Reporting from Washington—Under pressure to pay for his ambitious reshaping of the nation's healthcare system, President Obama today will outline $313 billion in Medicare and Medicaid spending cuts over the next decade to help cover the cost of expanding coverage to tens of millions of America's insured.

This is from an October 22 NPR report:

Over a decade, the committee would cut $117 billion from the Medicare Advantage plans.

This is from an article in the Washington Post on October 23:

$500 billion in cuts to Medicare over the next decade.

That is the Washington Post.

This is the Wall Street Journal on September 8:

Other sources of funding for the Finance Committee plan include cuts to Medicare.

Mr. President, the question is not whether there are going to be cuts to Medicare; that is the proposal. Maybe it is a good idea; maybe it is a bad idea. But we don't need to come to the Senate floor and say that something that is, is not.

The proposal in these large expansive health care plans—the 2,000-page bill coming from the House soon—is that it is basically half financed by cuts in Medicare—not to make the program solvent—a program which has $37 trillion in unfunded liabilities over the next 75 years—but to spend it on a new government program. Those are the facts. That is why it is important that the American people have an opportunity to read the bill and know what it costs and know how it affects them.

The Republican leader and Senator JOHANNS have talked about taxes in the bill. Rarely does a Senator have an opportunity to vote on so many Medicare cuts and so many new taxes, as we apparently will have when this bill comes to us.

The taxes include a tax on individuals who don't buy government-approved health insurance. The Joint Committee on Taxation, our joint committee, and the CBO estimate that at least 71 percent of that penalty, that tax, will hit people earning less than $250,000. So it is not just taxes on rich people. When you impose, as the Senate Finance Committee bill would, $900 billion-plus in new taxes, when fully implemented, on a whole variety of people and businesses that provide health care, what do they do?

According to the Director of the CBO, most of those taxes are passed on to the consumers. Who are the consumers? The people who are paying health care premiums—250 million Americans. What does that mean? That would mean that instead of reducing the cost of your health care premium, we are more likely to increase it.

I ask, Why are we passing a health care reform bill that increases the cost of your health care premiums, raises your taxes, and cuts Medicare to help pay for that? There are increased taxes on health care providers, manufacturers and importers of brand-named drugs, medical device manufacturers—these will all be passed on to consumers, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation and CBO. The Finance proposal raises the threshold for deducting catastrophic medical expenses, but eighty-seven percent of the 5.1 million taxpayers who claim this deduction earn less than $100,000 a year. They are not millionaires. They earn less than $100,000 a year. In fact, data from the Joint Committee on Taxation and the former Director of the CBO shows, by 2019, 89 percent of the taxes—these new taxes—will be paid by taxpayers earning less than $200,000 a year.

The 2,000-page proposal from the House of Representatives would raise taxes by $729 million. There is a tax on millionaires, but we know what happens to that when it is not indexed. Forty years ago, we were worried about 155 high-income Americans who were avoiding taxes, so the Congress passed the millionaires tax—the alternative minimum tax. Today, if we hadn't patched it, as we say, in 2009, that tax would have raised taxes on 28.3 million Americans. The millionaires tax will hit you if you keep earning money.

I have said quite a bit about Medicare cuts and taxes. I want to conclude my remarks by quickly saying what Republicans think should be done. We believe the American people do not want this 2,000-page bill that is headed our way. We want, instead, to start over in the right direction, which means reducing costs and re-earning the trust of the American people by reducing the cost of health care step by step.

Specifically, we would start with the small business health care plans. That is just 88 pages that would lower premiums, according to the CBO. It could cover up to 1 million new small business employees, and it would reduce spending on Medicaid. Then we could take a step to encourage competition by allowing people to buy health insurance across State lines, and we can take measures to stop junk lawsuits against doctors.

More health information technology could be a bipartisan proposal. We can have more health exchanges. The number of pages are very small. Waste, fraud, and abuse are out of control—$1 out of every $10 spent in Medicaid. Our proposal would offer a choice—a couple hundred pages, not 2,000—reducing premiums and debt and making Medicare solvent instead of cutting it, with no tax increases instead of higher taxes, and reducing costs.

That is the kind of health care plan Republicans have offered and the kind we believe Americans will want. We hope over time that will earn bipartisan support.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, how much time is remaining on both sides for morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority has 2½ minutes of morning business. The minority's time has expired.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I would like to speak on health care. I note with interest the remarks of the Senator from Tennessee. I think there is former bipartisan agreement, but everybody says let's go through this step by step. The Congress has had an extensive health care debate. We in the HELP Committee have had extensive hearings, and we had a markup of our bill that lasted more than 3 weeks and had over 350 amendments, of which 75 percent were offered by the other side. We offered many of those amendments. When all was said and done, they voted no. So we don't know when good would be good enough. It is one thing to disagree on policy; it is another thing to want to do a filibuster by proxy, which is what we encountered in the committees with the increased volume of amendments.

We need health care reform, and we need it now. We need it in a way that accomplishes the goal of saving lives, improving lives and, at the same time, controlling costs.

No. 1, I think we all agree, we need to save and stabilize Medicare. The other thing we need to do is end the punitive practices of insurance companies.

I am going to tell you a bone-chilling story. I held a hearing in the HELP Committee on how health insurance in the private sector treats women. First, we pay more and get less benefits. But also what happened and what emerged is that a woman who applied for health care who had a C-section was denied by a Minnesota company unless she got a sterilization.

Did you hear what I said? An insurance company told an American woman, to get health insurance, she had to have a sterilization. Is this fascist China, fascist Germany? Is this Communist China? This is the United States of America. We were outraged.

I have been in touch with this insurance company. I got lipservice promises, blow-off letters from their lawyers, and stuff like that. I am ready with an amendment on the floor. We have to get rid of these punitive practices of denying health care on the basis of a previous condition. And then, not only doing that because of a C-section, but then to engage in a coercive way to force a sterilization.

So you think I want reform? You better believe I do. And I think I speak for the majority of the country who feels this way and the good men, such as the Presiding Officer, who will support us on it. I will have an amendment to deal with this if the insurance company continues to blow me off.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to proceed to the motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the committee-reported substitute to H.R. 2847 is agreed to, and the motion to reconsider that vote is agreed to.

Under the previous order, there will be 40 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled as follows: 20 minutes under the control of the Senator from Louisiana and 20 minutes total under the control of the Senator from Maryland, Ms. MIKULSKI, and the Senator from Alabama, Mr. SHELBY.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, very shortly, we will vote on cloture on the CJS bill. As the chairperson of the committee, I wish to say that we want to finish this today so we can move forward with the blessing and the business of funding—Mr. President, I have to yield the floor a moment. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, reclaiming my time as the manager of the bill, I wish to bring to my colleagues' attention that at 12:25 p.m. today, we are going to vote on cloture of the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill. We wish to finish this bill today. When I say ''we,'' I mean Senator SHELBY, my ranking member, and myself.

This bill is the result of a rigorous bipartisan effort to fund the Department of Justice, including the FBI and DEA, the Commerce Department, and major science agencies that propel our country in the area of innovation and technology development, such as the National Science Foundation and the National Space Agency.

We want the Senate to be able to deal with this and then move on to other business.

After the cloture vote, it is our intention to dispose of any pending amendments that are germane to the bill. This bill has been public since June. It has been on the floor already for 4 days and over 20 hours. Senators have had ample time to draft and call up their amendments. Senator SHELBY and I hope to be able to move through the amendments in a well-paced but brisk fashion.

We hope our colleagues will cooperate and have any decisions relating to the funding of these important agencies be decided on robust debate and the merits of the argument rather than delay and dither, delay and dither, delay-and-dither tactics of the other side. We don't want to delay. We don't want to dither. We want to proceed, debate germane amendments, and bring our bill to a prompt closure.

Mr. President, I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of H.R. 2847, that it be in order for me to offer amendment No. 2676, which is filed at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. MIKULSKI. I object, Mr. President. The intention is to vote on cloture and dispose of pending germane amendments. The Senator's amendment is not pending, so I do object, with all courtesy because of my respect for the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I obviously am very disappointed to see my colleagues on the other side of the aisle object to my amendment. It is a pretty simple, straightforward amendment.

We have voted several different times when appropriations bills have been on the Senate floor over the last couple of weeks, wherein the folks on the other side of the aisle insist on allowing the transfer of prisoners from Guantanamo Bay to the United States for trial. My amendment prohibits that. I simply think it is not appropriate to bring battlefield combatants into article III trials inside the United States for any number of procedural reasons relative to the treatment of Guantanamo Bay prisoners within our Federal courts. But even beyond that, the potential for the release of those enemy combatants, once they arrive on U.S. soil, certainly is increased.

This is not the way we need to be treating enemy combatants. Those men who are at Gitmo are the meanest, nastiest killers in the world. Every single one of them wakes up every day thinking of ways they can kill and harm Americans, both our soldiers as well as individuals. Some of them were involved in the planning and the carrying out of the September 11 attacks. Others were arrested on the battlefield in Iraq and are at Guantanamo. We are not equipped nor have we ever in our history dealt with trials in article III courts of any enemy combatant arrested on the battlefield. The FBI has not investigated cases prior to arrest. These folks were not given Miranda warnings because our soldiers captured these individuals with AK–47s in their hands with which they were shooting at our men. These are not the types of individuals that our criminal courts are designed to handle or can feasibly handle.

I am disappointed we are not going to get a vote on this amendment. I will continue to raise this issue as long as we possibly can between now and the time that Guantanamo Bay is scheduled to be closed and, from a practical standpoint, until it is closed, if that ever does happen. We have the courts at Guantanamo Bay equipped to handle and try these individuals before military tribunals. Those tribunals have been established, just reauthorized. We are capable of handling the trials at Guantanamo Bay, and that is where they should take place.

I want to make sure the time I utilized is charged against Senator VITTER, which has been agreed to by the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It will be so charged.

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator from Georgia attempting to get a very important amendment on the floor. I wish to also propound a unanimous-consent request for a related amendment, related to the terrorists in Guantanamo Bay.

This week, I was advised by the officials at the Air Force and Navy base in Charleston——

Ms. MIKULSKI. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DEMINT. I will in a second.

Yes, I will yield.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Is the Senator offering an amendment or giving a speech about the desire to offer an amendment?

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I desire to offer an amendment, and I will propound a unanimous-consent request to allow my amendment to be considered postcloture. I have a request. I will get to the request in a moment. I wish to give a few seconds of background.

We know this is not an idle threat because inquiries have been made in Charleston for moving detainees from Guantanamo Bay to minimum security brigs in Charleston.

I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of H.R. 2847, it be in order for me to offer an amendment preventing the transfer of known terrorists at Guantanamo to U.S. soil.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I object to the amendment. The intention is to vote on cloture and dispose of pending germane amendments. The Senator's amendment is not pending, so I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, this amendment has been filed as a second degree. It makes no sense at this point for us to not have a short debate about moving the most dangerous people in the world to American soil. It is appropriate for us to allow at least a small amount of time, as we rush these bills through, to talk about the issues that are important to Americans.

I am obviously disappointed that we will not allow the discussion of my amendment or the amendment of the Senator from Georgia or others who are trying to get this issue in front of