

hear clearly: If you stand with Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, you are a threat to the security of the entire world and the region. You cannot continue to function as a terrorist organization and think that Israel will look away or that America will look away. We will not and cannot and will not.

So I encourage this body to pause and realize what is happening on the other side of the world right now and what has been raging for 2 years today; and for those hostages that are still being held today, that we would remember and we would continue to be able to stand against anti-Semitism and with the nation of Israel.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, we are 7 days deep into a government shutdown—what a ridiculous waste of time; what a painful, ridiculous waste of time for the Nation.

I can't tell you how frustrating it is, because I have been here long enough now to be able to see what the negotiations look like. Let me tell you what it just looks like for the last few years even. Let's go back just through the Biden administration.

Every single end of September, as we approached the deadline for government funding, this body had a conversation: Do we want to remain open and continue negotiating or do we want a shutdown? And every single time, during the Biden administration, this body said: It is harmful to the American people and to Federal workers to have a shutdown. Let's keep things open and continue to be able to negotiate.

So at the end of every September, which is the end of our fiscal year, this body voted to keep the government open and to continue to negotiate.

What happens when the Trump administration comes? Well, during the Trump administration, Democrats have determined that they want to show they are fighting and raging—that they are the resistance against President Trump—and so they have determined that the best way to do that is just to be able to shut the government down.

The same effect happens for Federal workers. The same effect happens for the Nation. We have the same opinions across the world as the entire world looks at the United States of America, the greatest Nation in the world, which is apparently not able to keep its government open because my Democratic colleagues have determined they want to show that they are the resistance.

Well, who gets to pay the penalty for the resistance, and what does that really look like?

We have had several votes that have happened here where we have had what is called a clean continuing resolution. This body knows it well because we voted on 13 of them in the last 4 years—a clean continuing resolution—and passed all of them. It was just a moment to say: Can we keep the gov-

ernment open and continue to negotiate?

The body determined: Yes, let's keep negotiating, but let's not hurt Federal workers and their families and not hurt members of the military and their families. Let's not hurt them, but let's keep negotiating here.

So we did that 13 times in just the last 4 years, until now.

My Democratic colleagues, the President knows full well, have brought forward a proposal, and their proposal is titled "Continuing Appropriations and Extensions and Other Matters." Now, ours is just titled "Continuing Appropriations and Extensions." Theirs is titled "Continuing Appropriations and Extensions and Other Matters." It should make you say: Well, what are the other matters?

Ours just keeps the government open; that is, the Republicans' just keeps the government open. It is status quo, where we are—the same level of spending, the same functionality. That is where it focuses in on.

My Democratic colleagues have brought up their own proposal, which is \$1.5 trillion in spending addition, and they include a couple of new little nuggets in there—their "and other matters." They throw in, like, section 135, which has a new element on carbon management expenditures dealing with fossil fuels. They have a new section on climate change initiatives that are built into their "and other matters." They have section 154, which is getting additional funding to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

They have section 2306, which allows a new extension of electric vehicles getting access to HOV lanes.

These are the demands that they have put in to say: We will not reopen the government unless we get electric vehicles into HOV lanes and additional money for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and carbon management expenditures.

Oh, by the way, there was a \$50 billion rural healthcare fund that Republicans passed in the One Big Beautiful Bill. They also want to get rid of that \$50 billion rural healthcare fund, saying: We need to wipe that out.

Can I tell you, rural hospitals really need the help. Fifty billion would really be a huge help for them. We have called that the Moon shot to be able to bring rural healthcare up to the standards they need to be across the country. They just wiped that out and included that in their "in other matters" section, to say "Yes, we want to open up the government, but we also want to close down more rural hospitals at the same time."

Listen, we have disagreements on things. It is not just because we are different parties; we come from different States and different areas. We have different perspectives. Welcome to America. We have different opinions on things. That is what this body is supposed to be about. But when we have disagreements, we should be able to ac-

tually sit down like grownups and talk to each other and figure out how to be able to solve them. That is what actually should be done. This is not a radical concept; this is a pretty straightforward concept.

Surprisingly enough, my colleagues have agreed with me in the past on this. Let me give just you some examples.

My colleague Senator BEN RAY LUJAN in September of last year said:

Shutting down the government should be a non-starter.

My colleague Senator MARK WARNER said:

Government shutdowns unleash chaos on Federal workers, delay pay for servicemembers, and weaken our position on the global stage.

My colleague BERNIE SANDERS said:

Shutting down the government is a serious and dangerous action that we must do everything possible to prevent. Shutting down the government would impact tens of millions of our fellow Americans who would be unable to access government services.

My colleague and friend JACKY ROSEN said:

A government shutdown would be devastating for [Nevada] families. [It would] increase housing costs, take away food assistance for seniors & children in need.

My colleague Senator MARK KELLY in September of 2023 said:

A government shutdown would have serious impacts. Servicemembers won't get their paychecks. Airports could have major delays. Nutrition assistance for children could be cut off. We can't let any of that happen.

My colleague Senator ELIZABETH WARREN said:

The least we can do—the bare minimum that we can do—would be to pass a continuing resolution to keep the doors open and the lights on.

My colleague BRIAN SCHATZ said:

I've seen the same thing, over and over again. Shutdowns don't work.

My colleague Senator GARY PETERS said:

A government shutdown will be a disaster for our economy and for people in Michigan and across the country.

My colleague TIM KAINE said:

I'm a senator from Virginia. Some of the hardest effects of a shutdown would be seen in my state.

My colleague DICK DURBIN said:

[Negotiating to avoid a shutdown holds] the livelihood of the American people and the proper functioning of this government hostage.

My colleague AMY KLOBUCHAR said:

Shutdowns are not good for the economy.

How about this one. I have to find my favorite. My colleague CHRIS MURPHY, my friend, made the statement:

There is a time and a place to debate health care, just like there is a time and place to debate energy policy and immigration and education—but not when the funding of the federal government, and all the lives that are impacted by it, hang in the balance.

I could not agree more.

So we have an opportunity just to be able to open the government up. We

have literally a bill on the floor today, just like we had yesterday, that has already passed the House of Representatives that would just open us up for another 6 weeks now, allow us to be able to get appropriations work done and to reopen—the same thing we did 4 times during the Biden administration in September; the same thing we have done 13 times in the last 4 years just to be able to keep the negotiations going and to not have all these consequences.

I have worked for years to be able to end government shutdowns. My colleagues that are here on the floor know it full well; we have talked about it before multiple times.

I have a bill. It is called Prevent Government Shutdowns. It is very straightforward. It just says that if we get to a moment like this, instead of Federal workers and their families suffering the consequences, we do. We have to stay in session 7 days a week, we can't move to any other bill other than appropriations, and we have to be able to get our work done.

It is as simple as, if you don't finish your work in class, you have to stay after class to finish your work, but it holds everyone else harmless and puts the pressure on Members of Congress, where it should be.

This is not a controversial issue outside of this body. The last time we had a vote on this bill, we had 56 votes, and 1 Member that was absent that day stated publicly they would have voted for it if they had been in that day. So we would have had 57 votes. We just need 60 to be able to make this thing law so that we would literally never have a government shutdown ever again—ever.

We would still have the debate on budget issues. We are going to have issues of budget disagreement. That is going to happen. We don't agree on everything. We should have the fights on budget, but we should have the fights here and hold everyone else harmless in the process.

We are at 57. We just needed 60 votes, and literally this day and this time wouldn't happen.

We need to solve this, and we can. We have solved a lot of difficult issues in the Senate. This is not too hard to solve.

My friend and colleague who is the ranking member on Appropriations has worked incredibly hard—Senator MURRAY—on appropriations for years and knows this process can be done well. But the last time we did appropriations in the time and in the order it should have been done was 1997—1997.

So let's fix our process. The entire country is staring at us, thinking, can't you guys get this together?

Yes, we can. We just have to agree not only to reopen the government, which should be the lowest threshold, but then fix our process of how we actually do this work to make sure that we actually get the 12 appropriations bills done on time, and when we don't, we stay after class until it is done and just stay at it.

We can figure this out. There are 100 smart people in this room—100 smart, stubborn people but 100 smart people in this room. Let's figure it out together.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, let me just start by giving our lawless President and OMB Director a little primer on the letter of the law because this morning, we learned they are plotting to try to rob furloughed Federal workers of backpay at the end of this shutdown.

This flies in the face of the plain text of the law, which could not be more clear. President Trump should actually know this. He has caused more shutdowns than any other President, after all, and he signed the law that guaranteed their pay. It is not new, it is not surprising, and, in fact, OPM guidance that the administration actually issued last month reaffirmed that furloughed employees will be paid.

Trump doesn't get to change the rules and rob workers just because he is worried his shutdown is backfiring. Scaring and intimidating workers will not work. He is not fooling anyone.

I know Republican leaders desperately want to ignore the looming healthcare crisis they caused. They have put their heads in the sand for months. They have spun wild lies to try to bury the truth, and they are hoping people stop talking about it. But every day, that gets just harder because every day, another warning light goes off showing just how devastating it will be if Republicans refuse to extend the ACA tax credits and let people's premiums skyrocket.

A new Kaiser Family Foundation poll found that 7 out of 10 families would not be able to afford their coverage if premiums doubled, and 4 in 10 would likely just go uninsured. That means that people will skip their basic care, they will skimp on their prescriptions, and they will miss lifesaving treatments. The hard reality is that people will die—people who otherwise would have sought the care they needed.

To every Republican who thinks they can keep sitting on their hands and waiting this out, you need to understand this is not some distant crisis you can ignore. Premiums are being locked in right now. Letters are going out to families announcing shocking price increases this month. In Idaho, open enrollment actually starts next week.

How is that not urgent to every Republican who keeps trying to say "We can talk about this later"? "Later" is simply too late.

By the way, why wouldn't Republican leaders talk about this earlier? We have been asking to fix this for months and months and months.

For all the talk of "Oh, we can't discuss healthcare while government is shut down," well, you didn't discuss it while government was open either. Where have you been? And where are you right now, for that matter?

House Republicans are not even here, and they have not been here for 3 weeks. I cannot help but note the stark contrast between how little House Republicans seem to care about opening up the government and preventing massive healthcare hikes and how much they cared about shoveling trillions in tax breaks at some of the richest people in the world earlier this year. Where is that urgency now?

I mean, when the tax breaks for billionaires were set to expire in December, that was the same time as these healthcare credits expire. Republicans made that priority No. 1. You can bet they fast-tracked relief for the bigwigs and fat cats because heaven forbid billionaires like Trump have to worry about filling up their private jets.

But families worried about healthcare? Republican leaders refuse to talk about it. They voted down efforts to save these tax credits three times before government funding was even in question, and they have spent the last few weeks saying that our insistence on preventing people's premiums from doubling is "unreasonable." Unreasonable?

Even now, the best Republicans can offer is that later we can maybe, possibly, talk about potentially doing something someday. That is pretty cold comfort to families who are staring down thousands upon thousands in higher healthcare costs next year. Those premium hikes aren't maybe happening someday; they are for real, and they are getting finalized right now.

If the Republican leader would rather send us home for the weekend than have a serious conversation; if House Republicans want to keep hiding as far as they can from the negotiating table; if you are going to not talk with us, then I beg my colleagues to at least talk to your constituents and see what this healthcare crisis looks like for them, because here is the thing Republicans seem especially keen to ignore: This is a problem where inaction will overwhelmingly hurt their own constituents.

News flash for my colleagues: Over three-quarters of the families with healthcare coverage through the ACA marketplace are in red States.

Do you know which five States will see the highest healthcare rate hikes next year? West Virginia is looking at a 387-percent rate hike for families that rely on ACA tax credits; Wyoming, 382 percent; Alaska, a 346-percent rate hike; Tennessee, 320 percent; and Mississippi, 314 percent. Those are five red States where premiums are going to more than quadruple for families that rely on those tax credits.

But do you know what? Let's keep going. Let's do the next five. These are States where the average premium will more than triple for families relying on the tax credits: Texas, a 289-percent increase; South Carolina, 285 percent; Alabama, 284 percent; South Dakota, 235 percent; and North Dakota, 234 percent.

So there you have it, the 10 States facing the biggest healthcare increases if Republicans refuse to act, all red States.

And you know what—I can still go on—premiums are going to more than double for families relying on the tax credits for States like Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, nearly every other red State. So the bottom line is, a lot of people are going to be hurt if Republicans refuse to save healthcare, and they are represented by Republicans. At least, they would be represented by Republicans, but our House colleagues are nowhere to be found. They have been gone for 3 weeks.

So my message to Republican leaders: You need to get serious about opening up the government and addressing the healthcare crisis before those premiums double for families across the country. You need to get serious now before those higher costs are locked in and before families back home decide they can't afford to stay healthy.

And, you know, even if Republicans want to hide from the negotiating table, they are not going to be able to hide from this issue because if they stay home and refuse to come back to DC to hammer out a solution, the people they represent back home are going to make their voices heard about this. They are going to say: Hey, my monthly premium is going up by over a thousand bucks—monthly premium. What are you doing about that?

They are going to say: Hey, I am going to lose my healthcare. What am I supposed to do?

They are going to say: Hey, if you care so much about opening the government like you say, if you care so much about lowering costs, why don't you get back and go to work?

When that message breaks through to all the Republicans who are just trying to ignore it, as I think it is very clear it is beginning to, here is another message for them: Democrats are still here. We are still at the table. And we are still ready to work together on a bipartisan deal to reopen the government and address this healthcare crisis.

I yield the floor.

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

ISRAEL

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today we mark 2 years since the horrific attack in Israel on October 7, 2023.

Two years ago, Israel was the victim of one of the most vicious, vile, terrible crimes in recent memory—maybe in all of history. Thousands of Hamas terrorists poured across the border and slaughtered more than 1,200 Israelis and abducted dozens more.

So today we remember, as we must, all who lost their lives, and we remember the families who have lost their loved ones. And our hearts go out to them, as they did in those days immediately following that horror.

We cannot forget the 48 hostages still enduring unimaginable suffering at the hands of Hamas, and we pray for their return. The wound of October 7 is still healing. It may never heal, but it is also a call to action and remembrance.

In the days immediately following October 7, I traveled to Israel. I met with families of those hostages. I have spoken since then to members of the IDF and to Palestinians. The war has never been against Palestinians; it is against Hamas. And I have been so deeply moved by the strength and bravery of those hostage families as well as many others. I have family in Israel, so this war is personal, and in my visits to Israel, I have also visited other nations and met with leaders in the region.

And today, I have more hope than ever that there is a narrow path to bringing those hostages home, to providing more humanitarian aid, and meeting the crisis in Gaza—a humanitarian crisis—as well as a permanent cease-fire, an end to Hamas's threat to Israel.

Today, I stand in solidarity with Israel. I believe in Israel's right to self-defense against this kind of terror. We should commit ourselves to take advantage of this window of opportunity. I hope that the peace plan that is on the table will provide a path, as it should, to everyone who wants an end to the suffering and bloodshed and the humanitarian crisis that continues, a peace that guarantees the security of the Israeli people, an end to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and the end of Hamas, so that all may live free of fear and oppression.

I hope that the memory of all who lost their lives on October 7 will be a blessing and that we will never forget them and honor them through action, honor them through the pursuit of peace and justice.

I am proud to have visited as well with members of communities in this country that have stood with Israel, and I am hopeful that the bipartisan unity consistently shown by this body over decades will be continued. It needs to be strengthened. It has frayed, but bipartisanship has always characterized support for Israel.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will treat this day not only with the solemnity and seriousness that it deserves but also with a renewed commitment to make this cause bipartisan, the pursuit of peace, support of Israel, an end to the humanitarian crisis, and a lasting, stable solution for the Middle East.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

RECESS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:12 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m.

and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

EN BLOC NOMINATIONS—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, it has been 1 whole week since Republicans shut down the government. So why did they close the government? Because Republicans decided they would rather shut down the entire government than lower costs and save healthcare for millions of Americans.

Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress are knocking 15 million people off their health insurance, driving up the cost of healthcare for everyone else, closing rural hospitals, shutting down community health centers, and much, much more—all so that they can fund giant tax cuts for billionaires. Those are Republican priorities.

Democrats are fighting to prevent insurance premiums from doubling. We are fighting to help American families hang onto their health insurance, because no one should go bankrupt because they got sick and needed to see a doctor.

In the next few days, Americans will begin getting letters in the mail, telling them their insurance premiums are going up—way, way up. For some families, those premiums are doubling. Others will get priced out of their plans completely, leaving them with no coverage at all.

Here is what that means: Thanks to Republicans in Congress, a 60-year-old couple making \$85,000 a year will have to pay more than \$22,000 every year to keep their coverage—\$22,000. For families already hanging on by their fingernails, that could be a matter of keeping healthcare coverage or just giving up, and that could be a matter of life and death.

I know what it is like. Growing up, there was never a time when my family didn't worry about money. My daddy ended up as a janitor. When I was 12, my daddy had a heart attack. He lost his job. The family's station wagon was repossessed, and we were about to lose our home. My mother had never worked outside the home, but that is when she put on her best dress, got herself a minimum wage job of answering phones at Sears, and saved our home and saved our family.

Our healthcare system was already broken with high premiums, insurance denials, and huge copays, and that was before Donald Trump and the Republicans decided to make the healthcare crisis so much worse.

Democrats are fighting to reverse Republicans' giant healthcare cuts and lower costs for Americans. Right now, it is only the Republicans in Congress who stand in the way. Affordable Care Act tax credits help people afford their healthcare, and they are set to expire at the end of the year. And insurance companies are resetting their rates right now—right now.