

understand they want a better life. We understand that. But the right way to do that is through legal channels, not through illegal channels. But one of the magnets that draws people to come to the country is access to taxpayer-provided free benefits, like free healthcare.

But the States like California that game the Medicaid system are the worst offenders when it comes to providing free access to healthcare using this Medicaid Program. But this is the provision that Democrats now want to repeal, the prohibition we passed in the One Big Beautiful Bill, the Working Families Tax Cut Act.

What is more, Democrats are asking us to spend billions of dollars in new spending because they won't vote for a stopgap spending measure. So we know that the Affordable Care Act subsidies—in other words, ObamaCare—are enormously expensive.

I won't spend much time here talking about the false promises upon which ObamaCare was sold: If you like your policy, you can keep it; if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor; and actually the claim that it lowered healthcare expenditures. None of that was true. And Democrats want to put those subsidies on steroids through the Biden-era, COVID, supercharged subsidy program. And they want to do it not just temporarily; they want to do it for the next 10 years, which will result in hundreds of billions—even a trillion-dollar-plus—of new spending.

Now, one of the things that we did in the One Big Beautiful Bill was we passed \$400 billion in deficit reduction. Why is that important? Because our country now owes roughly \$37 trillion. We are \$37 trillion in debt. And if we don't do something about that, we are going to be in deep trouble in the not-too-distant future. Right now, we pay more money on interest on the national debt than we do on defense, in a very dangerous world. That is unsustainable, and that is dangerous.

But the Democrats want to forget all that and spend hundreds of billions of dollars in new spending on a short-term, 9-week stopgap spending measure. And they say: If you won't agree with us, we are going to shut down the government.

The kind of spending Democrats have asked for would effectively erase all the savings we achieved through the commonsense spending reforms in the One Big Beautiful Bill. It is unconscionable that Senate Democrats are hurting the American people because they want more spending for their pet programs. Yet they are framing it as though Republicans are the ones forcing partisan demands.

That is false. All we are asking them to do is to keep the government open and pass the short-term continuing resolution that has already been passed by the House of Representatives.

The Democratic leader said, 2 days ago, on the floor:

Republicans have tried to stick us with a partisan CR that fails to protect Americans' healthcare.

Three days ago, the vice chair of the Appropriations Committee said:

Instead of talking with us about addressing healthcare . . . Republicans decided to pass a partisan continuing resolution.

Again, that is false. They said they don't want to fund illegal aliens. They say it is a partisan continuing resolution we insist on. Both of those are false. The continuing resolution proposed by Republicans has already passed the House of Representatives. It does not include partisan demands.

If Democrats do not want to pass a clean continuing resolution, what are they proposing? Well, a partisan continuing resolution. And I have talked about some of the provisions. The alternative continuing resolution that Democrats are proposing would not only repeal the One Big Beautiful Bill, effectively, but they make other partisan demands on top of that. The Democrat CR would eliminate provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill that are critical to putting our fiscal condition back on track, as I mentioned a moment ago.

In the Medicaid Program, we tightened eligibility. We added work requirements for able-bodied adults. We required stricter eligibility reporting and ensured that illegal immigrants do not get free healthcare benefits. The One Big Beautiful Bill was a critical step toward ensuring that Medicaid is there for the people who truly need it: the elderly, children, the disabled, not able-bodied adults.

Democrats have claimed over and over again they are not attempting to fund healthcare for illegal aliens, but as I have demonstrated, that is not true. Their proposed continuing resolution repeals the exact provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill that prevented illegal aliens from receiving those benefits.

Just for those who want to read it for themselves, this is section 2141 of the Democrats' proposed continuing resolution. It strikes section 71109 of the One Big Beautiful Bill. This is a provision that limits eligibility requirements and Federal payments to States that allow medical assistance for illegal aliens.

Medicaid has always been intended to be a lifeline to the most vulnerable Americans when it comes to their health insurance, but over the last decades it has become bloated with waste, fraud, and abuse. We cannot continue to serve the most vulnerable Americans for whom Medicaid was originally designed if we are going to be subsidizing other people, like able-bodied adults, who should be capable of contributing themselves. Further, extending these subsidies without reform would continue contributing to the ballooning costs of healthcare, now roughly 18 percent of our entire economy.

This is the same problem we have had with ballooning costs in higher education. The more the government subsidizes, the more bloated that industry becomes; and, consequently, the

providers raise prices, and those services become less affordable to ordinary middle-class Americans who would not otherwise rely on government benefits.

The Republican reforms to Medicaid in the One Big Beautiful Bill put the most vulnerable Americans first, but Democrats have refused to vote for a clean continuing resolution and, instead, demanded that Republicans repeal these monumental reforms before allowing the lights to stay on.

Democrats are also demanding to extend the enhanced Affordable Care Act subsidies, which are really Obamacare on steroids, which don't even expire until the end of this year. We will get to that, believe me, before the end of the year, but to hold this short-term stopgap spending bill hostage is really unconscionable.

To anyone who says that Republicans are proposing a partisan continuing resolution while Democrats are doing everything they can to keep the government open, I hope I have made it clear that the reality is just the opposite. Republicans do not want a shutdown.

Shutdowns don't benefit anybody, and the same problem that caused the government to shut down is there staring you in the face when government is reopened. I think we have learned that from hard experience.

A poison pill-packed continuing resolution is simply not the solution. So I hope we can get five more Democrats to join three other Democrats who have already voted to keep the government open to vote this afternoon in just a few minutes and reopen the government for the benefit of all Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak up to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled roll-call vote.

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

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF CHOOSE RESPECT DAY

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I am here on the floor today to ask unanimous consent to pass a very important resolution that I try to move forward every year. It is my Choose Respect Day resolution.

I want to thank Senator SCHIFF, my lead cosponsor on the other side of the aisle. And it is to kick off also Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

As a former AG like myself, this is really important to me and my State. I come down on the floor a lot to brag about the great State of Alaska in so many different areas, but this is one area where I don't like to brag about Alaska because there is not much to brag about. We have some of the highest rates of domestic violence and sexual assault than anyplace in the country—really bad.

So when I was attorney general a number of years ago, the Governor and I launched this big initiative called the Choose Respect Initiative. We changed the laws. We made perpetrators really pay if they were going to commit these heinous crimes in Alaska.

We got funding for lawyers and resources. We got different services, and we had ads all over TV in Alaska about choosing respect—real Alaska men choose respect; they don't commit these heinous acts; they don't hit their girlfriend; they don't do any of that kind of horrible stuff.

And it started to work in my State, to change the culture, which wasn't a good culture in Alaska. We are still doing that. So when I came to the Senate, I really wanted to continue this work. It is really important work—it has been bipartisan—to try to change the culture in our country.

We have very, very high rates—too high rates—of domestic violence and sexual assault in many places in America. We should all be focused on making sure the next generation of young men don't do that.

So one of the ways in which we have done that is my POWER Act, which has been to get pro bono legal services for domestic violence survivors and victims. This is an innovative idea that we started in Alaska and brought here to the Senate.

The POWER Act now has had over 61,000 attorneys across America provide pro bono legal assistance to survivors—61,000. That was from a bill here we had on the Senate floor. These are the kind of things we can do in the Senate, in the Congress, to address this very significant challenge in my State and across the country.

So this resolution builds on what we are doing across the board on many of the different Choose Respect initiatives that I have brought to the Congress in a bipartisan way over the years. It calls upon all of us to mark Choose Respect Day by teaching our youth about healthy relationships, supporting survivors, honoring those we have lost, and recommitting ourselves to the fundamental truth that every person deserves to live in freedom from violence and fear.

The call to choose respect is simple but powerful: If we live by it not just on October 1, as the resolution calls for, we can break the cycle of abuse, strengthen families, and build a safer, more respectful country.

I think, at this point right now in our Nation's history, we could all use that. I urge my colleagues to join me in passing this resolution. Together, let's honor survivors, remember victims, and choose respect in all we do.

Madam President, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 431, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 431) supporting the goals and objectives of Choose Respect Day.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 431) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

EN BLOC NOMINATIONS

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I am very hopeful that my colleagues here will move forward on this bipartisan, clean continuing resolution so we can get our government open again.

I do want to just explain to the American people and maybe some of our friends in the media a little dirty secret that is going on down here on the Senate floor. A lot of my Democratic colleagues are getting frustrated, not with us—not with us. We have had three already cross over and vote with us. There are a lot more who want to do it.

They are frustrated because they know we have got to reopen the government. They know this is the way to do it, a simple, bipartisan, clean continuing resolution. We have been doing this all the time here in the Senate. We have done it over 10 times during the Biden administration on the Republican side, but there is frustration.

I will give you my sense of why there is frustration on the Democrat side. Usually, in this place, when you run for leader—Democrat leader, Republican leader—and you are in leadership, there is kind of an unwritten rule that the leader will protect the broader membership and broader Members—on votes and different things. That is kind of what leadership is about.

This is the first time I have seen in my entire time here in the U.S. Senate where, on the Democrat side, the broader membership seems to be protecting just the leader. We all know why. He is worried about his left flank; worried about getting primaried.

So my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are getting frustrated, not with us. They know this is the right way to do it.

They are getting frustrated because they think they are having to protect their leader. This isn't the way it works—is supposed to work here. The minority leader previously called blocking a clean, bipartisan CR to get bigger demands from their side "political idiocy."

What we are viewing right now is a lot of political idiocy coming from the other side, and my colleagues on the

Democratic side are really starting to get frustrated, not with us but with their own leader.

I am hoping on this vote, in the next hour or so, for the American people, for the institution of the U.S. Senate, we have a couple more Democrat Senators who have the courage to break with the political idiocy we see right now on their side.

Vote with us. Reopen the government. They know it is the right thing to do. I hope that happens.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON S. RES. 412

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

The question occurs on adoption of the resolution.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 541 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeben	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
Curtis	Marshall	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Tuberville
Ernst	McCormick	Wicker
Fischer	Moody	Young

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—3

Coons	Cruz	Moran
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The resolution (S. Res. 412) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in the RECORD of September 18 (legislative day, September 16), 2025, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.