

they have access to high-quality medical care.

So I practiced medicine in Wyoming for 24 years. At the Wyoming Medical Center, I was the chief of staff of the hospital and was president of the State medical society, and taking care of patients continues to guide my work here in the U.S. Senate.

Wyoming is a rural State, as is the Presiding Officer's. Rural Americans deserve access to local care that is affordable, reliable, and high quality. For years, the options for people in many small communities have been shrinking. Why is that? Because of the passage of the Obama healthcare law. ObamaCare accelerated the rural healthcare crisis with there being hospitals closing all across the country. Since ObamaCare became law 15 years ago, over 100 rural hospitals across our Nation have closed. It is yet another broken promise from the failure of the Obama healthcare law, known as ObamaCare.

Rural America deserves a better approach. That is why, 1 year ago, Republicans passed a \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation Fund. The Rural Health Transformation Fund is a crucial piece of the Working Families Tax Cut law. It was designed to overcome the failed, one-size-fits-all Washington approach to healthcare. It partners with communities to invest in the services that they need. The Rural Health Transformation Fund is the largest Federal investment in rural healthcare in our Nation's history. Every State in America is now receiving the first round of funding under this new program.

The true power of this investment goes beyond the historic size and scope. Fundamentally, it is about delivering care to people where and when they need it the most. The Federal Government is too large to know the unique needs of every community. Rural solutions come from the States, they come from the local communities, they come from the local healthcare providers, not from Washington, DC. The Rural Health Transformation Fund is built on this simple idea. It gives States the resources and the flexibility they need to invest in the services that the communities need and that will work for them.

In Wyoming, we have received over \$200 million this year from the Rural Health Transformation Fund, and more funding will follow over the next 5 years. We are using it to strengthen and expand access to care in every corner of our State. We are supporting rural hospitals and clinics. We are embracing new technologies. We are bringing quality care closer to home.

At the same time, we are investing in our healthcare workforce. High-quality care starts with highly trained doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals. Wyoming has a long and successful track record of investing in our healthcare professionals. The Rural Health Transformation Fund allows us to build on that success.

We also know that the best treatment is often prevention. Preventive medicine can lead to healthier lives, it helps to lower costs, it teaches healthy habits from a young age. That is why Wyoming is investing in prevention. We are making sure the Food Stamp Program focuses on healthy nutrition. We are bringing back Presidential fitness tests in schools across the State. This helps children grow up healthier and reduces the long-term burden of chronic diseases.

These are practical and commonsense steps, and they have a clear goal. That goal is to help Wyoming families live healthier lives and to make healthcare more affordable.

I want to thank Dr. Oz and Gov. Mark Gordon. You know, Dr. Oz leads the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. He and his team have worked closely with Gov. Mark Gordon of Wyoming and his team. Together, they have developed an innovative plan that is tailored to Wyoming's unique needs.

Every single Democrat in Congress—every single one of them—voted against the Rural Health Transformation Fund, and that is not bad enough. One thing that was bad is they voted against it, and then they came to the floor and later voted to eliminate it—to eliminate it—to strangle the money that is going out to these communities all across the country. They said: No, we don't want it to go out.

Why? Why did they vote to cut \$50 billion from rural healthcare hospitals?

It is because they wanted to pay for healthcare for illegal immigrants. That is their mindset. Look at what happened in New York yesterday with the primary elections: open borders, eliminate ICE, focus on giving services to illegal immigrants—people who are in the country illegally.

How do they want to pay for all this?

The Democrats in the Senate say: Well, let's eliminate the rural healthcare plan.

That is the approach of every Democrat in the Senate and, apparently, of a lot of the Democrats, if not all, who are running to serve in this body.

Democrats voted to weaken healthcare for law-abiding American citizens in order to expand healthcare for illegal immigrants. That is a fundamental difference in a mentality and in an approach—and is a concern for American citizens. So just remember that when Democrats come and talk about healthcare. It is not necessarily healthcare for you or your family; it is healthcare for illegal immigrants.

Republicans are reversing the damage done by ObamaCare which, to repeat, forced the closure of over 100 small community hospitals around the country. Republicans are putting rural communities first, and we are going to continue to do that.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

WORKING FAMILIES TAX CUTS ACT

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, our country was founded on the belief that

all Americans have the right to pursue life, liberty, and happiness. It is fundamental to who we are as Americans, and these are the building blocks of the American dream. We live in a nation of opportunity. We live in a nation that enables kids to have it better than their parents. We live in a nation that believes that hard work leads to success. For over 250 years, people from all backgrounds have been able to work hard and achieve the American dream.

Here, in the U.S. Senate, I am fighting to renew the American dream.

One of the ways that we have done that with my Senate Republican colleagues is in the Working Families Tax Cut that we passed last year. The Working Families Tax Cut invests in American families and in American children. It invests in the next generation. With my Senate colleagues on the Republican side, we are building a path for another 250 years of opportunity for this great Nation and for the children and families of this great Nation.

The Working Families Tax Cut was great for families. One of the ways that it was great for families and for Nebraskans in my State is with the Trump Accounts that were part of that overall package. These are investment accounts that will kick-start the American dream for kids all across this Nation. You can download the app right now.

Starting on July 4, Nebraskans and all Americans will be able to start opening up these accounts. All American kids under the age of 18 will be eligible to have one of these accounts. And those born between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2028, will also be able to enroll and automatically have \$1,000 put into their account, courtesy of the U.S. Treasury, to be able to help kick-start that American dream.

Parents and guardians will be the custodians of these accounts, but the children will own them. And when those kids turn 18, they will be able to take possession of those Trump Accounts.

These accounts work like traditional retirement accounts. Up to \$5,000 a year can be put into these accounts—these Trump Accounts—and it can come from your parents, your grandparents. It can come from communities, come from churches, come from governments, come from nonprofits. Employers can contribute and help build that foundation for those young people to be able to achieve the American dream.

Many have already committed to contributing to Trump Accounts. For example, Michael and Susan Dell have donated \$6.25 billion to the first 25 million American kids who sign up for these accounts who also reside in ZIP Codes with median incomes below \$150,000. That means that each one of those kids will get about \$250 on top of the thousand dollars that the Treasury is putting in.

Charles Schwab has said he will match the government's \$1,000 with another \$1,000 for all the people who work at his company.

These are just a couple of examples of how philanthropists are working together with the U.S. Government to be able to kick-start young people's American dreams through these Trump Accounts.

In my home State of Nebraska, our State government is going to open accounts for all the foster kids in Nebraska. These Fostering the Future Accounts will work just the same, making sure that young Nebraskans in foster care have a little extra financial help. This money is so that these young Nebraskans can put it toward college, buying their first home, or starting a business.

For children whose accounts start with \$1,000, additional contributions will not be required. The accounts will still grow, and these accounts will help launch those kids into their future.

Another way we are investing in our children and families is with the expansion of the child tax credits. In the Working Families Tax Cut, we increased that child tax credit to \$2,200 and made it permanent. It was set to fall to \$1,000, but Senate Republicans made it permanent and took it up.

The child tax credit will benefit over 239,000 Nebraska families. Increasing the child tax credit allows these families to have more money in their pockets, and we want to encourage Americans to work hard and support their families. This is what keeps the American dream alive.

The Working Families Tax Cut also provides an increase in the child and dependent tax credit. We increased the maximum credit from 25 percent up to 50 percent, and we took the increased tax deduction up from \$5,000 to \$7,500.

We made the first ever permanent paid family medical leave credit, based on legislation from Senator DEB FISCHER. This will encourage our businesses to offer that benefit to families all across the Nation.

We expanded the tax credits for employee-provided childcare and created new credits for small businesses to be able to create childcare at work.

We also extended the ABLE accounts, which otherwise would have expired in 2025. These accounts help individuals with disabilities to save and invest through tax-free savings, without losing eligibility for Federal programs like Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income.

These are real investments in American families and the next generation.

And similar to my colleague from Wyoming who pointed this out, every single Democrat—every single one—voted against these provisions that would help young Americans be able to achieve the American dream. Every single Democrat voted against it.

Senate Republicans, by contrast, are fighting in the U.S. Senate to renew opportunity for our kids' futures and

supporting families in our country. We are encouraging and supporting the American dream, and we are making it possible for the good life to be more attainable for all Nebraskans.

I yield the floor.

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

AMERICA250

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, 50 years ago this Saturday, our Nation celebrated its bicentennial—its 200th anniversary of that day on the 4th of July, in 1776, when a group of Delegates from around the then-Thirteen Colonies gathered to declare their independence from Great Britain.

This coming Saturday, July 4, 2026, I will once again be gathering with a whole group of friends and family in the small town of Hockessin, DE, where I celebrated our bicentennial.

In 1976, we had what some might think of as a sad small gathering that celebrated the Fourth of July. It wasn't huge. It didn't have tens of thousands of people. It didn't have great fireworks. But it was the heart of the town I grew up in.

We had a parade. We had firetrucks. My Boy Scout troop marched. I played the bugle as a group from a local church raised a flag at the new Swift Memorial Park in downtown Hockessin, a small rural farming town of then about 1,500 people.

And this coming Saturday, I will conclude the Fourth of July by, once again, marching in the annual parade, where we will have firetrucks from our volunteer fire company, children from different Scouting groups, different church youth groups, different things like the 4-H and the Grange, and thousands of people, gathering with family, on either side of Old Wilmington Pike to view the parade go by.

I love the tradition of the Fourth of July parade in my hometown of Hockessin, and I wanted to just take a moment and reflect because, as I have talked to my team here in Washington and at home in Delaware, some of them see so much division in our country that they aren't excited about our semiquincentennial, our 250th. Some of them are distracted, as in some ways I think many in America are, by fighting, squabbling between our President and our Congress, between different political parties. And it is too easy to be distracted.

I will remind you that, 50 years ago, on our bicentennial, our country was also in a period of division and political controversy, that we had just come out of the end of the Vietnam war and Watergate, that there had been protests and disagreement, that there were different rights being asserted and tumult in our politics.

My recollection, as a child, was that that day, that period of the bicentennial, was actually a moment for the American people to stop and reflect and think about what brings us together. And so today, I will briefly reflect on what I think we ought to be

stopping and reflecting on as we celebrate our 250th.

Mr. President, 250 years ago, where we are right now was part of Great Britain, was part of the English Empire. In looking back, it might seem inevitable, but at that time, it was uncertain which way we would go. Ultimately, we chose liberty, we chose independence, and we had to fight for it in what became a long and brutal, internally divisive conflict.

Ultimately, the American story is not simply one story. We are a nation founded not on one ethnicity or one language, one religion or one history, but on an idea—an idea embodied in the second sentence of the declaration:

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, [and] . . . endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

Just a few days ago, I had the chance, over at the Library of Congress, along with a bunch of my colleagues, to see the original text of the Declaration of Independence and the changes made by different Framers.

Our story is stronger when we tell it in its entirety—the good and bad, the challenging chapters, the rough places, the foundational sins, the wrongs and the arc—the arc—toward “a more perfect Union.”

My State has long played a central role in some of these fights over the abolition of slavery, over racial segregation, over protecting our environment, over the right of women to vote, over full inclusion. And over 250 years, what I think defines us is that yearning for freedom, that yearning for the opportunity to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, as we understand it and define it.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, at the end of the Second World War—after the paroxysm of a global catastrophe of violence—talked about four freedoms, recognizing and celebrating those foundational First Amendment freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom to worship, but also freedom from want and freedom from fear.

And so I think we need to recognize, at this July 4, that we have a challenge, an opportunity, and an obligation.

In the middle of the Civil War, President Lincoln and his Senate insisted on building an expanded Capitol, at the exact moment our Nation was tearing itself apart. President Lincoln said:

If people see the Capitol going on, it is a sign we intend the Union shall go on.

I have traveled around the world and heard from people all over that they look to this Nation as a beacon of freedom. And every time I recite the Pledge of Allegiance, I remind myself that, at its end, we pledge ourselves to be a nation committed to liberty and justice for all.

In the months ahead, I look forward to giving many more speeches about what I see as the core defining values of our Nation going forward.