has gone into a restaurant where they don't have the price on the menu. It is like a five-star French restaurant, if there are that many stars, and the waiter doesn't tell you the price. If you ask the price, he looks at you like you shouldn't belong there. If you have to ask the price, you can't afford it.

Usually, if that is the case for my wife and me—in fact, always—we excuse ourselves after having a couple of crackers, and we say: Thank you very much, but we have a crying baby at home. We look a little bit old for a baby. Well, it is a grandchild.

The point being: If they are not telling you the price, probably you can't afford it.

Now, audience, people watching, anybody here, when is the last time you went to a hospital and you said ''Show me the price. Show me the price.'' It just doesn't happen. Do you know there are actually laws out there? But I can tell you, if you ask ''Show me the price,'' you are going to cause confusion.

Now, I am a doctor. I have been in this environment. I always kind of admire—kind of chuckle. I am a gastroenterologist. I used to do colonoscopies. So the patient is there. He has been prepped, which means that his colon has been cleaned out and he has been having diarrhea for about 6 hours. He has a gown on that covers everything but the derriere, a thin sheet above him. And he is given a lot of pieces of paper to sign, and at that point, he has the ability to ask ''How much does this colonoscopy cost?''

Now, that is—you are beyond the point of no return. You are not going to find actionable items, if they are even able to give you the price, at that point. You have already ordered at the French restaurant where they don't show you the price, and they are bringing the food to the table, and by golly, you are going to pay for it no matter how much it is.

But we have passed the Patients Deserve Price Tags Act, and that means that now, the patient is going to be told how much something costs.

If we have a health savings account or if you are just paying cash or in some way you are responsible for the goods and services that you are purchasing, you are going to be told the price.

Why is that? Why is that important? A cardiologist friend told me recently—a couple of years ago, actually—of a cardioversion for atrial fibrillation. If you did it in the doctor's office, it costs you $130; if you did it in the hospital, it costs you $13,000. Now, would it make a difference to someone, if they had a $4,000 deductible, to know that they either pay $130 if they went to the doctor's office or they pay the full deductible and the insurance company pays more but they pay 20 percent of that more if they went to the hospital? I think it would.

So price transparency lowers the cost of being insured and increases wages over time.

By the way, let's get back to our restaurant metaphor. When you go and they don't tell you the price, you kind of have a sense that no matter what you order, you are going to come out substantially poorer. But you are a little bit tight. You go in—you know, maybe when I was a teenager on a date, this was more common—and I can order the surf and turf with the lobster and the filet mignon, and it is going to cost me four times what the spaghetti costs. Now, depending on my budget, I may decide to get the spaghetti. I still have a great meal, still walk away full, nutrition is all satisfied, but because I had the price, I was able to control how much I spent. That is what price transparency does, and the Patients Deserve Price Tags Act begins to give them that price transparency.

Now, by the way, that promotes competition. If you know that if you get your colonoscopy here it is $1,000 and if you get it over there it is $5,000, I can promise you that the place charging $5,000 is going to lower the price.

And the patient with the prefunded health savings account—remember, in the MVP plan—they will have money in their pocket. They have an extra incentive.

I use the example of the woman whose child has an earache. She says: Hey, Siri, which urgent care center near me has the best afterhours price for an appointment for an earache?

Well, here, it is $50; there, it is $250. She is going to go where it is $50, but the one that charges $250 is going to lower their price.

Now, the advantage of this: If you combine the money in the pocket, where they have the prefunded health savings account, with the price transparency, you begin to lower the price of being insured. The patient has the money in their pocket, but now, with the Patients Deserve Price Tags Act, they can spend that money wisely. Instead of that money put into their health savings account being something that people just rebuff, instead, it is something that they can spend wisely.

By the way, they can also begin to purchase a more affordable insurance policy. The Presiding Officer probably, in his businesses, gives a ''You can choose option A or B or C for your insurance.'' If you choose the option with the higher deductible, then the premium is lower. If we have put $2,000 into your health savings account, you can choose that higher deductible because the first $2,000 is covered, and that higher deductible means that you have a lower premium.

The business owner saves money. He can use it to increase wages. But the employee saves money because their share of the premium is likewise less.

So I try to put it this way: If you have the Patients Deserve Price Tags Act and we are able to put money in the pocket and the patients choose the more affordable plan, they pay less. And if you look at the amount of money going to someone's salary—can I see that one. This is the total compensation package that someone gets when they are employed. Now, some of it goes to payroll taxes. That is a fixed portion. That is going out of your income. There is nothing you can do about that.

Your benefits—principally, what you pay for your health insurance—is the next biggest slice. The more healthcare costs, the more bread you spend on benefits. The less your healthcare costs, the more bread goes into your salary.

Now, for those people who grew up in the sixties, ''bread'' was the word they used for ''money.'' So think about this as being something literal: You have more money in your pocket not just because we have put money into your health savings account but because, as you pay less for insurance, you have less money to pay out of your pocket for the insurance, and the more money you get to keep to live the rest of your life.

We have been talking about people's wages not growing. Boom. That is how wages start to grow again. They begin to shrink the amount going for benefits, which increases the amount somebody has for the rest of their life.

Now, let me just go back to the Patients Deserve Price Tags Act. This is the most expansive, aggressive, comprehensive, patient-focused, business owner-focused piece of legislation for price transparency that has ever passed in Congress. If we pursue further healthcare bills—for example, reconciliation—we can move the ''money in your pocket'' portion, but this would stand on its own—a bipartisan piece of legislation that passed almost unanimously out of committee today and which would benefit almost every American who has got employer-sponsored insurance.

It is a huge first step. We will reconcile with the House, which has passed their own version of price transparency. This administration has been very aggressive promoting transparency. I am pleased to say that a significant portion of the MVP agenda passed out of committee; it is going to be headed to the President's desk soon; and, most importantly, individuals will have more money in their pocket and better coverage for their health.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. President, I have been working on Social Security now 8 years. Why? One, it is a guarantee—an intergenerational guarantee—made to Americans, when they get to a certain age, to retire. It is an earned benefit which says that, after a lifetime of work and contribution, Americans can count on a measure of financial security.

Today, more than 75 million Americans rely on Social Security. Most are retired workers. Many are disabled. Others are widows or widowers and children.

Now, let's just set the context: A program that 75 million Americans rely on, 10 million baby boomers a day become eligible for, and in 6 years, if Congress does nothing, by law, their benefits will be cut almost 29 percent. So let's just say that once more. If Congress does nothing, in 6 years, by law, benefits going to 75 million Americans—and more at that time—will be cut by almost 29 percent.

We have known this is coming. It is because there has been a continued drawdown from the Social Security trust fund. By law, Social Security cannot pay out more than it receives. Currently, it is receiving money from payroll taxes but also from the trust fund. When the trust fund goes belly up in 6 years and the only income is that which current workers are paying, then the amount going out has to fall, and it will fall 28.5 percent if we wait until then to fix things.

I am pleased to say, though, that there is now momentum on both sides—Republicans and Democrats—to find a solution and to preserve benefits for those who have spent their lifetime earning them.

By the way, people ask: How is Social Security going bankrupt? I have been paying into it my whole life. Everybody I know has been paying into it their whole life. So why is it going bankrupt now?

I point out to people that when Social Security came along—I don't know—there were like five kids per family, and now there are like two kids per family. And when Social Security was first enacted, you didn't get benefits until you were 65, but the average age of death was 62. Now people live until they are 82, and they are getting their hips replaced when they are 75 to go bungee jumping in New Zealand. So the point being is that people are living far longer and they are living more actively, and as a result of that, we are drawing down that trust fund.

So my Democratic colleague from Illinois DICK DURBIN, he and I just introduced the PROMISE Act, along with a group of colleagues, Republican and Democrat. And the PROMISE Act sets up a process. It doesn't dictate a policy. It sets up a process that puts Congress on the clock to save Social Security.

What the PROMISE Act does, it says that Congress shall come up with multiple options to present to the Senate Finance Committee or to the Ways and Means Committee in the House in order for them to consider it, have it scored, and be delivered to Congress in order to deliberate. And then it says that the relevant committee—say, Senate Finance—has 7 working days to consider it and then it comes to the floor and then we have a vote on it.

That begs the question, Why do it now? Why not wait until next Congress? Because every year we wait, it gets harder and harder to fix Social Security. The amount of cuts required or the amount of taxes to be raised are more dramatic, more drastic, and more likely to harm an individual's personal finances.

We are not dictating a policy. We are just setting up a process.

Now, by the way, in full honesty, I have a policy I have been working on, but my policy will be just one of several policies that will be considered. My policy, we have something in it which we call the big idea. In our big idea, we look at pension funds that are doing well, that are not going bankrupt, that are growing in line with the needs of the people whom they cover. This will be the kind of pension fund that Exxon or Google or Deloitte & Touche has—it is called a pension investment fund—in which dollars are invested at an early stage, allowed to grow, and as those dollars grow over time, they meet the need of the retirees as the retirees become eligible for pulling those dollars down.

We have actually done that in the Federal Government. Under George W. Bush, the Federal railroad retirement system was going insolvent, and so Congress voted to allow to diversify the investments of this pension fund. I think every Democrat voted for it in the Senate. Three Republicans voted no, and the concerns they had have been proven to be wrong because what has happened now, in the Federal railroad retirement system, we still have more and more retirees relative to fewer workers, but that system is in the black because it invests in the strength of the U.S. economy, and the strength of the U.S. economy has been able to pay all future obligations.

That is our big idea: What has the Congress already done successfully with the Federal railroad retirement system? What is being done with major corporations to meet their pension benefits? And kind of what do you do with your own 401(k)?

So if we can set up this investment fund to supplement the payroll taxes that are the primary source for funding Social Security, we can meet that future obligation.

By the way, let me go back to the PROMISE Act. I am not dictating my proposal will be the answer. We are dictating a process that can be considered so that any proposal can be brought up. The Presiding Officer has a proposal with Senator WARREN. His proposal can come up. So it might be his proposal. More likely, it is going to be some sort of amalgamation.

But the only option that should not be an option is to do nothing. Congress is—I am searching for the right word. Congress is being irresponsible—destructively irresponsible—if we don't address Social Security. It is driving the national debt. And if we cut benefits by 28 percent, that will double poverty among the elderly. The promised benefit will not be delivered. By the way, if all we do is borrow, it is going to tank our credit rating.

By the way, going back to my particular plan, folks say: Well, what if the stock market goes down?

Under our plan, all risk is borne by the investment fund; no risk is borne by the individual. That individual gets all the benefits she has been promised even if the market goes up and down.

They ask me: Is it putting the trust fund into the stock market?

No way. We have a separate investment fund, separate from the Social Security trust fund, and that is where the investment goes.

And one more thing. Folks want to say: Well, wait a second. I don't trust the Congress, and I don't trust the President. If you put a pot of money there, it is like honey to a bear; they are going to reach in and grab it.

We have guardrails all over the place, including an annual audit of how the money is invested and how the money is spent or not spent, and that audit is put online so the American people can keep track of what is happening with their trust fund.

I will finish by saying this. I like my plan. I think it is a good plan. I think it is going to make it a lot easier to address the problem. But the PROMISE Act is not about my plan. The PROMISE Act, which DICK DURBIN and I introduced, is only setting up a process by which Congress is forced to take action before it gets any worse. My proposal may be the one considered. It may be the Presiding Officer's. It may be somebody else's. The only option that should not be taken is the option of doing nothing. We need to do something.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. 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.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, on Monday, we saw yet another example of what has become disturbingly common, and that is an act of far-left terrorism. Outside the Jacob K. Javits Federal Building, a man poured gasoline on the entrance, set it ablaze, and tossed fireworks into the raging flames.

Thankfully, law enforcement responded swiftly to apprehend the suspect, who was armed with two axes, a hammer, a machete, and three knives, but not before he injured four innocent people.

Authorities believe the attack was motivated by the suspect's hatred of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The Federal building he targeted is home to New York's ICE field office and other Department of Homeland Security offices. Before the attack, he allegedly pushed a cart with a sign reading ''ICE Off Our Streets'' and made anti-ICE statements.

This attack did not come out of nowhere. It follows a monthslong campaign by Democrats to demonize ICE and our brave Federal law enforcement officers who are simply doing their job. They have likened them to ''secret police,'' the Nazi Gestapo, the Soviet