

healthcare in America. ObamaCare is a failure. ObamaCare is unaffordable.

Let me point out, not a single Republican voted for ObamaCare, not one. Premiums for people on ObamaCare have gone up over 220 percent since ObamaCare became law 15 years ago. For people that have ObamaCare, their deductibles have doubled. A family of four now pays \$10,000 more for the coverage today than it did before ObamaCare.

Competition for selling insurance in the United States has collapsed. In rural counties in my home State of Wyoming, your home State, Mr. President, of Oklahoma, people lost so many of the options they had to buy insurance. The insurance providers have dried up. Today, many counties are left with one provider only for people to buy from. Some counties have none. Rural hospitals are struggling.

More than 100 rural hospitals have closed since ObamaCare became law. Hundreds more are at risk because of the devastating effect of ObamaCare on healthcare in our Nation.

Let's go back and recall what President Obama told the Nation as he was promoting ObamaCare and every one of the Democrats voted for it, every single one of them. He said: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. He said: If you like your policy, you can keep your policy. These are the things that the President of the United States told the American people when Obama was in the White House. He went on to say probably the biggest lie of all. He said your insurance premiums would go down by \$2,500 a year for families.

Every single one of these was a lie. The American people see it. The American people—even the New York Times said that "ObamaCare is pricey." They said that about a month ago. The Washington Post admitted that ObamaCare was never affordable. These aren't my words; these are the words of the New York Times and the Washington Post.

How do Democrats continue to cover up the failure, to continue to mislead the American people? They tried to do it with government subsidies. They tried to cover up the failures of ObamaCare with government-paid subsidies—not to the American people but directly to the American insurance companies.

When they found out those subsidies weren't enough, what did they do when those juicy subsidies weren't carrying the day? They said: Let's add new subsidies on top of it, which is what they are talking about extending. Those new juicier subsidies today, they want to extend those for 3 more years.

They put them in place during COVID. They called them the Biden COVID bonus subsidies. Now they want to make them permanent. They want to extend them 3 years. Now they want to make them permanent, have the American people—have the Treasury of the United States send more money to

insurance companies as the cost of healthcare continues to climb.

When Biden was President, Democrats created these Biden COVID bonuses, new subsidies, added on top to prop up ObamaCare because it was falling. ObamaCare was toppling. Democrats said: We can't have this. Let's send hundreds of billions of more dollars to insurance companies.

Let's be very clear: The money does not go to the American people. It is a main line straight from the U.S. Government Treasury into the bank accounts of big insurance companies. The American people, the consumers, are cut out of the equation. American consumers have no way to say how the money is spent, and they need to have a voice in this. They have the government writing big checks.

There is no incentive to control costs. Zero incentive to compete. As a result, insurance companies continue to raise premiums as high as they want, and their profits continue to go up.

These increases aren't because the Biden COVID bonuses are expiring, although that is what the Democrats are trying to say. Remember, Democrats chose the date of the expiring of these subsidies when they put this into law in 2022. That is what they did. They had the House, Senate, White House and said: We are going to put more money in—even they realized COVID was going to be done by the end of this year—so they set this up as an expiring date. Now they realize: Oh, no, ObamaCare continues to topple over. We need to prop it up with more government money to insurance companies.

The end of these Biden COVID bonuses explain about 4 percent of next year's projected 20-percent spike in insurance premiums. These huge premium increases explain why the stock prices of insurance companies have soared for 500 to 1,000 percent since ObamaCare became law. That is what we are seeing. That is the reality of this. Big insurance companies, not the American people, are whom the Democrats continue to support financially.

Democrats created a system with zero accountability. Now they want to extend this broken system with these additional subsidies for another 3 years with zero reforms, nothing. They are not going after the waste, not going after the fraud, not going after the abuse. Oh, no, Democrats are happy paying massive subsidies, and for everybody, for people making over a quarter of a million dollars a year, people making over half a million dollars a year. Nope, keep sending the money over to the insurance companies for all their rich, fat-cat friends.

The Biden COVID bonuses are not improving patient care, I will tell you that as a doctor. For every taxpayer dollar spent on these subsidies, Americans believe they get about 34 cents of value. Where does the rest of the money go? Waste, fraud, abuse, and, yes, corruption.

How do we know there is corruption? Last year, the American people filed over 200,000 complaints with the Federal Government about that specific thing. They complained because they were unknowingly signed up or switched into ObamaCare plans, things they didn't choose, they didn't want, they didn't ask for. Those are 200,000 that complained. How many more were there that didn't know about it or didn't know enough or whom to complain to? Insurers signed up individuals for insurance plans they didn't even know they had. Biden COVID bonuses are an expensive, fraud-ridden failure, and the Democrats want to extend them for another 3 years.

Continuing to pour billions of dollars more into the pockets of big insurance companies without meaningful protection against fraud will not lower costs in healthcare. It will not help the American people. Republicans believe Americans deserve high-quality affordable care. It is not what people got under ObamaCare, not at all.

Republicans believe taxpayer dollars should go directly to hard-working people, not to the big insurance companies. Give buying power to the people. Let people make decisions. I trust the American people. You want to empower Americans to make their own decisions about healthcare, certainly, and about their own families and what the needs are for their family, what is right for them.

There is a clear divide between the Democrats and Republicans on healthcare. And on one side of the aisle, you have Democrats protecting a broken system with not a single plan to lower costs. On this side of the aisle, we have Republicans fighting to give people what they wanted all along, the care they need from a doctor they choose, at a price they can afford.

I yield the floor.

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

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, this past Saturday marked 50 years since the passing of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1975.

Before IDEA, children with disabilities were often institutionalized or excluded from classrooms, deprived of the support needed to achieve their God-given potential. IDEA changed that by guaranteeing every child, regardless of ability, the right to a free and appropriate public education.

The IDEA said that every child—every child—is worthy of reaching their full potential and that the Federal Government ought to provide the resources to make that possible.

Massachusetts, the birthplace of public education, first passed a State law, section 766, which established the high legal standard that would be adapted

and expanded federally as IDEA. I was proud to vote for that bill, section 766, as a State representative—one of my first votes in my career. That bill then became the law for the entire country.

In the decades since the IDEA became Federal law, students, parents, educators, administrators, and support staff have worked tirelessly to deliver the promise of a world-class education to millions of students with disabilities. But far too many students with disabilities are still waiting for their shot at a meaningful education.

The Federal Government committed to funding 40 percent of the cost to school districts of implementing the IDEA, but Congress has never fully funded special education. Right now, the Federal Government is only covering 12 percent of the tab, and that is unacceptable.

Now President Trump and Education Secretary Linda McMahon are threatening the very foundation of public education. They are slashing education funding, stealing from children to give tax breaks to CEO billionaires and millionaires. It is Robin Hood in reverse. They are trying to destroy the Department of Education. When the Department first opened its doors, fewer than one in three students with a disability graduated from high school—only one in three. Today, that number is over 70 percent of kids with disabilities who graduate from high school. But instead of fighting to make that 100 percent, Trump and McMahon are attempting to send education for students with disabilities back to the Stone Age.

In their “Big Ugly Bill,” Trump and the MAGA Republicans doing his bidding also slashed Medicaid, which covers over \$8 billion of school-based health services delivered to students. Medicaid funding is the fourth largest Federal funding stream for public schools.

Two weeks ago, I visited the Campus School in Boston, which is a school for students with complex disabilities and extensive support needs. During my visit, I met Natalie, a middle school student, and her mom Julia. Natalie has Dup15q syndrome, which causes serious developmental, behavioral, and medical needs, such as frequent seizures. Natalie requires 24-hour caregiving support.

Natalie’s story demonstrates how crucial the IDEA is and how devastating Trump and MAGA Republicans’ cuts will be to families around the country.

In April of 2023, Natalie and her mom moved to Massachusetts to seek out a safe, accessible education for her, which she was not receiving in her home State. The implementation of IDEA and outcomes for students with disabilities vary dramatically across State lines. Now Natalie is receiving the support she needs to flourish. Her school has set up an individual education plan with goals for her academic achievement, occupational therapy, communication, and motor skills. Her

home school district is able to access funding from the State of Massachusetts, the IDEA, and Medicaid to cover Natalie’s educational costs.

Her school pays \$18 million each year to allow students like Natalie to receive the highest quality and best-fit school placements out of district. In turn, her school receives \$1.7 million from IDEA funding and \$500,000 in Medicaid funds to offset those costs—around 10 percent. If this Federal funding is jeopardized, the school, Natalie, and her peers, their educators, and their families will have no idea how to continue providing the level of education that these students not only deserve but are legally entitled to.

That includes the nurses, the teachers, the occupational therapists, and the school staff who work with Natalie. It includes the assistive technology that Natalie uses to communicate. Federal health and education funding give Natalie her voice. It also includes the transportation that Natalie receives to and from school each and every day.

Natalie’s disability does not preclude her ability or deny her the right to receive an excellent education. At school and at home, Natalie radiates joy because she is given the support she needs to flourish. Every student with a disability is worthy of that same support, inclusion, and joy.

Natalie’s mom Julia, with whom I spent a couple of hours talking, is among the strongest amongst us. Natalie’s mother navigates a world that is not yet designed for her daughter to thrive without ceaseless advocacy and effort. Yet Julia says what keeps her up at night is thinking of the thousands of children just like Natalie who don’t have the extensive support that her daughter has. I will tell you that Julia needs that help. It is 24 hours a day. She needs that help that is going to be slashed.

There are millions of students across America who are still fighting for what Natalie has and what is promised by the IDEA: an education that allows them to thrive. Because of Donald Trump, Linda McMahon, and MAGA Republicans, that promise is moving further and further out of reach.

At the same time, the education that Natalie currently receives is under threat. Natalie, her mom, her teachers, her school administrators—they all want to ensure that Natalie receives a world-class education, but a vision without funding is a hallucination. If the Federal funding and protections backstopping education for students with disabilities stop flowing, as insufficient as they may be right now, we will see a nationwide regression. We cannot let that happen to Natalie or to any child in our country. They deserve our Nation’s support.

As we look ahead to the next 50 years of the IDEA, our moral obligation to students with disabilities must not waver. We must, finally, fully fund the IDEA. We must forcefully reject the

Trump administration’s continued attacks on public education. Ultimately, we must make sure that every child in America—no matter what State they live in—is given the opportunity to excel and to thrive.

This anniversary is a call to action. Children are only 25 percent of our population, but they are 100 percent of our future. We must fight for them every single day. Natalie’s is a story that all of us must be aware of.

H.J. RES. 131

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I also rise today to oppose the effort to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to permanent, irreversible damage from the Big Oil industry.

This effort to overthrow the Biden administration’s Record of Decision for the management of the Arctic Refuge through the Congressional Review Act process will sow chaos, create legal uncertainty, and put the refuge into limbo. But we do have some certainty. Republicans know this will put our last most wild place at risk. It will put the rare caribou, polar bears, and wildlife that call the refuge home at risk. The Gwich’in people have said over and over that it puts their way of life at risk.

But this vote would also put business and legal certainty at risk—years of confusion, lawsuits, and paralysis all from this unnecessary resolution. And for what? This fossil fuel fiasco has been rejected time and time again by insurers, major banks, and oil and gas companies. They have said they won’t finance development in the refuge. They are even paid to get out of leases. Two failed lease sales, one of which was held under President Trump, should have been the end of this political theater, but they persist. And even before drilling, any fossil fuel exploration in the refuge will leave scars that will last for generations.

Instead of tackling our affordability crisis, instead of fighting the climate crisis, instead of protecting healthcare programs or fighting for the needs of special education students, this is what Republicans want to work on—an attempted favor for Big Oil executives.

This CRA resolution would jeopardize the Arctic Refuge—the greatest intact wildlife refuge in our Nation. It would jeopardize our chance at a livable future, and it would jeopardize the Gwich’in people’s way of life.

Our public lands belong in public hands. Yesterday, the President of the United States, with the auto industry of our country standing behind him, signed a new resolution saying that we are not going to try to increase fuel economy standards in our Nation. Do you know what the consequence of that is? They want to just put a big gas station up in the Arctic Refuge, and we will just start drilling for more oil because we don’t want to make our vehicles more efficient. We are going to cede the future of all-electric vehicles