

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I have agreed to delay my 20 minutes in favor of the distinguished Senator from Michigan having 3 or 4 minutes. I ask unanimous consent that I be given the floor after that.

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

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. First, Madam President, I thank my friend from Utah for his graciousness. It is a pleasure to serve with him on the Finance Committee.

(The remarks of Ms. STABENOW pertaining to the introduction of S. 1776 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I appreciate very much my friend from Utah allowing me to step in for a moment. I will be happy to talk more about this at a later point, but it is important to get this introduced this evening so it can become a part of the debate.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2009—UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3548, which was received from the House; further, that a Reid substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I have to object on behalf of our side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah is recognized.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I have taken a lot of votes in my Senate service, as I have had the proud honor of representing my fellow Utahns and of course all Americans across this great Nation. I deliver these remarks with a heavy heart because what could have been a strong bipartisan vote reflecting our collective and genuine desire for responsible reform in the Senate Finance Committee has ended as another largely partisan exercise as we take another step forward toward the flawed solution of reforming one-sixth of our economy with more spending, more government, and more taxes.

Having said that, I wish to compliment the distinguished chairman of

the committee, MAX BAUCUS, from Montana, for having worked so long and hard to try to get that bill through the committee. I disagree with the bill, but I also recognize that type of effort, and I have great regard for Senator BAUCUS and others on the committee as well. But I have worked through almost 4 weeks of debate in the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and now through 2 weeks of strenuous debate on the Senate Finance Committee. I was in the original Gang of 7 trying to come up with a bipartisan approach, but I realized that not enough flexibility had been given to Senator BAUCUS, and I decided to leave that group of seven, and I am glad I did, because I predicted when I left exactly what this bill would turn out to be.

It almost seems as though these hundreds of hours of debate in the past were for naught. It is important for Americans everywhere to understand that the bills we have spent hundreds of hours working on are not the bills that will be discussed on the Senate floor. The real bill that is currently being written behind closed doors in the dark corners of the Capitol and the White House—and we can all only hope that all of us, especially American families, will have ample opportunity, at least 72 hours, to review the full bill before we are asked to consider this on the floor and vote on it—is a bill that affects every American life and every American business. The health care reform bill is too big and too important to not have a full public review.

I wish to spend my time today talking about why the Baucus bill fails President Obama's own test for responsible health care reform. This bill is another example of Washington once again talking from both sides of the mouth and using technicalities and policy nuances to evade the promises made to our seniors and middle-class families. First, President Obama in his own words has consistently stated: "If you like your current plan, you will be able to keep it." Let me repeat that: "If you like your plan, you will be able to keep it." That was given on July 2, 2009, right at the White House, and we are all familiar with that particular commitment.

One of the amendments I offered in the Finance Committee simply provided that if more than 1 million Americans would lose the coverage of their choice because of the implementation of this bill, then this legislation would not go into effect. This was a simple and straightforward amendment; no nuance, no double-talk. This amendment was defeated along party lines.

It should come as no surprise to anyone on the Finance Committee that in a recent Rasmussen poll, a majority of Americans with health care coverage—almost 53 percent—said that the bill would force them to change their coverage. This bill is rife with policies that will do anything but allow you to keep your coverage. It cuts upward of

\$133 billion out of the Medicare Advantage Program, which will adversely impact the availability of these plans for millions of American seniors, especially in rural areas. That was what it was designed for. It is pushing for policies at the Federal level that actuaries acknowledge could increase premiums significantly for millions of Americans, not to mention the new insurance tax which will cost families another \$500 in higher premiums. This will make current coverage unaffordable for countless Americans.

American families are very smart; they are very astute. They realize that there is no free lunch, especially in Washington. They are being promised an almost \$1 trillion bill—that is really an understatement of what it is, and I will get into that later—that will not increase deficits, not raise taxes, and not cut benefits. Only Washington speak could try to sell a promise such as this with a straight face.

Second: The President has consistently pledged: "We're not going to mess with Medicare." Once again, this is another simple and straightforward pledge that this bill has now evaded through Washington double speech or doubletalk. This bill strips, as I say, \$133 billion out of the Medicare Advantage Program that currently covers 10.6 million seniors, or almost one out of four seniors in the Medicare Program. According to the Congressional Budget Office, under this bill, the value of so-called additional benefits such as vision care and dental care would decline from \$135 to \$42 by 2019. That is a reduction of more than 70 percent of benefits. You heard me right: 70 percent. I offered an amendment to protect these benefits for our seniors, many of whom are low-income Americans who reside in rural States. However, this amendment too was defeated in the Finance Committee. The majority chose to skirt the President's pledge about no reduction in Medicare benefits for our seniors by characterizing the benefits being lost—vision care, dental care, and reduced hospital deductibles—as extra benefits, not statutory benefits.

Let me make this point as clearly as I can. When we promise American seniors that we will not reduce their benefits, let us be honest about that promise. Benefits are benefits, so we are either going to protect benefits or not. It is that simple. Under this bill, if you are a senior with Medicare Advantage, the unfortunate answer is no, you are going to lose benefits.

Thirdly, the President has consistently stated: "I can make a firm pledge. Under my plan, no family making less than \$250,000 a year will see any form of tax increase."

That was when the President was a candidate in New Hampshire on September 12, 2008, and he has said that since.

Let us examine the realities of this bill. As I said before, there is no such thing as a free lunch, especially when