

which should definitely be included, I hope Senator McCAIN's proposal is part of our consideration of Russia-related sanctions as well.

Chairman CORKER, Chairman CRAPO, Ranking Member BROWN, and Ranking Member CARDIN are in ongoing discussions, as are the majority leader and I, about the content of the Russia sanctions and amendment. I am hopeful that we can resolve this issue and vote to advance both measures.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, my friends on the other side of the aisle continue to work on their healthcare bill behind closed doors. They haven't made public a shred of bill text or even considered holding a committee hearing to debate the topic. Yesterday my friend the majority leader filed a motion to bring TrumpCare directly to the floor, skipping the committee process.

This is a party that screamed from the rafters "Read the bill, read the bill" when Democrats were putting together the Affordable Care Act. We spent over a year debating that bill. We tried with a bipartisan group of six to come up with a solution.

Republicans are putting together their bill in secret, with no Democratic input, and then will rush their bill to the floor without a single committee hearing, all in the span of 3 short weeks. This is a bill that will alter one-sixth of the American economy and affect tens of millions of American lives. For many, it will have life-and-death consequences.

The way Republicans are crafting this legislation is pulling the wool over the eyes of the American people on one of the most crucial issues affecting their lives. Why? There is only one explanation: They don't want the American people to see their bill. They don't want to go home to townhall meetings and let people give their opinions. Keep it under wraps, rush it through? There is only one good reason: They are not very proud of the product that they have put together.

The Republicans know that even if they make some changes to the bill that came over from the House—they may increase subsidies a bit or lower the amount of tax breaks they give to millionaires—they will still wind up with a bill that is far worse than the status quo: higher costs, less care. That is because they are working from a fundamentally flawed premise, which is to take support away from healthcare programs like Medicaid to give a tax break to the wealthiest Americans. Senate Republicans can nibble around the edges, but they will not be able to excise the rotten core of their healthcare plan.

The House bill has the support of approximately 18 percent of Americans. A majority of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans don't like it. Don't you get the message, my Republican

friends? We understand the ideologues are telling you that you must repeal. But now that people have actually looked at repeal, they realize that is not the way to go.

The right approach is not to move backward, not to undo all the progress we have made in healthcare over the past 8 years and start from scratch. The American people don't want to go back to the days when an insurance company could discriminate against you because you have a preexisting condition or jack up your rates simply because you are older. That is not the kind of healthcare system the American people want. But that seems to be what our Republican colleagues, in the dark of night, are considering.

The right approach is to keep all the good things in the existing law and work in a bipartisan way to make more progress on lowering costs for consumers and improving the quality of care.

Again, I urge my Republican colleagues to drop their repeal efforts and, instead, work with Democrats on actually improving our healthcare system.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I heard President Trump talk about Democrats being obstructionists yesterday—out in Ohio, Kentucky—about a healthcare bill in which they are not asking for Democratic help or input. They are tied in a knot because their own party can't agree on the tax bill. They again are not asking for Democratic input. They are tied in a knot because their own party can't agree.

Now it looks as if they are doing the same thing on infrastructure. The President is in an "alter reality" world. He blames Democrats, but then his Republican colleagues, often at his instruction, are told not to work on the bill with Democrats. What is going on here?

What the President tweets and talks about at his rallies and what is actually happening are two different worlds—two different worlds. That is no good. It is no good for America, no good for the American people, and, frankly, no good for the President.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

COUNTERING IRAN'S DESTABILIZING ACTIVITIES ACT OF 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the

Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 722, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 110, S. 722, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran's ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes.

Mrs. FISCHER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 1:30 p.m. today, the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar No. 99, the nomination of Scott Brown to be Ambassador to New Zealand; I further ask that there be 15 minutes of debate on the nomination equally divided in the usual form; that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on confirmation with no intervening action or debate; and that, if confirmed, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I think we all know that former FBI Director Comey just completed his public testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee. He testified about how President Trump asked him to pledge his loyalty to him personally and how the President asked the FBI to drop the investigation into former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn.

We know that last December, Michael Flynn had a discussion with the Russian Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Kislyak, about dropping some of the economic sanctions that the United States has imposed on Russia. We know that Michael Flynn subsequently lied about that conversation.

We also know—and former FBI Director Comey discussed it today—that he was fired by President Trump after he refused to pledge his loyalty to the