

health care will “lead to increased competition and reduced premiums,” and “ensure that consumers have the affordable choices they deserve,” even though virtually everything about the Obamacare experience contradicts that conclusion.

The inevitable result of the course my colleagues want to follow is a single-payer health care system, even if many of them won’t admit that is their long-term goal. I have noted several times that, in a world where the government dictates both the products on the health insurance market and the prices at which they are sold, the eventual result will be a market where the government is the only available provider.

From the time Obamacare was drafted, I have argued that Democrats intended to keep expanding the role of the government in the health care sector until they could argue that, after a series of failures, the only option left is a nationalized, single-payer health care system.

And my arguments have been called paranoid and inflammatory by pundits and politicians on the other side; yet, looking at this current campaign season, it is not remotely a stretch to say that my colleagues support and eventually intend to impose a health care system run entirely by the government.

Whether we are talking about taxes or health care or anything else, the problem with this type of rhetoric and all of these campaign promises isn’t that my colleagues are simply wrong on the facts. The problem is that, when the rubber meets the proverbial road, these kinds of promises don’t lead to good results for the American people.

And, here is why: While some unfortunately seem to live in a perpetual election cycle, once the votes are all counted, we have an obligation to actually govern the country.

I know that fact is sometimes lost on a number of people in this town, but it is the cold, honest truth. The purpose of elections is to eventually enact policies that are preferred by the voters.

Yet, in every election, candidates and Members of Congress spend months taking unreasonable positions and making outlandish promises because they play well with the voters. But, once the election is over, all of that rhetoric—the promises as well as the attacks—have to be translated into actual policy. And, far too often, that process of translation leads either to gridlock when elected officials refuse to move off of their unreasonable campaign positions or to results that, in the eyes of many voters, appear watered down in comparison to the promises they heard in the middle of campaign.

Is it any wonder, then, that the American people are, by and large, growing more distrustful of the government?

Is it any wonder why the vast majority of Americans across the ideological spectrum have a negative view of Congress?

As chairman of the Finance Committee, I am well aware that I am going to be tasked with translating election-year rhetoric into workable policies. I am also aware that the policies that fall within the Finance Committee’s jurisdiction are often those where we hear some the most contentious rhetoric and unrealistic promises during each and every election cycle, which makes the job of crafting policy that much harder.

Don’t get me wrong, I don’t doubt my own ability to reach policy solutions that can satisfy members of both parties, and, as chairman and previously as ranking member, I have worked very hard to do so. And, prior to that time, I had a great deal of success working through difficult policy matters with members in both parties to find the right answers to complex problems.

I believe strongly that we can be successful in coming up with tax policies, health care policies, or any other policies that serve the best interests of the American people. I simply do not believe that election-year rhetoric and hyperbolic campaign promises are the right starting points for these efforts.

Allow me to boil it down a little further and get more specific.

I believe wholeheartedly that we can reform our broken Tax Code on a bipartisan basis, I just don’t think we can do it by starting with the notion that tax reform should be about raising revenue for increased spending and punishing disfavored income groups, unpopular industries, or savvy investors.

I also believe we can find a bipartisan way to fix our ailing health care system. But I simply don’t believe that it can be done if we are focusing on expanding government in order to keep campaign promises to create a government-run health plan.

I look forward to tackling these issues with my colleagues and to reaching across the aisle to find the right answers. In my view, that will be much easier to accomplish if my friends on the other side of the aisle will eventually be willing to set aside the rhetoric they have employed during the campaign to appease their base.

I am willing to work with anyone to address these and other issues. We’re just going to have to find a way to cut through the politics and partisanship that all too often slows us down.

JUSTICE AGAINST SPONSORS OF TERRORISM BILL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I reluctantly voted to sustain President Obama’s veto of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, JASTA. It is essential that we honor families of the 9/11 victims. I am supportive of their efforts to pursue justice and hold accountable foreign powers that support terrorism in the United States. However, I am concerned that JASTA erodes longstanding international immunity protections that are essential to the security of the United States.

As President Obama explained in a letter to me, “Enacting JASTA into law . . . would neither protect America from terrorist attacks nor improve the effectiveness of our response to such attacks. . . . JASTA sweeps much more broadly than 9/11 or Saudi Arabia, and its far-reaching implications would threaten to undermine important principles that protect the United States, including our U.S. Armed Forces and other officials overseas, without making us any safer.”

In its current form, JASTA undermines the principle of sovereign immunity in U.S. courts, which could have significant reciprocal ramifications. If JASTA becomes law, other countries will likely follow suit and enact laws that threaten U.S. interests and jeopardize the United States’ ability to operate internationally. As Secretary of Defense Ash Carter noted, “[JASTA] is likely to increase our country’s vulnerability to lawsuits overseas and to encourage foreign governments or their courts to exercise jurisdiction over the United States or U.S. officials in situations in which we believe the United States is entitled of sovereign immunity. U.S. Servicemembers stationed here and overseas, and especially those supporting our counterterrorism efforts, would be vulnerable to private individuals’ accusations that their activities contributed to acts alleged to violate a foreign state’s law.”

As the Senate Democratic leader, I feel an obligation to support my President. Although I am voting to sustain the President’s veto, I would be supportive of follow-on efforts to modify the JASTA bill in a way that would allow victims to secure justice while protecting core U.S. interests.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

MR. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to talk about the continuing resolution passed by the Senate earlier today. This bipartisan agreement is the result of weeks of negotiations between Democrats and Republicans in both the House and Senate. It funds the Federal Government through December 9 at fiscal year 2016 levels and provides much-needed funding to fight the ongoing Zika public health emergency. We also now have an agreement on a path forward to finally address the public health crisis in Flint, MI.

Funding the government through a stop-gap measure like this is not ideal, but it provides Congress additional time to negotiate a larger funding agreement to fund the Federal Government through the end of the 2017 fiscal year.

Included in this agreement is \$1.1 billion in emergency funding to help States and our Federal health agencies properly respond to the Zika epidemic. As of last week, there were more than 23,000 reported cases of Zika in the United States and its territories, including more than 2,000 pregnant