the policy was going to be wrong a year before it got implemented and that the Democrats had overreached. I became the second Republican speaker of the house in North Carolina, since the Civil War, based on a bad healthcare decision.

The policy that the House sent us in the reconciliation bill was good policy for Medicaid. It had a work requirement, which I support; it had all kinds of policies for waste, fraud, and abuse that made sense; and it saved \$100 billion over 10 years. But then somebody in the White House tried to convince the Senate that they should up the ante for \$200 billion more in revenue to pass policy that will do, I think, irreparable damage not only in the policy but in the politics, but we have time to fix it.

The reason I came to the floor today on the birthday of Medicaid is to say I believe the President does not want to harm qualified beneficiaries of Medicaid, but this bill will in its current form. There is a way to fix it. There is a way to have President Trump's legacy deliver on his promise not to push people off of Medicaid and government support systems who qualify for them. I am not talking about the ones who probably shouldn't be on it. There is a way to fix it, but if we don't fix it, I believe that our President's legacy—President Trump, whom I have supported; I have supported each one of his election efforts, and I support him to

this day—is at risk if we don't recognize we are done and move on to the next thing.

We don't have to touch a line of the tax policy. We can have a discussion about some of the renewable energy, but I am not going to have that discussion. I want to have a discussion about something that I believe could be the Republicans' ObamaCare. Now, there are some States that probably are not affected substantially, but the majority is. I believe, if we come together and work on this policy and also work on the policy that is set to expire at the end of September—and that is some of the subsidies for the healthcare exchanges for ObamaCare—we could get this right, and this President's legacy will be righting the mistake that was made by Obama and avoiding the mistake that his advisers have told him he should pursue.

So I want the President of the United States and my colleagues in the Senate body to know I am unbridled by any political considerations for the next 17 months, and I stand ready to work with my Republican colleagues and Democrats who are willing to be bipartisan and do something right for our healthcare policy here to get this right. And if I do nothing else in my remaining 17 months, that is worth the effort.

#### WAIVING QUORUM CALL

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

#### VOTE ON GAISER NOMINATION

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gaiser nomination?

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 450 Ex.]

#### YEAS—53

Banks	Cramer	Hoeven
Barrasso	Crapo	Husted
Blackburn	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Boozman	Curtis	Johnson
Britt	Daines	Justice
Budd	Ernst	Kennedy
Capito	Fischer	Lankford
Cassidy	Graham	Lee
Collins	Grassley	Lummis
Cornyn	Hagerty	Marshall
Cotton	Hawley	McConnell

McCormick Ricketts Sullivan  
 Moody Risch Thune  
 Moran Rounds Tillis  
 Moreno Schmitt Tuberville  
 Mullin Scott (FL) Wicker  
 Murkowski Scott (SC) Young  
 Paul Sheehy

## NAYS—45

Alsobrooks Hickenlooper Reed  
 Baldwin Hirono Rosen  
 Bennet Kaine Sanders  
 Blumenthal Kelly Schatz  
 Blunt Rochester Kim Schiff  
 Booker King Schumer  
 Cantwell Klobuchar Shaheen  
 Coons Luján Smith  
 Cortez Masto Markey Van Hollen  
 Duckworth Merkley Warner  
 Durbin Murphy Warnock  
 Fetterman Murray Warren  
 Gillibrand Ossoff Welch  
 Hassan Padilla Whitehouse  
 Heinrich Peters Wyden

## NOT VOTING—2

Gallego Slotkin

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). 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.

## CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant bill 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. 95, Joseph Kent, of Washington, to be Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

John Thune, Dan Sullivan, John Barrasso, Mike Rounds, Todd Young, Cynthia M. Lummis, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, Bernie Moreno, John R. Curtis, Ted Budd, Mike Crapo, Katie Boyd Britt, Jim Banks, Markwayne Mullin, Jon A. Husted, Steve Daines.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Joseph Kent, of Washington, to be Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 451 Ex.]

## YEAS—53

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

## NAYS—44

Alsobrooks Hickenlooper Reed  
 Baldwin Hirono Rosen  
 Bennet Kaine Sanders  
 Blumenthal Kelly Schatz  
 Blunt Rochester Kim Schiff  
 Booker King Schumer  
 Cantwell Klobuchar Shaheen  
 Coons Luján Smith  
 Cortez Masto Markey Van Hollen  
 Duckworth Merkley Warner  
 Durbin Murphy Warnock  
 Fetterman Murray Warren  
 Gillibrand Ossoff Welch  
 Hassan Padilla Whitehouse  
 Heinrich Peters Wyden

## NOT VOTING—3

Gallego Slotkin Whitehouse

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 44. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Joseph Kent, of Washington, to be Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

## MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today, marks the 60th anniversary of the day that President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Social Security Amendments of 1965, establishing Medicare and Medicaid—cornerstones of American healthcare. These programs provide millions, including 1.5 million people in Connecticut, with access to comprehensive and affordable healthcare.

Nothing is more important than our health. As the saying goes, if you don't have your health, you don't have anything; and if you don't have healthcare coverage, which for most Americans guarantees treatment, diagnoses, effective healthcare, you don't have your health.

I am here—I wish I could say—to celebrate these vital programs, but, really, I am here to defend them, to defend them against deep and damaging cuts made by Senate Republicans and the Trump administration. Their budget decimates Medicaid benefits. It threatens rural and pediatric hospitals. It in-

creases health insurance premiums for the majority of Americans. Let me repeat: It increases premiums paid by everyday Americans—the majority of our fellow citizens.

Health insurers are already proposing a median premium increase of 15 percent in 2026. That will be the largest in 5 years, and that is just an estimate. You know, if you have had any experience with health insurers, that if they are estimating 15 percent, it could well, in fact, likely be higher. These cuts are not about eliminating fraud or waste in the Federal government; they are about delivering tax breaks to billionaires on the backs of working Americans.

This bill is an absolute disgrace. The American people should hold every Member who voted for it accountable when they are next up for election.

It is the biggest Medicaid cut in our history. Over 900,000 people in Connecticut rely on Medicaid for their health insurance coverage; 30 percent of them are children.

In fact, in Connecticut, Medicaid covers 41 percent of births and 68 percent of people living in nursing homes. The majority of people in nursing homes, in other words, depend on Medicaid, and they could well be thrown out of those nursing homes.

Under this bill, up to 158,000 people in Connecticut will lose Medicaid, and 53,000 will lose their ACA coverage. Even those who keep their health coverage will see reduced benefits and strained providers as the State struggles to make up the difference. People in Connecticut are lucky because there will be an effort to make up the difference, but many other States won't have that ability.

Just to be clear, these cuts are going to have an impact on everyone because the Medicaid Program is a huge source of funding for all hospitals. All hospitals depend on Medicaid. Even if you are not there with Medicaid coverage, the quality of care that you will receive will suffer as a result of these cuts. So even if you have private health insurance, your nearest hospital could close. You may have to wait longer for an appointment to see a doctor. Your out-of-pocket costs may increase. Hospitals will attempt to recoup that lost funding on your back. They have no choice. They have to stay open, and they have to cover their costs.

To make matters worse, my Republican colleagues refuse to extend the ACA enhanced premium tax credits. And 112,000 people in Connecticut rely on these credits to lower their monthly premiums. They are a lifesaver. They are a lifeline to health insurance coverage.

Without the extension, 10,000 children are at risk of losing essential services, and 81 small business owners in the State will see their premiums skyrocket. Premiums will rise for small businesses as well as individuals.

These numbers are staggering. They are stunning. But they fail to capture