

If that is our guiding principle, then I know we can make this session a success. It is what will allow us to get the appropriations process moving, for example. We can set the pace now by working toward a smooth nomination process.

I ask our Democratic friends to remember the consideration we showed President-Elect Obama's nominees in 2009. We approved seven—seven—members of his Cabinet unanimously within hours of his inauguration. Seven nominees for President Obama's Cabinet were approved unanimously within hours of his inauguration.

Now, some nominations will be more contentious. I am sure that will be true, of course, of the Supreme Court. It has been clear throughout that the next President would name the next Supreme Court Justice. I maintained that position even when many thought a President of a different party would be taking the oath this month. Now the President who won the election will make the nomination, and the Senate that the American people just re-elected will consider that nomination.

But not everything need become so contentious. We will have many opportunities to cooperate. I have mentioned several already. We will see many more in committee. Shortly, we hope to see an example of that in the Intelligence Committee, where Chairman BURR will lead Members of both parties in a serious, comprehensive, and responsible review of any Russian involvement in our elections. Leader SCHUMER will join the committee as an ex-officio member and will be able to review the reports of the intelligence community. The Armed Services Committee will review how best to tie our cyber capabilities to our warfighting doctrine.

It is just this type of issue—something both parties say is too important to become a partisan football—where we often see the hard work of legislating and oversight transcend party. We saw it last Congress when, for instance, Members of both parties came together—and held together—on highways, on efforts to cure incurable diseases, and on providing TPA authority to both the current President and the next one. I hope we will see similar cooperation on many issues to come.

The American people are watching us. They are hurting. They are calling for a change in direction. It is now our united responsibility to move forward with their needs and their priorities as our guide.

Let me again welcome every new Member of the Senate. I want again to congratulate the Democratic leader, and let me again acknowledge President-Elect Trump for an impressive victory. He heard the voices of Americans in every part of the country in ways others have not. He now carries a heavy burden.

We will work with him to help the American people feel confident again—confident in themselves and confident in their futures.

We look forward to the inauguration in just over 2 weeks. There is now much serious work to be done. I look forward to working with each of you to achieve it.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote on the motion to proceed to S. Con. Res. 3 occur following the remarks of Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to S. Con. Res. 3.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 1, S. Con. Res. 3, a concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2017 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2018 through 2026.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I apologize to my good friend the Republican leader. I couldn't be here for his remarks. I intended to be, but our President stayed longer and then I was meeting with the Vice President-elect. I apologize for that.

I also wish to recognize the distinguished majority leader and reiterate what I said yesterday: I sincerely hope, just as I heard he hopes, that we can find common ground in the Senate. While we at all times inevitably disagree on the right way forward for our country, I know he is a patriot who

cares deeply about this institution. That matters a lot to me. I learned that through a meeting set up by my friend from Tennessee. We had a dinner, and I walked away convinced that Leader MCCONNELL cares a lot about making the institution function. That matters, and that can maybe help us through some of the rougher times. We know it has grand principles, grand practices, and a grand tradition in our national life, something we both want to preserve.

Yesterday, in my opening remarks as a Senate leader, I did remind our Republican majority and the President-elect that there would indeed be places where we can work together, and I named a few of them, but let me be perfectly clear, kicking millions of Americans off their health care and throwing the entire health care system into chaos is not one of them.

I am deeply troubled that the Republican majority and seemingly the President-elect are plotting, as one of their first campaigns in the new Congress, a full-scale assault on the American health care system, not just the Affordable Care Act but Medicare and Medicaid as well because they are inextricably bound. Those are the pillars that support the American health care system, but as its first order of legislative business, the Republican majority has decided to put forward a budget resolution to repeal health care reform. Although he promised not to cut Medicare in the campaign, the President-elect has nominated a man who spent his career strategizing health care's demise, and he chose him to be Secretary of HHS. I don't think that is something a vast majority of Americans or even Republicans believe in.

It is too clear that President-Elect Trump and the Republican Congress are intent on making America sick again. Republicans seem determined to create chaos, not affordable care, for the American people.

Today, I would like to focus on the budget resolution on the Affordable Care Act. I understand why the majority thinks they have to do it. Over the past 8 years, they promised every group—conservative group and audience in the country, they would repeal the law, “root and branch.”

For a long time, it has been only a conservative fever dream. Republicans knew they could make extreme promises about replacing it with something better without ever having to consider the consequences or even come up with a reasonable plan to replace it because they knew the Democrats or President Obama would ultimately block their attempts to roll back the law.

Now things are different. The consequences of repealing the Affordable Care Act are real. I sincerely urge my colleagues to deeply consider the consequences. It is no longer just a game or a political line to say “repeal” because now you have to replace. So far, it has been 5 years of repeal, repeal, repeal; not one replace plan has garnered

a lot of support even on the Republican side of the aisle, let alone in America.

What will it mean for average Americans if you repeal the law without any viable replacement? Not just the 30 million who might lose coverage right away—that is a staggering number, many of them in very red and poor States and rural areas. What will happen to the overall marketplace if you rip away all the safeguards of the ACA and have put nothing in its place?

It doesn't matter if you repeal and delay, as some of my friends on the other side of the aisle call it, for 1 year or 2 years—however long. Folks will lose a lot of benefits, and the insurance marketplace could fall apart long before repeal goes into place. As insurers raise their prices because they have to with repeal, costs to the average American who has employer insurance will go up as well. My colleagues will own that, just as we owned everything that happened previous to this election.

Let me tell you, if Republicans pull the plug on health reform, on Medicaid, and privatize Medicare, it could mean absolute chaos, not affordable care. It would likely increase prescription drug costs, premiums, and out-of-pocket costs to American families—not, as I said, just for the families that got coverage on the exchanges but for all American families, even if you get insurance through your employer. I repeat that to America. Everyone who has employer-based insurance and is not part of the ACA should worry about this repeal with no replace because their costs will go up, sure as we are here together. It would put insurance companies back in charge. It would allow them to discriminate against individuals with preexisting conditions.

We all know of people. Parents—their kid has cancer. They would look for an insurance company. Oh, no, your son has cancer, your daughter has cancer, you can't get it. What are our colleagues going to do about that one? No answers yet. I doubt they have good ones. It would cause premiums to skyrocket. It would unravel the insurance market.

I would ask my colleagues before they jump into this repeal to talk to their local rural hospitals. In my State, rural hospitals are a mainstay of our rural economy. They are the largest employer in many of our towns and villages. Remember, New York has New York City, but we are the third largest rural State in the Nation, only behind Pennsylvania and North Carolina. In those areas, merely repealing the ACA and not doing anything else is going to hurt those hospitals dramatically. In fact, today, in 11 State capitals, rural hospitals—many of them in red States—protested a repeal of the ACA.

It could also exacerbate—I don't want to forget—the opioid epidemic by ripping away coverage from 1.6 million newly insured individuals struggling with substance abuse disorders. We worked so hard in the Cures Act to

cover people. Far more would be undone by this act of repeal in terms of fighting opioid abuse.

For all my deficit-hawk friends, your proposal causes a trillion-dollar hole in the budget—at least a trillion. My colleague from Washington thinks it might be even higher, and I rarely doubt her. What are you going to do, deficit hawks, once you repeal and that hole in the budget becomes enormous?

This is not conjecture. My Republican colleagues would be wise to remember how the American health care system operated before health care reform. Health care costs were growing at a much faster rate than they are today, eating into workers' paychecks and dissuading them from taking risks and changing jobs lest they lose a good coverage plan. A debilitating illness could wipe out a lifetime of hard-earned savings because there was no cap on health care costs. Women were charged more than men for the same health coverage. It was outrageous. We will go back to those days with repeal.

Many couldn't get insurance if they had a preexisting condition. Some insurance companies would simply delete you from their rolls if you got sick. You want to go back to those "good old days"?

Today, because of health care reform, those things are no longer true. Health care costs are rising much more slowly than before, and the uninsured rate is the lowest it has ever been. I don't think any American would want to go back to the health care world of yesterday where insurance companies wrote the rules and costs spiraled up unchecked, but Republicans seem all too eager to dial back the clock and make America sick again.

Democrats are united in our opposition to cutting Medicare, to cutting Medicaid, and to repealing health care reform, and we will hold the Republican majority and the President-elect accountable for the consequences of repealing health care reform.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question occurs on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 1 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander
Barrasso
Blunt
Boozman
Burr
Capito
Cassidy
Cochran
Collins

Corker
Cornyn
Cotton
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Enzi
Ernst
Fischer

Flake
Gardner
Graham
Grassley
Hatch
Heller
Hoeven
Inhofe
Isakson

Johnson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
McCain
McConnell
Moran
Murkowski

Perdue
Portman
Risch
Roberts
Rounds
Rubio
Sasse
Scott

Sessions
Shelby
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Toomey
Wicker
Young

NAYS—48

Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Booker
Brown
Cantwell
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Coons
Cortez Masto
Donnelly
Duckworth
Durbin
Franken
Gillibrand

Harris
Hassan
Heinrich
Heitkamp
Hirono
Kaine
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Manchin
Markey
McCaskey
Menendez
Merkley
Murphy
Murray

Nelson
Paul
Peters
Reed
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Stabenow
Tester
Udall
Van Hollen
Warner
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Feinstein

The motion was agreed to.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2017

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 3) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2017 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2018 through 2026.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

RECESS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly policy lunches.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 1:21 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ROUNDS).

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2017—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided between the two sides during quorum calls.

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

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

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

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that for the duration of the Senate's consideration of S. Con.