

of staff. She has been filling a dual role for some time. She was my legislative director. We have filled that position now. But she has been acting as the assistant here on the floor as well and done a tremendous job of manipulating and coordinating both centers of action.

Now, we have also been supported by the great work of our leadership, floor, and cloakroom staff. I thank them for their continued good work and dedication to this institution and the country as a whole. In particular, I want to thank Sharon Soderstrom, Hazen Marshall, Jane Lee, and Scott Raab in the leader's office, and Monica Popp, John Caphuis, and Emily Kirlin in the whip's office, and very especially Laura Dove and Robert Duncan in the cloakroom.

These folks, as well as my budget team, worked hours over the holiday break to ensure our success. Without all their work, we would not be here this evening standing on the verge of passing the Senate's repeal resolution that will set the stage for true legislative relief from ObamaCare that Americans have long demanded, while ensuring a stable transition in which those with insurance will not lose access to health care coverage.

This will allow us to move step by step on a new set of reforms, listening carefully to the advice of the millions of Americans who are affected, a step we left out when we did it previously. Or, as Senator ALEXANDER of Tennessee, the chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee put it, the ObamaCare bridge is collapsing, and we are sending in a rescue team. Then we will build several new bridges to get better health care. Finally, when those bridges are finished, we will close the old bridge.

After 5 days of consideration, many hours of debate, and numerous amendments reviewed and voted on, this part of the process can now be concluded. With that, I ask for the continued support and discussion on this valuable issue. If people have ideas for what ought to be included, I hope they will talk to us about them. I hope the American people will talk to us about the ideas they think need to be included.

There has been a lot of fearmongering, a lot of supposition about what will happen at the next stage. There were amendments that were put in about the next stage. Those, of course, wound up being non-germane. But we have our work cut out for us. We do have to come through now with a system that will solve the problems for the American people.

I mentioned before that when we started the whole debate on ObamaCare, there were 30 million people uninsured. Today, there are 28 million people uninsured. I think that the 30 million people was probably closer to 28 million at that time. One of the differences is some people who could not get insurance have insurance, and

a bunch of people who had insurance can't afford their insurance, and a bunch of people who have insurance can't afford their insurance, as you heard through the debate.

We want all the people who want insurance to be covered, and to be covered in such a way that they can actually get the treatment. If you have a \$12,000 or \$10,000 or \$6,000 deductible, that may not happen.

But I thank all of the people who have worked to get us to this point. Our work is now cut out for us even more so.

I know that we can have a spirit of cooperation and work through this, or we can use the reconciliation process and do it with 51 votes. But it is far better if we can find common ground and common solutions and get the work done.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH CRISCO, JR.

• Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate my good friend Joseph Crisco, Jr., on his outstanding 24 years of service representing the 17th district in the Connecticut State Senate. Joe has shown an incredible commitment to working for the people of Connecticut over his long career, and I thank him for all that he has done for our State and, in particular, the towns of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bethany, Derby, Hamden, Naugatuck, and his hometown of Woodbridge.

Joe is a graduate of Wilbur Cross High School and the University of Connecticut, where he credits many of his early lessons to his time spent as an athlete on the football field. His outstanding career as a player at both institutions earned him a place in the Wilbur Cross Athletic Hall of Fame, and his experience as a standout guard on the UConn football team in 1956 and 1957 helped forge a lasting commitment to his alma mater and shaped the ethic of teamwork and dedication that would follow him to the Connecticut State Senate.

First elected to the senate in 1992, Joe's commitment to his constituents and his community has never wavered. It is no exaggeration to say that his district would not be what it is today if not for the many grants and public projects he has been responsible for bringing home, from recreational centers and trails, to libraries, animal shelters, and affordable housing. The 17th district's most important institutions—like Griffin Hospital, Quinnipiac University, the Sterling Opera House, the Troop I Barracks of the Connecticut State Police, the former Bethany Airport, and the Metro-North Waterbury branch line—have always had a dedicated friend and advocate in Joe. And the annual senior fair in Ansonia's Warsaw Park, which Joe ran throughout his service in the senate, has provided assistance to thousands of senior

citizens over the years and become an iconic event in the Naugatuck Valley.

But more than simply serving the people in his district, Joe distinguished himself in the Connecticut General Assembly as one of its most effective and hard-working legislators. He served as chair of the Appropriations Committee and the Insurance & Real Estate Committee and had a hand in some of the most important legislation in a generation to support Connecticut's economy and the welfare of its citizens. He led the creation of the Biomedical Research Fund, which has devoted millions of dollars towards research efforts in the State to fight heart disease, cancer, smoking-related illnesses, Alzheimer's, stroke, and diabetes. He championed investment tax credits for economic development and public safety, secured a cost-of-living adjustment for beneficiaries of the ConnPACE Program for seniors, and fought passionately to expand the reach of health insurance coverage. After only 6 years in the senate, Joe pioneered the founding of Family Day; an initiative close to his heart as a father of 6 and grandfather of 18. And the legacy he leaves with his lifesaving work to improve and expand coverage for breast cancer exams, creating a new international standard for insurance coverage, is a special achievement of which Joe should be particularly proud.

I am also personally thankful for Joe's dedication to his position in the general assembly because I have seen it up close. During my time representing the 16th district, Joe and I sat next to each other in the senate chamber, and I remain incredibly grateful for his willingness to act as a mentor and friend in the early years of my government service.

Once again, congratulations to Joe, his wife, Pat, and his entire family for a long and successful career in the Connecticut State Senate. It is my hope that the general assembly will use Joe's career as an example and continue to work diligently and passionately for the people of our State in the years to come.●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

#### PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

##### 2016 NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL STRATEGY—PM1

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

*To the Congress of the United States:*