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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You are our strength and shield. We are grateful for Your great and precious promises that provide us with inspiration and hope. Daily, You have provided for our needs, leading us along the road toward abundant living. We continue to be sustained by the promise of Your eternal presence. Lord, forgive us when we surrender to those influences that draw us downward.

Bless the Members of this body. Teach them that Your hand is on the helm of human affairs and that You still guide Your world. Renew their strength and give them the courage to persevere in doing what is right.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Democratic leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is a hard thing to admit you are wrong. It is always very difficult. It is not very pleasing to look back and say to yourself: Oh, I wish I wasn't so far off; I was way off.

But as public servants, we have to accept reality, regardless of where we may have stood or what we may have said in the past.

Unfortunately, Republicans in Congress are trying their utmost to escape the reality that ObamaCare is a smashing success.

Just consider a few of the facts—and these are only a few of them: 16.4 million Americans now have quality health coverage, many for the first time in decades, many for the first time in their lives.

Since 2013, the United States has seen the largest decline in the uninsured rate—ever. Nine in ten Americans have health insurance. In the last 18 months, the uninsured rate for non-elderly adults has fallen by 35 percent. Health care costs have grown at their slowest rate in 50 years.

Since 2011, the number of preventable deaths at hospitals and care centers has dropped by 50,000. That is 50,000 lives—50,000 people are alive today who wouldn't have been but for ObamaCare, and ObamaCare enrollees are overwhelmingly satisfied with their coverage.

Those are the facts. No matter how hard my Republican colleagues try, they cannot wish those numbers away. All of the doomsday reports are wrong.

I understand that many Senate Republicans have worked hard to make their opposition to ObamaCare their legacy.

In June of 2009, the Republican leader—the majority leader—was on the Senate floor decrying health care reform more than 3 months before the bill even passed. His mind was made up before he even saw the bill.

And so it has been with too many other Republicans in this body, and certainly in the other body where they voted—I lost track of it—65 times to repeal it. Each time it has been a colossal flop.

The junior Senator from Wyoming, for example, has been relentless in his

condemnation of ObamaCare. He comes to the floor all the time with his charts and everything, but he avoids the facts. He has been relentless in his condemnation of ObamaCare—before and after the bill was passed. But he is wrong. I don't say so, the facts say so.

For example, Paul Krugman's piece in the New York Times today effectively lays out the options congressional Republicans have with respect to ObamaCare. Remember, this isn't some high school teacher talking about the merits of ObamaCare, it is a Nobel laureate in economics.

This is what he said today, and I quote part of what he said—simply put, Republicans were wrong on ObamaCare. In this body, it is understandable for a Senator to be dead wrong on some piece of policy from time to time. It happens. But what is not understandable and what is not acceptable is for the entire Republican Party to double down on its opposition after they have already been proven wrong. It says a lot about their inability to govern and, quite frankly, their grasp on reality—that Republicans refuse to acknowledge facts.

That is a reality.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the full piece from the New York Times written by Paul Krugman.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Apr. 27, 2015]

NOBODY SAID THAT

(By Paul Krugman)

Imagine yourself as a regular commentator on public affairs—maybe a paid pundit, maybe a supposed expert in some area, maybe just an opinionated billionaire. You weigh in on a major policy initiative that's about to happen, making strong predictions of disaster. The Obama stimulus, you declare, will cause soaring interest rates; the Fed's bond purchases will "debase the dollar" and cause high inflation; the Affordable Care Act will collapse in a vicious circle of declining enrollment and surging costs.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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