

the addiction problem did as well. Just at the time, we entered into the opioid addiction, which swamped the United States and needed this kind of response in Congress. That was one thing.

The second thing, before the Affordable Care Act, if you had any history of any illness, coverage would be excluded for that illness when you got your health insurance plan. So most plans were worthless for people who came into the market looking for healthcare coverage if they had any history whatsoever. That was eliminated, and I am glad it was.

We also extended health insurance coverage for children of families to age 26. The belief was simple: When your child, your son or your daughter, graduates college and starts looking for a job, they may not have luck at the outset. They may not have a full-time job when they finally do find employment. And they probably, in those days, had no health insurance offered to them as part-time employees. So we let young people stay under their family health insurance plan until they reached the age of 26.

Those are the types of things that have been decried by many Republicans as socialism, too much government, too much regulation. But it meant that the health insurance market was actually worth something to families who otherwise were excluded from it or found it too expensive.

As I said, we passed that major legislation 15 years ago—roughly 15 years ago—at a time when not a single Republican would support it.

Now we are back into a period—and I listened closely to the Republican leader this morning—where we are asking: What are we going to do moving forward?

Here is the problem: For those people who had limited income, health insurance was beyond their reach. And so we offered a tax break—a tax credit—for people to help pay their health insurance premiums. Otherwise, they were too expensive. That health insurance tax credit helped millions of American families afford health insurance, and we moved forward.

But there came a time when the Republicans had a chance, with their own majority, to address the Affordable Care Act, and they started eliminating that health insurance credit.

As a consequence, many families—24 million, we believe, nationwide—face the prospect that their health insurance premiums are going to be too high and increase dramatically, beyond their reach in family income.

And that is exactly what is happening. Families across America who qualify for the Affordable Care Act health insurance tax credit are learning that their health insurance premiums are going up dramatically. I receive letters and contacts from people in Illinois, which I will put in the record in just a moment here.

But Senator THUNE, who is a friend and the Republican leader of the Sen-

ate, came to the floor this morning and pointed to two areas he thinks needed to be changed in the Affordable Care Act. One is whether your income level should be taken into consideration for the tax credit, and I believe it should and he does, too, I think. I don't want to put words in his mouth, but that is what I understood him to say this morning. Secondly, that there are zero premium policies that are being taken advantage of by some unethical people.

I think those are two legitimate areas of debate. I want to offer, as a Democratic Senator, my good offices and personal effort to try to fix those two problems if it means we can come together and restore tax credits for families that otherwise cannot afford their health insurance premiums. We are going to have a chance to do it.

And it was Senator THUNE who created that chance. He said the Democrats could offer a basic bill to improve the system, which I am sure we will. And I hope that the Republicans may offer amendments to it or may have their own approach that we can debate leading into it. The problem is, we have precious little time. It is supposed to be done before December 12, and that is only a few days away. Some of these changes are significant. We ought to take a little time to make sure we get them right.

I am just saying, as an offer—and I hope the American people follow this closely—this Democrat, and I am sure others as well on my side of the aisle, will sit down with Senator THUNE to try to address the problems that he raised this morning. They are legitimate concerns. We may see them a little differently, but let's discuss it.

Let's do something we hardly ever do in the U.S. Senate anymore: Let's legislate. Let's do it on a bipartisan basis. They don't have 60 votes on their side of the aisle, nor do we. But if we come together, we can muster 60 votes for a good change and say to millions of Americans with health insurance premiums they can't afford that there is a way out of this.

Let us extend the Affordable Care Act tax credits with some changes, as suggested, but do it for a period of time that is reasonable and gives people peace of mind. If we are concerned about the cost of living and family budgets, for goodness' sake, it starts with healthcare. Health insurance premiums can be so high, people have no choice.

OPERATION MIDWAY BLITZ

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to address another issue on a different topic. For more than 3 months, Chicago has endured President Trump's Operation Midway Blitz. It is a cruel campaign that swept up innocent citizens, legal American residents, and immigrants who pose absolutely no threat to public safety.

Remember why the President wanted to send troops and more resources to

the Department of Homeland Security into the city of Chicago? Because he was going after "the worst of the worst." He was going after terrorists, murderers, rapists, the criminally insane who somehow got into this country, and he was going to make it safer by going after them. What has actually happened? The Trump administration justified their actions by saying that they were going after "the worst of the worst," but what happened was just the opposite.

Federal agents, under President Trump, have used excessive force in Chicago while patrolling our streets, including deploying pepper balls and tear gas into crowds, using zip ties to contain women and children, and physically tackling peaceful protesters to the ground. If you think I am making this up, virtually everything I just said is verified by video.

In a hearing challenging the treatment of press and protesters by Federal immigration agents, U.S. District Judge Sara Ellis said the "use of force shocks the conscience" and "this conduct shows no sign of stopping," said the Federal judge. In contrast to this judge's observation, Border Patrol Chief Greg Bovino boasted in his deposition, almost mockingly, that "all uses of force have been more than exemplary." I will just tell you, Mr. Bovino, look at the videotape.

To rein in the lawlessness, Judge Ellis issued a preliminary injunction restricting the agents' use of chemical agents against protesters. Outside of a Lutheran church in Albany Park several weeks ago, after an 11 o'clock service broke up, the parishioners were leaving the church. The ICE agents were waiting on the sidewalk and dropped a tear gas canister in front of the church. Whistles were going off and eventually ICE agents left. But do you think would-be terrorists were at that Lutheran service? I don't think so. It was harassment in that neighborhood.

Judge Ellis issued a finding, a 233-page opinion, explaining her ruling on examining specific instances of Federal immigration agents' use of excessive force. While the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals has temporarily paused that injunction, which she issued while it considers the government's appeal, the court noted that Judge Ellis "has developed voluminous . . . robust factual findings" of wrongdoing by these agents.

And though some courts have acted as a critical guard against the President's lawlessness, those rulings don't change the fact that the Trump administration's militarized raids are dangerous political theater meant to spread fear and advance an anti-immigrant agenda.

After wreaking havoc in Illinois and now Charlotte, reports indicate the city of New Orleans is Greg Bovino's next target. I ask my Republican colleagues: What if this Midway Blitz comes to your State, your hometown? What is stopping the President from

sowing fear there, conducting lawless raids in your cities? It is up to all of us to denounce this kind of conduct.

Just incidentally, they did a survey of 600 of the people who have been arrested in Chicago in the Midway Blitz, going after “the worst of the worst” criminals. What percentage of those 600 do you think actually had any kind of criminal record that was serious? It was 2 percent, 16 of them—16 people out of 600.

Millions of dollars being spent to terrorize innocent people and wreck these communities and their economies, and it turns out the return rate was 2 percent. Sixteen would-be criminals were brought to justice at the expense of our community.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a separate subject, in just a few weeks, the Affordable Care Act’s enhanced premium tax credits are set to expire. We have precious little time to act. That means, on January 1 of next year, millions of Americans will see their health insurance costs skyrocket, and some will have to drop health insurance coverage completely because they just can’t afford the premiums. Will they get sick? You bet. Will they go to the hospital? Many will. Will they get treated? Yes. Will they be able to pay their bills with their health insurance premiums? Unfortunately, not if they drop coverage.

That includes my constituent Jess, a hair stylist in Chicago who was diagnosed with breast cancer last year. Jess said that if the tax credits go away, as they are supposed to on January 1, she would be forced to pay more for healthcare and will have to make a “lifestyle change to pay the difference,” potentially working more shifts. She also worries about a lapse of coverage if the price increase forces her to switch plans. Any gap in coverage could jeopardize her lifesaving cancer treatment.

How would you like to have that hanging over your head? Premiums of your health insurance plan go through the roof, and you need constant coverage because of a diagnosis of breast cancer. No American family should face that.

Here is the good news though. We can make a difference here in the Senate. We can stop Americans like Jess from falling off this looming healthcare cliff. As part of the bipartisan agreement to end the longest government shutdown in American history, Leader THUNE, who was on the floor this morning, gave me his word, and I accepted it, that he will hold a vote in this Chamber extending these subsidies to Jess and others who desperately need help.

Last week, reports emerged from the White House about plans to release a proposal that would extend these subsidies for 2 years. The President was supporting that. Imagine my surprise

after trying to cut or repeal the Affordable Care Act more than 70 times, after he promised on the campaign trail that he had “concepts of a plan,” whatever the heck that is—finally, we were to see the details of the Republican healthcare agenda for America.

But congressional Republicans jumped all over the White House and told the President he couldn’t do it. They threw cold water on the idea of the President cooperating with the Democrats to solve this problem. The President has been tough to pin down on this subject, and Republicans know that they have a losing hand because they have no plan.

So far, their signature accomplishment is a law that would kick 11 million Americans off Medicaid and shutter rural hospitals in my State and others.

It is my hope that the President and Republicans will come to the table and negotiate in good faith in the few days that remain in the December session. Let’s do this together. Let’s fix the tax credit that is available to families who struggle to pay health insurance premiums. If they don’t, we will put our proposal on the floor, and the American people will see where each party stands when it comes to helping deserving American families who need a helping hand.

If our offer on the Democrat side is rejected, the American public will know, with every paycheck, with every prescription, with every hospital bill, which party stood on their side and which didn’t.

The time to make a good-faith effort on a bipartisan basis is now. Just 13 days from now is the deadline to enroll or change plans before the first of the year. Before and during the shutdown, my Republican colleagues argued there was plenty of time to craft a fix before the subsidies expire. The clock is ticking, and we need to act on a bipartisan basis.

When I voted to end the government shutdown, it was controversial. But I said I would not wage a political strategy at the expense of my neighbor’s paycheck or food for his family. I meant it. But I, too, cannot sit idly by while 20 million Americans go without gas or groceries in order to pay their health insurance premiums. This is a question of fundamentals: Will you be able to afford the healthcare you and your family need? Let’s get this done on behalf of every American in red and blue communities alike.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Maine.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

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

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

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 3296

are printed in today’s RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The youthful junior Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. JUSTICE. Youthful. I like that.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

HONORING SPECIALIST SARAH BECKSTROM AND STAFF SERGEANT ANDREW WOLFE

Mr. JUSTICE. Mr. President, I would tell everyone just this—all those up in the Galleries, everybody—I am probably going to need your prayers to get through this, because we have had something happen in the small but great State of West Virginia that absolutely is tragic beyond belief.

I mean, look at these two young, beautiful people. We have lost Sarah, haven’t we? And Andrew is just clinging for his life.

West Virginia is really hurting—really hurting. Our National Guard is really hurting but nowhere close—nowhere possibly close—to how these families are really hurting. So in every single way, I ask for your prayers.

Just think of the call that came right before Thanksgiving—Thanksgiving, of all times of the year. Think about that call. Think about basically the senseless attack on America, but think about that call to these families and how bad bad really is.

You see, in my little State of West Virginia—I will just tell you this—the people are proud; the people are smart; the people are craftsmen; they are good people; they are loving people; they are neighbors. They are absolutely a people that are appreciative—appreciative of all. It is amazing just how deeply appreciative they are when somebody does something that helps them in any way.

I have got to tell you this real quick. I had brown hair at one time, and I was really skinny. I grew up in the little town of Beckley, WV. I used to ride my bike absolutely from where we lived on a little dirt road, a little red dog road at the time—and “red dog” is something they just make out of, you know, coal piles that become slate and just got burnt, and they built a great road. With all that being said, I would ride my bike 8 miles across town to Little League practice. You see, I lived in Mayberry. That is all there is to it.

Now, think about our National Guard. You know, there is story after story.

I was able to be the Governor of the great State of West Virginia for 8 years, and I worked hand in hand with them. It was unbelievable what General Hoyer and General Crane and all the great people of the National Guard—they are phenomenal beyond all possible comparison. That is why