

for expensive insurance that many people found actually wasn't insurance they could use, even though they were forced to buy it. For 7 years, Americans have suffered under the consequences of that decision by this body and by the former President.

Less than 7 weeks into the Trump administration, Republicans introduced a plan to give Americans real healthcare reform. The American people know that ObamaCare has been a disaster, one broken promise after another. I hear about this every weekend when I am home in Wyoming. I heard about it this past weekend. There is now only one insurance company that is willing to offer ObamaCare coverage in my entire State. There are 1,000 counties all across the country in the same situation—only one option. This is not a marketplace; it is a monopoly.

As a doctor who has practiced medicine for 25 years, I can tell you that when it comes to healthcare, the last thing patients want to hear is that they don't have a choice: It is this or nothing. That is why Republicans promised we were going to repeal the restrictions in ObamaCare that limit people's choices. We promised to give people options, not mandates. The healthcare bill we are debating now is the first step to keeping that promise.

The bill starts to give people more choices so they can pick what is right for them and for their families. I want to talk about three ways that it does this.

First, the bill removes the mandates. It ends both the individual and the employer mandates. It eliminates the penalties that hard-working families have to pay if they decide that overpriced ObamaCare insurance isn't right for them. This was one of the most outrageous and unfair parts of the healthcare law. These mandates will be gone.

Second, the bill that the House is considering cuts taxes. It gets rid of the ObamaCare tax on prescription drugs. It gets rid of the ObamaCare tax on health insurance. It gets rid of the taxes on artificial appliances, such as pacemakers and artificial joints. Overall, the bill eliminates 15 different taxes. These taxes are obviously passed on to consumers; repealing them helps to bring down the cost of care.

Third, the repeal bill creates options for people and for States. It encourages people to find creative ways to help make healthcare costs more affordable for them. It expands how people can use health savings accounts, which is a great option for many people. It helps States do innovative things, such as create high risk pools to bring down costs for everybody. It gives States more flexibility when it comes to Medicaid Programs.

Let's face it: Medicaid is broken, and ObamaCare just threw more people onto this second-class health insurance. Just last week, we got evidence of how badly Medicaid is harming patients. The chief executive at the Mayo

Clinic said in his speech that his hospital is going to give precedence to people with private insurance over people on Medicaid. The supporters of ObamaCare said that their biggest success is the number of people who got coverage by being put into Medicaid. Well, it is clear that many of these people are being harmed by being in Medicaid, a system that has been broken for decades. It is alarming and it is also appalling.

We have to fundamentally reform the Medicaid Program. To do that, we have to give States more options for coming up with the reforms that work for them and for the people who live in those States. Every State is different, and a one-size-fits-all mandate from Washington will never work for all of the States all across the country. Democrats tried it, and it failed dramatically.

ObamaCare is collapsing all around us. We have to do something, and we have to start now. In the next couple of months, insurance companies are going to start making decisions about what they are going to do for next year, 2018. They will be figuring out how much they want to charge and whether they want to be involved in the ObamaCare exchanges at all. People have been losing their coverage and losing choices ever since the Democrats wrote the healthcare law and the President signed it 7 years ago. I believe it is going to get worse every day that we delay.

There are Democrats who don't really seem to care much about any of that. They would rather set the whole healthcare system on a path to fall apart completely before they will ever admit that they were wrong. Hard-working Americans and families across the country don't have that luxury. There are still 25 million Americans without insurance even 7 years after ObamaCare has been in place. Every year, people have gotten letters in the mail telling them that their plans have been canceled. That is the reality of ObamaCare. Democrats want to pretend that everything is fine, but that is absolutely not true.

That is why it is so important that President Trump jumped in right away to take important steps to help stabilize the marketplace. He recognized what Democrats won't admit—that these ObamaCare markets are falling apart. So the President has already started doing what he can to stabilize the markets, to make sure people keep their options for health coverage. The Department of Health and Human Services has taken steps to preserve programs that ObamaCare tried to eliminate. These are plans that people already had and they liked and the law tried to say they could no longer exist. The Trump administration has said people can continue on those plans. The administration also tightened up some of the rules to make sure people actually pay the premiums for this year's insurance before they are al-

lowed to sign up for next year. The administration is taking commonsense steps that will make it harder for people to game the system and that will lower the cost for everyone else. These are important steps. The administration is going to be doing a lot more to protect families and to create more options.

This repeal bill isn't perfect; nobody says it is. Still, it is a monumental shift away from ObamaCare. The American people will be better off with this repeal plan. They will be better off with the additional reforms that we will continue to push after this bill.

I hope that Democrats will join us and offer their own ideas about what these additional reforms will look like. I hope they realize that families are better off when they have more choices, not fewer. We are better off when people can decide what is better for them and their families, not when government tells them what to do. We are better off when healthcare decisions are left to patients and doctors, not to Washington bureaucrats and insurance companies. We are better off when people have freedom and options, not mandates and penalties.

America needs healthcare reform. What we had before ObamaCare wasn't working; I saw that as a doctor. What we have now isn't working, either. It is time for everyone to admit that and to take this opportunity to start repairing the damage, start creating real reform. As Ronald Reagan said: It is better to get 80 percent of what you want rather than go over the cliff with a flag flying. The American people are asking for our help, and we cannot turn our backs on them now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

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#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

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#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Charles R. Breyer, of California, to be a Member of the United States Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2021; and Danny C. Reeves, of Kentucky, to be a