



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

No. 65

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.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.

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom. Nothing is impossible to You. Forgive us when we sometimes have anxiety about the future because we fail to remember what You have done in the past. Thank You for Your wisdom that guides us on life's journey, empowering us to walk with integrity. Today, enlighten our Senators, show them Your ways, teach them Your paths. May Your great love so encompass them that discord and confusion will be dispelled. Lord, let Your peace and tranquility guard their hearts and minds. Deal graciously with them, encouraging them to cast their cares upon You, receiving Your loving mercy and protection.

We pray in Your Holy 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote with respect to the Alexander substitute amendment No. 3801 occur at 12

noon today; that the cloture vote on H.R. 2028 occur following disposition of the substitute amendment; and that the 10:30 a.m. second-degree filing deadline for both the amendment and the underlying bill be at 11 a.m. this morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. We have no problem moving the vote to noon, but I want everyone to be clear that we would be happy to have a vote to pass this bill right now. The only thing holding up the bill is, of course, the amendment of which the Presiding Officer is well aware.

We would be happy to move right now with the amendments that have been agreed to—the managers' package we agreed to the night before last—and finish this bill now.

I have no objection.

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

THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we have seen important progress in this appropriations season, with the committee reporting out one-third of the 12 funding bills already, each with unanimous backing. So let's continue our work to make progress on the bipartisan energy security and water infrastructure funding bill before us.

This appropriations measure will have positive impacts across the country and promote American priorities such as energy innovation, waterways infrastructure, commerce, and public safety. It is the product of much research and deliberation. It shows what can be achieved with the return to regular order.

We know it would not have been possible without the dedicated work and leadership of the Appropriations Committee and the Energy and Water De-

velopment Subcommittee. It is good to see this significant headway we have made thus far. With continued cooperation, we can pass the first appropriations bill of the season and continue our work to move through more of these individual funding measures.

OBAMACARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it has been 6 years since the flawed health care policies of ObamaCare were signed into law. Six years later, my office continues to receive stories from Kentuckians who are reeling from the negative effects of this partisan law.

For instance, take the heartbreaking story from one middle-class husband and father of two from Covington who suffered a heart attack at the age of 42. Under ObamaCare, this Kentucky dad has seen his health care premium triple and his deductible increase to, as he put it, a "ridiculous" amount. He said he struggles to afford his medicine—which he says costs upward of \$1,000 a month—as he and his family struggle to survive week to week.

Put simply, he says, ObamaCare is a "terrible blight on the health care system" that has resulted in more "expensive, watered down, unaffordable health care for the middle class." Unfortunately, too many American families have had similar experiences under this administration's partisan law because from the start this health care policy was built on a mountain—a mountain of higher costs and broken promises, which only seem to grow larger by the day.

When it comes to ObamaCare, costs in the exchange are higher than its champions expected. A recent study found that ObamaCare exchange individual market enrollees experienced higher medical costs than people insured through employer-provided coverage: 19 percent higher in 2014 and 22 percent higher last year. When it comes to ObamaCare, it simply does

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



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not work like its champions promised either. As a result, we have seen increasing numbers of insurers pull out of the ObamaCare marketplace altogether.

Just last week, we learned that the Nation's largest health insurer will join the list, withdrawing from all but a "handful of States" next year, including Kentucky. What this means is that Americans in my home State and across much of the Nation are likely to face even fewer health insurance options. According to one analysis, if this insurer withdrew from the exchange market altogether, nearly 2 million marketplace enrollees would be left with only 2 insurers, while more than 1 million more would be left with only 1.

Fewer choices could also mean even higher premium costs. As one expert put it, either insurers will drop out or insurers will raise premiums. This only adds to the many Kentuckians who have already seen their premiums spike under ObamaCare, like the retired police officer whose premium increased to nearly \$5,000 a year, which he "simply cannot afford" or the Kentuckian whose rate tripled, leaving him uninsured and leaving him to pay a fine at the end of the year.

Not surprisingly, the insurance industry's chief spokesperson—who is a former top Obama administration official, by the way—is bracing the public for even more premium increases in the year to come. The administration's answer? More money from taxpayers. Whether they call it a risk corridor or a premium subsidy or a reinsurance mechanism, the source is still the same, the American taxpayer.

So the bottom line is this: Americans continue to be unfairly hurt by a health care law that was forced on them through backroom deals and is literally littered with broken promises. Too many have seen their premiums and deductibles skyrocket. Too many have suffered from tax increases and lost coverage. Now too many are set to face even fewer choices and significant price hikes in the year to come.

Middle-class families have endured the broken promises and failures of ObamaCare for far too long. It is past time for Democrats to own up to the many disappointments of this law and help us move toward better health care policies for our country.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks, the time until 12 noon be equally divided between the two managers or their designees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is too bad my Republican friends continue to attack ObamaCare. It is working. The ranks of the uninsured are as low as they have ever been. More people are getting access to health care, and they are healthier. More people are healthier because they can go see a doctor or go to a hospital when they need to.

The Republicans need to get over it and accept the fact that ObamaCare is here to stay. If they are so concerned about it—they have no plan of their own—maybe they could give us some ideas as to how it should be changed. We hear nothing other than criticism of a program that is doing so much to change America forever.

WISHING CAPITOL POLICE OFFICER PAT MILLHAM A SPEEDY RECOVERY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want to take just a minute to talk about the tragedy that struck the Capitol Police yesterday. At 5 a.m., United States Capitol Police Officer Pat Millham was working out in the gym. He suffered a massive heart attack. Those who were present in the gym at the time rushed to his aid. They used a defibrillator three times before his heart started beating again. He was then flown to a nearby hospital and had surgery late last night.

He was revived. That is very good. He is a 28-year veteran of the Capitol Police. He has served in a variety of very important positions: a member of the criminal investigations unit, academy instructor, and he even worked on the hostage negotiation team.

He is an outstanding police officer by all accounts. The Department has recognized his performance and honored Officer Millham with the Service Medal and Commendation Award. He is well-liked by all of his colleagues and has a great sense of humor. He is currently a member of the Department's mountain bike patrol that we see around here. There are not a lot of mountains, but there are a lot of hills around this Capitol complex.

He is in very good shape. That is what you have to be to be a patrol officer on a bicycle. That is what makes what happened yesterday so shocking. I cannot imagine what a difficult time it has been for Pat and his wife Heidi and their two children at college, Skylar and Savannah. Heidi recently retired from the United States Capitol Police.

I hope they know the entire Senate and House family wishes Officer Millham a speedy recovery, and I express my personal appreciation and admiration to all of the Capitol Police for all they do and all the personnel who make the Capitol Police jobs functional. We look forward to having Officer Millham back at full health very quickly.

Mr. President, where are we on what is happening on the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2028, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2028) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Alexander/Feinstein amendment No. 3801, in the nature of a substitute.

Alexander amendment No. 3804 (to amendment No. 3801), to modify provisions relating to Nuclear Regulatory Commission fees.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided between the two managers or their designees.

NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE-BACK DAY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we have recently been talking quite a bit—because, frankly, unless we talk about it people won't know what happened—about how productive we have been over the last year and a half in advancing legislation that benefits the American people, which is, of course, the reason why they sent us here.

I say we have been talking about it, because if we don't talk about it, maybe they will never learn, and even if we talked about it, some of them may never believe it. But the fact of the matter is that we need to talk about what we are doing here for the people we represent.

Of course, nothing happens in the Senate or in Congress or in Washington unless it is done on a bipartisan basis. But leadership matters. Leadership matters.

We have seen with the new Republican majority in the 114th Congress, under Senator MCCONNELL and Speaker RYAN now, that we have been able to pass some important legislation. This includes legislation to combat the epidemic of opioid abuse throughout our Nation. We passed an important piece of legislation called the Comprehensive