

now know that didn't work. The amount of money that went into the fund was rather insignificant, so those who undercharged aren't getting much and companies are going out of business.

Today we take a crucial step forward in beginning to lift the burdens and the higher cost of this law that has been placed on all Americans. As I mentioned, this is a special budget operation that only requires 51 votes. The House has already passed a bill with more than a significant majority.

By the time we are done, the legislation the Senate passes will eliminate more than \$1 trillion in tax increases placed on the American people while saving more than \$500 billion in spending. Most importantly, this bill begins to build a bridge from the President's broken promises to a better health care system for hard-working families across the country.

Let's talk about the broken promises. As a Presidential candidate, then-Senator Obama promised Americans they could keep their health plan if they liked it. When he was in office and the bill was there, he said: If you like your plan, you can keep it. Millions soon learned they can't. This is because ObamaCare has drastically reduced America's choice among health care plans through a Federal Government takeover of the insurance marketplace. In fact, the President's promise, "If you like your plan, you can keep it," was named PolitiFact's "Lie of the Year" in 2013 after the health care plan cancellations were mailed to over 4 million Americans.

Let's talk about the higher costs. Americans were also promised lower health care costs, but even the administration admits ObamaCare is failing to address costs and said average premiums are expected to rise by 7.5 percent this year. Recent headlines from across the country actually show much more dramatic increases.

In Minnesota insurance policies on the exchange have rate hikes in the double digits—between 14 and 49 percent. In Oregon premiums for the benchmark plan on the exchange will go up about 23 percent. In Alaska the premium hike will be more than 31 percent for the benchmark plan. In Oklahoma the second lowest cost silver plan premiums will increase more than 35 percent. In Utah plans on the federally run exchange will be 22 percent higher next year.

The President of the United States himself promised that this bill was not a tax. In fact, this was one of the law's top selling points because Democrats knew it would never pass if they said it was a tax, but while they got the bill passed and signed into law, the Supreme Court later ruled it is a tax. This law was deceptively sold to the American people and now these hidden taxes are being passed on to hard-working families in the form of higher fees and costs. It is time for Democrats in Congress and the President to admit

that ObamaCare is a \$1 trillion tax hike that families and employers simply can't afford.

We can talk about fewer choices. ObamaCare's mandates and taxes on employer-sponsored health care plans are not only leading to higher out-of-pocket expenses but also fewer choices and services for 150 million Americans who have relied upon job-based health benefits for decades. It eliminated some of the competition, and competition is the real way to bring down prices.

I remember when we did Medicare Part D. I was a little concerned because there were only two companies that were providing the pharmaceutical benefit in Wyoming, and I thought they would maybe drop out of the program, but Medicare Part D increased competition. What did increased competition do? It brought down the price of the pharmaceuticals by 25 percent before it even went into effect.

ObamaCare didn't provide for more competition. According to the non-partisan Kaiser Family Foundation, employees who have job-based insurance have witnessed their out-of-pocket expenses, on average for an individual, climb from \$900 in 2010 to \$1,300 in 2015. Employees working for small businesses now have deductibles of over \$1,800. Since ObamaCare became law, several large employers have stopped offering benefits to part-time employees, including Walmart, Target, Home Depot, and Trader Joe's. The premiums have gone up and the deductibles have gone up. There are fewer choices and higher costs.

So this was supposed to build a bridge to better care. Over the past 50 years, our Nation has made great strides in improving the quality of life for all Americans, but these transformative changes were always forged in the spirit of bipartisan compromise and cooperation. These qualities are essential to the success and longevity of crucial programs such as Medicare and Medicaid.

Shortly before he retired in 2001, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a Democrat from New York, said:

Never pass legislation that affects most Americans without real bipartisan support. It opens the doors to all kinds of political trouble.

Senator Moynihan correctly noted that the side that didn't support the law will focus on each and every misstep. More importantly, he predicted that the measure's very legitimacy would always be in doubt and that the majority of Americans would have trouble supporting it in the long run unless it unquestionably achieved all of its goals.

We have seen each of these scenarios play out over the past 5 years as the health care law has polarized America like nothing before.

Bipartisan support, of course, means that both sides get some things into the mix of the bill. That did not happen

even though we had a very extensive amendment process in committee and on the floor. Essentially, the Republican ideas were all thrown out. Both sides weren't included, so it was not a bipartisan bill.

After passage of the bill, we had a special time at the Blair House where there were half Republicans and half Democrats who got to speak with the President for a day. The amazing thing at that meeting was that every time a Republican mentioned an idea, the President blasted it immediately. When the Democrats suggested an idea, those were all good. At the end of the day, it turned out to be very much a waste of time because not a single idea was even considered that was brought up at that time by the Republicans.

We still need health care reform, but it has to be done the right way—not comprehensive" means so large that nobody can understand it, and that is kind of what happened with this bill. We have to do it step by step. They can be pretty big steps, but if we do it step by step, we can bring the American public along. They can understand it, and they can tell us the unintended consequences, and those can be fixed. It would be correctable. This bill hasn't been correctable. We have known the flaws. The President has put waivers on to keep us from noticing them sooner. We have offered to make corrections but have never been taken up on our offer.

Providing access to high-quality, affordable health care is something I am confident that Democrats and Republicans should be able to do. It is time to build a bridge from the broken promises to better health care for each and every American once and for all.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 4 p.m. today, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.
The Senator from Vermont.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION BILL

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as the ranking member of the Budget Committee, I rise in strong opposition to the budget reconciliation bill we are debating today. In fact, this bill should tell every American just how far removed the Republican leadership here in Congress is from the realities of American life and the needs of the American people.

At a time when the United States is the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee health care to all people; when 29 million Americans today have no health insurance and even more are underinsured, with high