

takes pleasure in sharing such deeply personal stories, but Susan wants to be sure anyone that who finds themselves in such a difficult position has the support she had.

I appreciate her bravery in beating cancer and her willingness to share this very personal experience.

Alayna from Southfield, MI, shared that she was diagnosed with a rare tumor almost a year ago. Alayna serves as a minister of music in her church in downtown Detroit and enjoys working with children through various local programs. Alayna works part time and her husband works full time, often 70 hours per week. Neither has healthcare benefits through their employers.

Alayna and her husband were able to obtain coverage through the ACA marketplace, a plan she would not have been able to purchase without the Affordable Care Act. Alayna is rightfully terrified by the Republican plan and said she would probably be dead without the affordable coverage she received under the Affordable Care Act, leaving her husband and her 5-year-old daughter behind.

Matt, from Waterford, was unable to get health insurance before the ACA due to two preexisting conditions. After obtaining healthcare through the Affordable Care Act, he discovered one of his preexisting conditions had led to cancer in his digestive tract. Matt is convinced the ACA literally saved his life and that he would not have been able to afford the care he needs otherwise.

Hearing the stories of Matt, Susan, Alayna, and countless other Michiganders like them, I feel the need to remind this body that these individuals are our neighbors. They are husbands and wives and fathers and mothers. Illnesses or emergencies can happen to anyone. Ministers get sick. Students get sick. Small business owners get sick.

Matt didn't choose to be born with a preexisting condition, Susan didn't ask for breast cancer, and Alayna's tumor could have been on any one of us.

Last week, we honored our country's fight for independence, our Nation's brave Founders, and all who have sacrificed to build our Nation by working toward a more perfect union to ensure America is the land of opportunity for all.

The healthcare bill Republicans have written goes against the very values we honor and cherish. It does not bring us closer to opportunity for all. When the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office concludes that the Republican bill will leave millions of people uninsured, that should send a strong signal to all of us that we need to go back to the drawing board.

About an hour ago, my Republican colleagues released additional last-minute changes to their healthcare bill, intended to win over a few more votes within their party—changes that were drafted behind closed doors and

without input from the American public, the very people we represent. In their rush to get this bill done quickly, my colleagues have not fully considered how this proposal will impact their constituents.

Healthcare stakeholders and our Nation's insurers have told Republicans this latest change will still cause premiums for older Americans and those with preexisting conditions to skyrocket. It will still increase the number of Americans without health insurance by millions.

We should be working on bipartisan legislation that will truly improve our healthcare system by increasing insurance coverage while bringing down cost, not forcing a vote next week on legislation that is seriously flawed.

I ask my Republican colleagues to listen to their fellow Americans, Americans who are scared of what this bill will mean for them and for their families. I ask my Republican colleagues to listen to the people calling their office every single day and even traveling here to Washington, DC, to speak out against this bill. I ask my colleagues to listen to the independent experts and healthcare stakeholders who have said, in no uncertain terms, that this bill will cost millions of people their health insurance and could cost thousands of Americans their very lives.

I ask my colleagues to remember why they came to Washington in the first place. I ask my colleagues to step back and ask themselves some tough questions. Will this bill help people or will it hurt people? What will this bill mean for rural hospitals in their State, for lifesaving addiction treatments, for preventive care that saves lives and taxpayer dollars? Does this bill hold true to the important American values of fairness, freedom, and equal opportunity for all?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, we should scrap this bill, start over, and work together, in a bipartisan way, to bring down healthcare costs and improve the quality of care available to every American, no matter who they are or where they live.

I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Hagerty nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of William Francis Hagerty IV, of Tennessee, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Japan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, let me begin by reviewing the threats the United States is facing around the world today. The campaign against ISIS is far from over. We must build on the success of retaking Mosul and ensure an enduring defeat of terrorist threats in Iraq and Syria and throughout the region.

Every day we learn more about Russia's asymmetric capabilities—from cyber attacks to disinformation campaigns—even as they modernize their military, occupy Crimea, destabilize Ukraine, and threaten our NATO allies. China continues to militarize the South China Sea and modernize its own military at an alarming rate. North Korea gets ever closer to developing the capability to strike the U.S. homeland with a nuclear-armed missile.

I could spend a lot of time going through all of the threats we face. We are at war. We are at war. There are brave young men and women serving in Afghanistan, as I speak. Some of them have been wounded and killed. We must always ask ourselves: Are we really doing all we can to support them?

Our military is facing a crisis. Years of budget cuts from this Congress have failed our men and women in uniform. In order to rebuild the military, the Pentagon needs to ramp up readiness programs and embark on an ambitious plan for modernization to make sure our servicemembers are given the training, resources, and capabilities they need. To do that, the Department of Defense must have senior leadership.

The position of Deputy Secretary of State is one of the most critical positions in our government. It is essentially the chief operating officer of the largest, most complex organization in the world—the Department that is entrusted with ensuring our national security.

Patrick Shanahan is a well-qualified nominee who passed out of the Armed Services Committee on a voice vote. This body voted overwhelmingly, 98 to 1, to confirm General Mattis as Secretary of Defense. He had our overwhelming support to lead the Department during challenging times. Yet we have not given Secretary Mattis the senior leadership he needs to help him do his job.

Tomorrow, I say to my colleagues, the current Deputy Secretary of Defense, Bob Work, will leave his office. There simply is no more time to delay moving the nomination of Patrick Shanahan. You can choose to vote no, you can choose to vote yes, but let's just vote. The obstruction has gone on long enough, and it has to stop.

I wish to say, I understand the frustration my colleagues on the other side of the aisle feel with the process we have been through, particularly on the issue of healthcare. The issue of healthcare should have gone through