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One Big Beautiful Bill Act

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I am joining my colleagues today to speak in opposition to the Republicans' catastrophic budget bill that will end healthcare coverage for millions of American families so that President Trump can orchestrate the largest transfer of wealth from the poor and the working class to the ultrarich that we have ever seen in this country.

This bill has nearly \$1 trillion in healthcare cuts, including over \$800 billion in Medicaid cuts. In total, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that this bill would not only add \$2.4 trillion to our national deficit, but it also kicks 16 million Americans off of their health insurance in the next 10 years. In Nevada, that means about 95,271 people will lose their healthcare and 66,571 will be kicked off of Medicaid. These numbers alone should at least give my Republican colleagues pause, make them think about how devastating this bill would be for our working families, and maybe even reconsider moving forward with trying to ram it through Congress.

But there is more to this than just these big numbers, and it needs to be brought to light. I was just home in Nevada meeting with Nevadans, hospitals, and providers. With the Medicaid cuts they are anticipating from this billionaire tax giveaway, hospitals are bracing themselves not just for coverage losses but for the downstream impact on care and costs. This is going to affect our most vulnerable populations in Nevada--seniors, children, veterans, parents of children with rare diseases, pregnant women, and our elderly in nursing homes.

When people lose coverage, they delay their care. A single mom who is living paycheck to paycheck and is worried about putting food on the table for her kids is not going to go to the doctor if she has a persistent cough; she will wait. But that means that when her cough turns serious, making it harder for her to breathe, she will have to go to the emergency room for treatment. By then, it is more dangerous for her and more expensive for everyone involved. The hospital she goes to has to treat her regardless of whether or not she has health insurance. If she can't pay, the hospital is on the hook for the cost of her care.

Now, if you are in a rural or underserved area, of which we have many in Nevada and across the country, and the one hospital for miles can't afford to keep those doors open, it may scale back or close altogether.

The hospital staff has to choose which services to cut. Labor and delivery? Mental health care? Trauma units? These are services entire communities rely on. Or will they be forced to close entirely if they can't make up the cost?

In rural Nevada, people sometimes have to drive 2, 3, 4 hours to see their doctor. A hospital closure would be devastating for rural families trying to access even basic care. That is the danger we are facing with this bill.

This isn't just about Medicaid patients. As providers look to cover the cost of treating more uninsured patients, those expenses will shift to everyone, to working families and to employers, and premiums and out-of-pocket costs will soar--all so that this President and Republicans can pay for tax cuts for billionaires.

You know, this is also going to impact Nevadans who rely on the Affordable Care Act for their medical insurance. Republicans, in their bill, cut almost \$300 billion from the ACA marketplace plans, and that would kickabout 29,000 Nevada small business owners, middle-class families, and legal immigrants, like Dreamers, off their healthcare. It would also increase Medicare premiums for over 1 million seniors, and it could end healthcare coverage for 1.5 million children. These are real people who are going to lose their coverage as a result of this bill.

This impact would be lasting. This bill is so expensive that it would force Congress to make even more Medicare cuts in the future. For those who don't immediately get kicked off their health insurance as a result of cuts to Medicaid, my Republican colleagues want to implement burdensome work reporting requirements so they can take away coverage from even more Americans to pay for those billionaire tax cuts.

In Nevada, over 67 percent of Medicaid recipients are already working, but if this bill passes, those working families will have to jump through even more government reporting hoops to prove they work. We know from States that have tried this--like Arkansas--that people lost Medicaid not because they didn't meet the requirements but because they couldn't keep up with the redtape.

Think about this: People working who already have access to Medicaid--they are making it harder for them to get it, which means that if you lose your Medicaid, your insurance, there is a possibility that if your health gets worse, you are going to lose your job. We are going backwards.

This bill has complex paperwork, frequent deadlines, and little flexibility to the everyday lives of hard-working mothers, veterans, and families across the country. And why again? Because the Republicans' goal is to take Medicaid away from as many people as possible so that they can find revenue to pay for the tax cuts for billionaires.

Think about what I said at the beginning: It is the biggest shift-shift--in our country of wealth from the poor and the working class to the billionaire class. Instead of making the billionaires pay for this, they are taking it off the backs of the very people that are working in this country in the middle class, and they are preventing the poor from getting into the middle class, and they are making it harder for the middle class.

This is absolutely absurd, it is un-American, and we cannot--we cannot--accept this as our new normal. So my Democratic colleagues and I are going to continue to stand against this outrageous and dangerous bill because we know that the American public deserves better.

Americans deserve a Congress that is helping to lift the poor into the middle class and helping the middle class have their lives be a little bit easier.

If we are talking about who should pay their fair share, well, I can guarantee you, if we polled Americans, they would say it is the billionaire class. The billionaire class should pay their fair share and not make it harder--not make it harder--for the poor and the working class just to get by and just to get through the day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin. Ms. BALDWIN.

Mr. President, I rise today on behalf of the 228,000 Wisconsinites whose healthcare is on the chopping block if Republicans get their way. At a time when Wisconsin families are asking us to take on the skyrocketing costs of healthcare and prescription drugs, Congressional Republicans are doing just the opposite. My Republican colleagues are not using their time and energy to go after greedy corporations, not to take on the big drug companies, and not to expand access to affordable healthcare, but they are instead forging ahead with a bill that will kick millions of Americans off of their insurance and jack up the cost of healthcare for millions more.

I keep hearing my colleagues falsely claim that we are exaggerating how horrible this plan is for working families. They want to pretend these cuts are just going after waste, fraud, and abuse.

I am not here to engage in a ``he said, she said'' about this. The Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan analyst, released a new report today and found that the Republican plan will result in 16 million Americans losing their healthcare. That means that those last-minute changes that were made in the middle of the night in the House resulted in 2 million more people being kicked off their healthcare. Of those 16 million, nearly 150,000 Wisconsinites will lose their Medicaid coverage.

Sadly, it doesn't stop there. This bill is yet another attempt to chip away at the Affordable Care Act. In my State, over 80,000 Wisconsinites will be priced out of their affordable care, and more will see their marketplace coverage costs skyrocket. We are talking about children with disabilities, grandparents, working families, and so many more whose healthcare is literally right now in jeopardy. I heard from Annette in Kenosha, WI. She has three children, including a sixth grader with severe special needs. She wrote to me about her daughter Maya's first year before they got access to Medicaid. She said: We paid \$16,000 out-of-pocket after insurance for her hospital bills, surgery, and appointments. It destroyed our savings and pushed us to the brink of losing everything. Medicaid is not fraud, waste, or abuse. Medicaid supports kids like Maya who are in desperate need, and the families who love them. She told me that she doesn't plan to stay on Medicaid forever, but that program ``has been a Godsend to us [right] now. It was a rigorous process to qualify. I hope other families like mine will have the support they need to keep their families healthy."

I also heard from Evan in Madison, WI, who has undergone two brain surgeries and subsequent radiation over the last 10 years to treat brain tumors, in part paid for by Medicaid. He wrote to me: I sacrificed a lot to hopefully become a part of the working class. . . . [I]f Trump meddles any further with my health care, I won't be able to afford my medication that literally gives me the ability to go out and be a part of my community.

Take Kevin in De Pere, WI, whose 19-year-old son has Down syndrome and relies on Medicaid for care. Kevin had a message for my colleagues who are considering advancing any cuts to Medicaid. He wrote: I ask that you remember that Medicaid . . . is not about dollars, it's about dignity, opportunity, and ensuring that all individuals, regardless of ability, can thrive.

For Americans like Kevin and Annette and Evan, Medicaid is a lifeline. Without it, millions of families would forgo their care or face almost certain financial ruin. But congressional Republicans are putting all of that on the line, making Americans jump through more hoops and ever more redtape to access their lifesaving care. And why?

To kick enough eligible people off Medicaid to pay for their tax cuts that overwhelmingly benefit corporations and their special interest donors--the very same corporations that jack up the cost of healthcare on Americans in the first place.

As deep as these cuts are, they fall far short of the total cost of the handouts that the Republicans are proposing in the form of tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations. Their plan won't just kick 16 million Americans off their health insurance or 4 million Americans off of food assistance, the Republicans' plan will also balloon the deficit by \$3 trillion over the next decade.

While Republicans spend the rest of their summer figuring out how to pass their agenda that puts their campaign donors and corporations ahead of working families, I will keep raising the

alarm bells about the real Wisconsinites whose health and lives are in the balance if they get their way.

I yield the floor. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I want to join my colleagues in talking about one of the terrible elements of this bill, and that is it is going to take away Medicaid coverage, healthcare for--this morning, it was 13.7 million people across this country, including Vermont and including Missouri. But we just got an update: It is 16 million people; 16 million people are going to lose healthcare. And this Medicaid Program that provides access to low-income folks, to kids with disabilities, and, of course, those parents who do so much to care for their child with special needs--they need that Medicaid to be able to keep body and soul together and give that child that they love the best they can possibly have.

It provides healthcare for two out of three seniors who are in nursing homes. Medicaid pays for those hospital beds. So how is it that at a time when healthcare is expensive--it is getting out of reach for more and more people; it is the biggest expense many families face--that we are actually considering in the U.S. Senate a bill that would take away healthcare from 16 million people? It is hard to believe that the U.S. Senate has any degree of appreciation for the reality of the everyday lives of folks who depend on this healthcare.

The legislation also takes away subsidies that have made it affordable for people to buy into the Affordable Care Act, known as ObamaCare. It is the margin that is necessary for millions of people to be able to continue to get healthcare coverage through the Affordable Care Act. So we literally have a piece of legislation that is going to take away this healthcare for individuals. It is going to take away healthcare from families who are getting access through the Affordable Care Act.

This bill also is cutting nutrition programs. The SNAP benefits really matter for lower income families. It is how they feed their kids. And in your community and in mine, we have thousands of volunteers who put together food shelves, community food programs; they do Meals on Wheels; they volunteer to do everything they possibly can to help our kids in school with nutrition, to help with the Meals on Wheels for our seniors and then, of course, to distribute and help with the SNAP program. Millions of Americans are going to lose that. And, by the way, that SNAP benefit amounts to about 6 bucks a day, maybe a little more. Hardly a big bonanza but an incredibly important component of keeping body and soul together. It is the meals that are so essential to the well-being not just of our seniors but to our children. So all of this is being done as a way of ``paying for" legislation that is going to lower taxes. And I don't know how it works for you in Missouri, but when I am talking to Vermonters, nobody has come up to me and said: Peter, you have got to get to work on getting me that tax cut. Nobody believes that

there is a tax cut in this bill that is going to be anything at all meaningful to them in their struggles with affording paying their bills at the end of each month.

Now, if you are in the uberwealthy class, you would get \$250,000. That is real money, although for some of those folks who are making millions of dollars a year, it won't even be anything they notice. But why is it that we are pushing through this legislation that will provide a tax cut to folks who, by and large, don't need it, will do very little for working-class people, will have a negative impact on their ability to pay their bills, especially the ones who are going to lose access to Medicaid, especially folks who are going to lose access to food stamps or the SNAP benefits that are so essential to their well-being? And that is on top of all of those folks having to pay more because of the tariffs.

So this is an assault on the budgets of working families in America. That is what it really is. It is going to shrink their take-home pay at the end of the month. That is literally what it is we are doing. And for what? To provide a tax cut that is not going to be meaningful for the vast majority of Americans who really will end up paying more through tariffs and lost access to healthcare and nutrition programs than they will ever even in the wildest stretch of the imagination get from the so-called tax cut bill, the Big Beautiful Bill.

But there is another part of this that is so damaging, and especially for those of us representing rural America. Individuals need healthcare, but they can't get healthcare unless they can go to a community hospital, unless they can go to a community health center, unless they can go to a private practitioner who accepts Medicaid reimbursement.

All of those people who lose access to Medicaid to pay those bills are going to continue to show up at the doctor's office. They are going to show up at the emergency room. They are going to go to our community hospitals. They are going to go to our community health centers. And those health centers and those doctors will continue to do everything that they can to provide care, even if they don't get paid. But at a certain point, they can't continue. They can't keep the doors open, they can't pay salaries to staff. They can't pay the light bill.

So what this does is not only take away access to healthcare for individuals, it starts to unravel the healthcare system to deliver healthcare to people in the community. Those institutions that lose the modest revenue reimbursement that you get from Medicaid--far less than Medicare, far less than private pay--are going to lose that revenue. And those institutions, those hospitals, those practices already operating on a very thin margin are going to go out of business. And then what happens? We put all of the pressure for paying for the healthcare system on the private sector. And what we have seen over and over again is the so-called cost shift. It is a real thing. It is not a so-called cost shift; it is real. So the more money you take out of Medicaid, the more money and more burden you put on the private insurance market.

And who pays that? A lot of our employers. You know, in Vermont--I am sure this is true in Missouri--our employers care about their employees, and there is a struggle every year for employers who want to provide employer-sponsored healthcare when they get the sticker shock

of a 10-, 15-, or a 25-percent increase in premiums. And that always then forces the discussion about "Do we want to give a raise?" or "Do we want to just maintain benefits but pay for the higher premium with what would have been your raise?" So that is further pressure.

So this bill does real harm to individuals, but it really also starts to continue and accelerate the unraveling of a financially insecure medical payment system.

So why do we do this? It is hard to answer. You know, it is a theoretical benefit. The theory here is if you lower taxes, you will boost the economy. We have been hearing that since Reagan, and that is very much in dispute, especially when the lower taxes go to folks who don't need it, and the folks who are struggling to pay their bills aren't getting much relief and are getting higher costs from tariffs and getting higher costs because they are losing access to healthcare, and this is going to weaken our communities.

And then of course, finally, what we are going to see is a significant increase in our debt. And the recent CBO scores, I think, put it at \$2.8 trillion. And what are we getting for that? You know, sometimes a country has to borrow like we did in World War II. Sometimes you have to borrow like we did during COVID. Sometimes you have to borrow to rescue the economy like we did after the 2008 Wall Street crash. And you know why you are doing it.

But when you are in better times where you don't have this market

collapse, you don't have this mass pandemic, that is not the time to be adding to the debt. And what it does is it means that in the future, if we do have to borrow for an emergency, our capacity to do it is more limited.

And what it is also doing right now is raising interest rates. And as interest rates go up, the cost of debt service on our budget goes up. And right now--right now--the biggest expenditure of taxpayer money is to pay interest on the debt that is escalating exponentially. So we are spending more on debt service than we do on the military. We are spending more on debt service than we do on Medicare and way more than we are on Medicaid. And by adding to the debt, it is clearly putting pressure on interest rates, raising what it is taxpayers have to pay.

So there is nothing good in this bill for the working person or for their small businesses that when they need to borrow money, they are much better off if they can get a lower rate of interest or when a family has to get a car loan, they can get a lower rate of interest or a mortgage, they can get a lower rate of interest. It is the exact opposite.

So we have got families who are paying more because of tariffs, losing a lot because they are losing their Medicaid eligibility and losing their access to the Affordable Care Act, and then everybody is paying more because of the

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high interest associated with the escalation in the debt.

We should kill this bill, and I would urge all of my colleagues to take into consideration how this is going to affect the people whom each of us represents.

You know, there is a bipartisan element to this bill. The bipartisan aspect of this bill is that everybody is going to share the pain of what this bill does. It is folks in red States. It is the folks in the blue States. Whether they voted for Harris or they voted for Trump, if they lose their Medicaid, that hurts; if they lose their community hospital, that hurts; if they pay higher interest rates, that hurts.

Let's come to our senses and vote against this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague Senator Welch, the great Senator from Vermont, for shining a spotlight on Donald Trump and the Republicans' attack on healthcare in their so-called Big Beautiful Bill.

Let's be honest about what the Republican bill really is. It is repeal and replace by another name--not one fell swoop but death by a thousand papercuts.

They are afraid to say they want to kill healthcare, Medicaid, ACA; so instead, they put so many barriers in the way that, in effect, they are doing the same thing.

They are doing the same thing with Social Security.

We have all heard how this bill will devastate Medicaid. It is the largest cut in history. Every day you learn more about this bill, it gets worse. It includes over \$1 trillion--\$1 trillion--in healthcare

cuts--cuts to the ACA, even cuts to Medicare. We have been learning that Medicare will be hurt as well by the sequestration.

And today, if you didn't think it could get worse with this ``Big Ugly Bill," it sure did. The CBO just announced that their bill will kick millions more people off their healthcare than we originally thought, not only by attacking Medicaid, but by crippling the ACA private insurance and even Medicare now.

Yesterday, it was 13.7 million people who would lose coverage. Today, it is as high as 16 million. You know, that is a big number, 16 million. It is families; it is people who need healthcare; people whose kids might have cancer and they are desperate to get something done; elderly who are paying so much for medicine, they can't afford to go to a doctor to see if the medicine is working; families that are just starting out and maybe someone lost his or her job. Yes, 16 million, but that is each person, a family, a group.

The more you look at the House bill, the worse it gets. Enrollment times will be shortened by an entire month. Wait times will be longer for everyone at the hospital. And 22 million people--22 million people--could see their average premium go up by an average of 93 percent. Small business owners--3.3 million--will see their premiums skyrocket. Hospitals, nursing homes, health centers are all at risk.

I have been at nursing homes in many parts of my State. Guess what? They are all afraid they are going to close because 60 percent, 70 percent of their income is Medicaid. That is how they take care of the elderly. And those people will lose their coverage and be forced to leave because the nursing home will close.

Well, how about those 45-year-old couples with three kids? They have no extra room in the house and Mom has to come back because she has no place to go; and there won't be adequate healthcare there at home.

And job loss. Job loss on this ``Big Ugly Bill"--this betrayal-- 850,000 will lose their jobs in healthcare alone, another 800,000 in clean energy, and many, many more. Millions are losing their jobs.

I don't know what the economists would think, but when you lose 2 million jobs, if that is the case, you are right on the edge of a recession, if not in one.

And despite all this, Donald Trump has the gall to lie and say that his bill wouldn't harm Americans' healthcare. He says no one will lose coverage. Ladies and gentlemen, people of America, Donald Trump is lying. The bill will kick people off their healthcare coverage. It will slash healthcare benefits. It will close rural hospitals. People will get sicker and die.

What did the junior Senator from Iowa say?

Well, we are all going to die.

How about the junior Senator from Louisiana?

I'm not worried about people losing their healthcare.

It shows the callousness of the Republican Senators when it comes to healthcare. They don't seem to care. They seem to say ``Tough luck."

Republicans should forget calling this their ``One Big Beautiful

Bill." You know what the new name for this bill is, a more suitable name? The ``We're All Going to Die Act." The ``We're All Going to Die Act" because that just about sums up how callous they are being with the American people.

For many Americans, healthcare is the difference between life and death. Democrats will fight this bill with everything we have. The American people deserve to know the truth.

And one more point. I would say to my colleagues, Donald Trump is selling you Republican colleagues a bill of goods: It is not going to hurt anybody. Don't believe his false words because when you vote for this bill, the effects will actually occur, and the public will realize what you have done. So don't let Donald Trump sell you a bill of goods. We know he makes things up out of the clear blue all the time. He is doing it now. And when he calls you in and tells you that no one is going to be hurt, no one is going to lose coverage, you know that is a crock of you-know-what. I can't say it here. Don't listen to him because your constituents will pay an awful price in healthcare. And they will know you did it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today in strong opposition to the President's request to Congress this week to eliminate \$9.4 billion in funding that has already been passed and signed into law. Let's say that again--that has already been passed and signed into law.

Anyone who watches ``Schoolhouse Rock!" and listens to the song knows how a bill becomes a law. A Republican-led House at the time and

a Democratic-led Senate came together; they made an agreement; they passed a bill; and it was signed into law by the then-President. But this President thinks he can just come in and change everything when it comes to really important things for people in this country that I am about to get to. That is just not how it works. We have got to do our jobs, and people need to stand up and say: This is our part of the job. We make the decisions about the funding. The President can veto them. He can work with us, you know, as we could be doing right now. Instead, it is just a one-pony show, but that is how this place works.

So what this proposal would do would gut funding that has already been appropriated for broadcasting--public broadcasting--and slash critical international aid funding, which are programs that have long had bipartisan support. I am the daughter of a newspaperman. I care a lot about people getting information, getting news, and right now, I care a lot about it in rural America because there has been such a breakdown of news coverage--of small newspapers that have folded, in part, because we won't do anything about the social media companies--about Facebook and Google--and how they are able to use the content without being reimbursed. We just let it sit there as their lobbyists come in and stop it.

But while we are doing that in a lot of these areas now, the only news--the only way for them to find out about what is going on with a storm or what is happening with a wildfire or what is even happening with their local softball team or what is happening with the high school or what business is opening or closing--is through these sources of public radio and public TV.

Public broadcasting reaches nearly 99 percent of Americans with free programming, delivering lifesaving emergency alerts by the local news and shows that talk about what is actually happening locally and what is true and

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what is happening and what events are going on and when they can attend the school fair--all those kinds of things. But President Trump has decided to try to claw back the money Congress has already provided, I guess, to pay for these tax cuts for the wealthiest and to try to claw it back for over 1,500 local and regional public TV and radio stations throughout the country. Many of these stations provide free, high-quality programming to millions of households in rural areas. A lot of them don't even have what they need to see it online, and this is actually how they get their news. Even without that, they are in their cars a lot. They have a long way to drive, and they get a lot of stuff off the radio.

I know that in my State this will be particularly devastating. We have a lot of rural areas. Minnesota has a long history of public radio and TV programming. Every week, 20 million people across the country listen to the Minnesota Public Radio programs that were originally produced by the Marketplace, right? Since 1967, its award-winning news operation has documented some of the most important stories of our time. With Minnesotans coming from Cambodia and as to what was happening there, it was public radio that was covering that. In 1988,

MPR's Main Street radio produced a documentary called "Against the Grain," which gave rural Minnesotans the mic to talk about how they were handling economic change. In 2007, MPR News covered every detail of the collapse of the I-35W bridge, which was, of course, also warning people of where they had to go, of what was happening, of what was closed down. They are covering research on dementia, State plans for K through 12 education. The legislative session right now--both the public TV and public radio stations--are diligently covering every single detail of that while so many other news organizations have gone away or broken down.

What do we want to have--no coverage of a city council in Bemidji, MN? We don't want to know what is happening on Main Street? We don't want to know, when a flood comes in, what stores are open and when? Why would we decide to cut ourselves off from information at this moment in time?

Public TV is a place where so many people get their news that 58 percent of households watch PBS programming in a year. PBS Kids? There are 15 million monthly viewers of PBS Kids, and, yes, that is right. They don't get exposed to all the advertising and all the stuff they would see online because they are watching the PBS Kids. I think that is actually a pretty cool thing for our country that there is a place that kids can watch these programs. Every month, 36 million Americans watch their local PBS.

I was just at KSMQ TV in Austin, MN. I am sure most of the people haven't heard of it, but, boy, to the people in Austin, it is pretty important. For tens of thousands of people, that is where they get

their news--72 percent. The former Republican Senate leader in the State senate is on the board because they know this is a place that can find out about local news or what is happening and where they can find out about local news in places like Granite Falls, MN, and in places like Bemidji, MN.

All across the country, in times of crisis, public radio and TV are essential to public safety. While many other news sources lost power and the internet during Hurricane Helene, Asheville's Blue Ridge Public Radio stayed online, bringing lifesaving news and information to the over 500,000 people in the region who were without power. When Hurricane Milton devastated the Tampa area, local public station WUSF hosted live call-in shows. It aired frequent local news briefings and maintained a regularly updated live blog with a text-only bandwidth option to keep residents informed and safe before and after the storm.

I have been in so many areas of my State in a time of crisis of flooding, where you go down there, and the mayor in a really small town is sitting there, but he is live-streaming on their local public access because that is the way. Where else are people going to go? Are they going to try 80 different platforms on social media? Hmm. Are they going to go and try to figure out which local TV station in the Twin Cities--miles away--is, maybe, showing something every so often about their problems? They go to public access purely for safety's sake and much less for kids seeing really good programming that is free of all the commercial aspects that are coming kids' ways every single day. There is the interesting, in-depth kind of reporting you can have on a

place like Marketplace for what is happening with the economy or something to listen to when you are driving for hours and hours and hours that doesn't mean endless ads and endless marketing because you actually get to hear the news or you actually get to hear some music you like.

That is what public TV and public radio do for us. It is a treasure in our country. Public broadcasting creates a more informed community through quality programming on local and national events, and I think it is really going to be important, as we debate this in the next few weeks, to remember that ``local" part. It shines a light on the people, places, history, and stories that are the fabric of towns and cities that are addressing the most pressing issues. We must support these vital resources that give voice to important local issues that wouldn't otherwise be heard. They are going to be lost to history. It is going to be a future erosion of the fabric.

So what do people do instead? Oh, go look on Twitter and see if you can protect your kids from a bunch of bad stuff that is on there. I use it. A bunch of us in here--almost all of us--have accounts. It is an important way to reach people. I am not cutting it down, but I would much rather have a kid in my State be watching the programming on public radio than looking on social media accounts right now or be watching it on public TV and listening to the radio. It is a safe space for them to get some programming.

The President's request would also deepen the damage this administration has done to our standing in the world through reckless cuts to foreign aid. I will give you one example. The President would

impose major cuts to PEPFAR, the program that began under President George W. Bush to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. Over many years, this program has earned consistent bipartisan support across 4 administrations and 10 Congresses. It is credited with saving over 25 million lives. These programs not only demonstrate Americans' humanitarian leadership, which certainly helps when you need a friend when there is a conflict going on abroad and you can point to things that you did in working with other countries, but they are also good for our country. We know that you just can't bury your head in the sand and hope that these problems in other countries and diseases aren't heading your way, whether it is Ebola or malaria or the bird flu. Oftentimes, these things come in from other countries. A pandemic, right? They come in from other countries.

So why would we, at this moment in time, cut off our investments in public health and in food aid and other things that are not only right, based on your belief that we are part of this world, and your faith or whatever makes you believe that, if we can save some lives for a small part of the Federal budget in America? Because we are so good at innovation and we are so good at producing things, and, yes, we have some extra food, and, yes, we have some rural economy that we want to keep strong, but also, just from a purely American, selfish version of this--and I don't mean ``selfish" like a bad thing; I mean ``selfish" like looking out for ourselves and our country--you would want to work with the rest of the world so these diseases don't come through your doors or you don't shut out and anger other countries when 90 percent of our customers, potential customers, are outside of our borders. You

want to be able to sell stuff to them but not if we cut ourselves off from the rest of the world and make fun of them and call them the 51st State.

The President's proposed cuts to funding for UNICEF are also misguided. I was one of those kids at Halloween who would go trick-or-treating. I would have my bag and this little UNICEF box so people would put some pennies in, and I learned how much each of those dimes would mean for food for kids in other countries. We should be at the forefront of supporting brighter futures for children who are facing the hardships of poverty so the

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next generation can build strong societies and become close partners with the United States.

Think about people who study in our colleges and graduate schools from other countries. Think about what they offer us. Yes, they pay their way a lot of the time. That helps college. But do you know what else they do? Sometimes they stay. Sometimes they stay for a few years. Basically, they are getting advanced degrees. They are getting skills that we want them to get, and sometimes we want them to stay in our country. In my mind, we should be stapling a green card to their diplomas. That is why, when you look at Fortune 500 companies in our country and who has headed them up, a huge number of them are immigrants or are kids of immigrants who were educated in our country.

That is such a big part of our economy and our advantage across the

world. Why would we be cutting them off--or they go back to their home countries and say: You know, I kind of liked it there. They start a business. Then they do business with our country. That is how this has worked.

American businesses need access to emerging markets. Many countries that have received U.S. assistance have become important American trading partners. The connection between foreign assistance and American prosperity is especially clear in agriculture. America has proudly fed the world for decades, and foreign aid has been a critical component of that effort. Food aid is a significant market for American farmers, purchasing over \$4.25 billion in American commodities from 2020 to 2024.

Minnesota farmers and ag businesses sold a total of \$70 million in ag products to USAID's Food for Peace Program in 2024 alone.

Continuing this aid should not be a partisan issue. It never has been, or we never would have gotten it done for all these years. It has been completely bipartisan. Some people come at it, as I said, because of their faith and their belief in helping the world. Some people come at it in terms of economics and think this is how we help people, and then this opens the markets for us. Some people come at it from a security standpoint, which I mentioned with health but also applies in other ways. If you help people and you are their friends, it can lead to good things down the line.

Cutting funding for this international aid, not to mention cutting ourselves off from the information we need, especially in rural areas that so often in news deserts rely on public radio and public TV for

their information, is sending our democracy backward at a time when we are completely connected and should be connected to the rest of the world.

These investments, compared to the rest of the Federal budget, aren't as big, but their influence in the immediate and in the long term is immense. They strengthen our country at home and strengthen American leadership around the world.

This is a test of our values, yes, but it is also economically the right thing to do to keep a fragmented country that is ever-divided somewhat on the same plane, by their kids having a public TV program to watch and learn from, from their community being able to tune in and watch a local sports game and are able to get their news about what happened on their city council and talk about it the next day.

So one person says: I don't know what happened. I read this on Facebook.

Then the other person says: No, that is not true. I actually saw the local news in Austin, and I saw what it said on our local public TV network--they don't even, maybe, know what that is, but they know what it is--and this is what I found out.

That is how people can come to some common agreement about what is happening in our world.

And there is no better place to start than on a local level, which is why, when you talk to Republican or Democratic mayors or city council members, they will tell you: If we don't have that, how are we ever going to debate this levy proposal? How are we ever going to get people to understand why we have to make a decision about the school and

whether we close it down or whether we expand it or whether we close another school down?

How are they ever going to have that without a public access station?

In this day and age, this idea that we are--what are we going to do?

Just expect everyone to go out when they have three kids? Are they supposed to go out to every single meeting and watch it themselves? Or are they supposed to rely on that, maybe, they are going to get the right information on Twitter, but they are not sure if that person is telling the truth or that person is telling the truth? Or are we going to give them the first frontline of information, which is what C-SPAN does, by the way, which is why Senator Grassley and I are trying to make sure that we get C-SPAN on platforms like YouTube, owned by Google; by Hulu, owned by Disney, in the modern day.

It is the same thing here. I want to make sure there are some sources where people can gather and look at this news and know they are getting something of quality, know they are getting something either that entertains them with music, without every single song having an ad in the middle of it, and that they are able to get the news they need to be good citizens of this great country. That is what is on the line with these rescissions.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Moreno). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, a lot of people are asking the question: What exactly were people voting for in the last Presidential election?

Well, many things. We have many citizens who are voters in this country, but the recurring theme seems to be the cost of living for the average family, the ability of mothers and fathers to make ends meet and to see a realization of their dreams and aspirations. We were told, over and over again, that families across this country were being overwhelmed by the cost of living--gas, groceries, housing. So they gave a majority of the votes to President Trump, who promised he would make America great again.

Since taking office, I don't believe that the President has come near to keeping his promise. Instead, he has hired many of his billionaire buddies and cut deals with the ultrawealthy that will harm the same Americans who voted for him.

I am not going to get into his cryptocurrency scheme and how it has enriched him and his family. Let's set that aside for a minute and talk about issues that apply to every person.

Hidden in more than 1,000 pages in the bill that passed the House of Representatives is a plan--a laundry list of things--that I don't believe Americans even considered voting for in the last November election. They are going to have a devastating impact on families and States, red and blue alike.

The main takeaway from this ``One Big Ugly Bill": Billionaires are going to win, and American families are going to lose.

Do you think the voters in last November's election for President of

the United States would actually vote to close down their local hospital? That is what is looming.

You say: Oh, you Democrats and your scare tactics--that can't possibly be true.

Well, let me tell you what happened.

Three weeks ago, 20 hospital administrators from across the State of Illinois--from Chicago down to the southernmost part of our State--all took a special trip to Washington to warn me that the bill that was pending before the House of Representatives threatened the survival of hospitals across our State. These are hospitals which are not only critical for providing professional medical care, delivering babies, and saving people's lives who are in automobile accidents but also major parts of the local economy.

You come to rural, smalltown Midwest America and ask about the impact to the local hospital, and they will tell you: We don't know that we can keep a business or attract a business if we didn't have it. We count on it every day to be there when we need it. And, secondly, it is a major employer--in

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fact, in most towns, the biggest employer in Downstate.

Then they warned me: Many of these hospitals are hanging on by a thread. The money that they receive from government insurance programs like Medicaid keeps the doors open and the lights on and the doctors in town.

And now we have a proposal from the Republicans to cut that Medicaid benefit for 16 million Americans. This would be the largest cutback in health insurance protection in the history of the United States. That is what has been sent over by the House of Representatives and is presently under consideration by the Republican leadership here in the Senate.

Nationwide, half of all rural hospitals already operate in the red, and more than 300 rural hospitals are at immediate risk of closure--26 in Kansas, 22 in Alabama, and 9 in Missouri.

How many closed hospitals will the Republicans accept as part of their plan?

Let me tell you, I am from downstate Illinois--proud to represent the city of Chicago all these years but prouder still of being from downstate and trying to keep track of all the needs they have for this economy to prosper. I know rural hospitals are the backbone of many communities in downstate Illinois. Critical emergency medical care anchors the local economy.

Now you dig deeply into this Republican budget bill that has come over from the House of Representatives, and it turns out they are not just eliminating health insurance coverage for 16 million Americans, they are also cutting Medicare.

Medicare is a program primarily for elderly people in this country. It has been a miracle worker. Medicare was created in the 1960s, and it is no coincidence or surprise that the life expectancy of Americans went up as Medicare took root and became part of healthcare in America.

Despite promising to leave Medicare alone, which everyone said, from

Donald Trump on down, Republicans couldn't help themselves. They slashed Medicare benefits and reduced access to hospitals, nursing homes, and medications for seniors in all 50 States--Medicaid and Medicare.

So why would Republicans in Congress take a wrecking ball to these two major parts of our healthcare system? To provide money from tax breaks to the wealthiest people in America.

I will bet you that he is making it up. I will bet you it is another one of those political schemes of his.

It is not being made up. It is true. They want to generate enough money to give tax breaks to wealthy people.

Based on a new update from the Congressional Budget Office today, up to 16 million Americans are now estimated to lose their health insurance coverage under this Republican plan that passed the House and is now being considered by the Senate Republicans.

I can just tell you this from a personal basis: There is no more helpless feeling in the world than to be a father with no health insurance and being told that your beautiful baby has a serious medical complication. I know. I have been there.

Some Republicans are downplaying these catastrophic health cuts. On the Senate floor earlier today, a Republican Senator said people on Medicaid are lazy and play video games all day. At a recent townhall meeting, when a concerned constituent raised the Republicans' proposed Medicaid cuts and said that people would die, it became a controversy in response to the Senator's comment.

It sounds like Republicans in Congress want to be the ones to decide

who is worthy of healthcare in America. But Americans who depend on Medicaid are not strangers. They are your neighbors. They are people at your church, your school, and at your work. It probably is your family too.

If you or a loved one gets sick, will congressional Republicans deem you deserving of seeing a doctor? Is that what this was all about? Is that what this election was all about? Did the American people vote for tax cuts for billionaires? I don't think so.

A party like the Republicans, who claim they are the party of the working class--working-class billionaires--they refuse to put their money where their mouth is. Republicans in Congress may say they are just trying to lower your taxes, but most of the benefit is going to wealthy people who won't even notice it. Maybe their bookkeepers and accountants will be able to give them the good news that they just saved another \$200- or \$300,000 in taxes.

Under the Republican plan, taxpayers in the wealthiest 0.1 percent would get a \$300,000 tax cut every year--\$300,000 for the richest of the richest in America. Why? At the expense of healthcare for 16 million Americans? It makes no sense.

The average full-time worker making minimum wage on average would receive a tax break as well. I have to be honest about it. It is \$20 a month. So \$300,000 for the richest of the rich and 20 bucks a month for the working stiff. How can that possibly be fair?

Did the American people vote to slash jobs across the economy in the last November election? I don't think so. Since we passed the Inflation Reduction Act, 85 percent of investment in clean energy technology has

landed in Republican districts.

Now, I know the President of the United States calls global warming and environmental issues a hoax. He has been hanging with that story for a long time even though we know something is happening. Notice the extreme weather events across the United States and around the world? They are getting more frequent and more costly. Is it a coincidence or is something going on? I happen to believe something is going on.

In just 2 years since passing the Inflation Reduction Act, businesses have announced 340 new clean technology projects. One estimate says that these projects will create 150,000 permanent jobs. I have seen it in my State. That includes more than 9,000 jobs in Texas, 4,800 in Ohio, 4,500 in Indiana, and 2,700 in my home State of Illinois. The Republicans' ``Big Ugly Bill" puts these jobs at risk, taking a hatchet to tax policy that makes these projects possible.

The promise of a Republican repeal has already scared the private sector into withdrawing \$14 billion in investment and canceling 10,000 clean energy manufacturing jobs. Why would the so-called party of the working class want to give their own constituents a pink slip? I don't get it.

Now, some of my Republican colleagues have been brave enough to raise alarms about the Medicaid cuts, the rollback of clean energy credits, and the cost of the bill, but do you know what the cost of this bill is to give tax breaks to the wealthiest people? It is \$3.8 trillion more on the deficit over the next decade.

We already know the scammer in chief will try to bully Republicans into choosing billionaires over working families, using anything he can

to persuade them or threaten them. My Republican colleagues must know that this plan does not make America great again; it makes our debt the greatest in the history of our Nation. Instead, it harms families in red and blue States looking for a fair shot.

Their lip service to these terrible cuts is not enough. I urge a handful of my Republican colleagues--and that is all it takes--to show some courage, show some common sense, tell the folks in the House and tell the White House as well that this approach is not going to work.

Taking health insurance away from 16 million Americans--more than has ever happened in the history of this country--is unfair, fundamentally unfair, and we all know it. We know intuitively that is just not fair. Taking Medicaid away from reimbursing hospitals and doctors of critical care in small towns and rural areas is a mistake we will pay for for generations to come.

I urge Republicans to listen to their constituents because I know that Americans who voted for Trump in November did not vote for what I have just described today on the floor of the Senate.

We need four Republicans--four--to stand up and say: This doesn't make sense--too much debt, too much pain for families, and too much of a gamble for rural areas in smalltown America.

We have to stand up and make a much better effort, and we should do it on a bipartisan basis as quickly as possible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.