

finishing up college. I feel that I owe my life to the Center for Family Health.

Felicia knows the importance of comprehensive health coverage. It saved her life.

Nick and Chelsey know it too. They and their three young children are covered by Healthy Michigan, our State's Medicaid expansion. Nick and Chelsey are both employed full time. Chelsey also attends college full time.

During a routine visit, doctors discovered that her oldest son was born with an obstructed kidney, which had lost one-third of its function by the time he was 5 years old. Thanks to the Medicaid expansion, he was able to have surgery before his kidney lost all function. Without the Medicaid expansion, which ends under the Republican bill, these working parents and their three children couldn't afford healthcare coverage, let alone surgery.

Margo knows this because she sees it every day. She manages a clinic in Kent County on the west side of the State. She said the lives of patients are much different today than they were a few years ago. Margo wrote:

Seeing working people who have struggled all of their adult lives to manage their chronic health conditions finally have access to regular doctor visits, health education, and prescription medications has been a tremendous relief. You cannot imagine the sense of dignity our patients feel.

She added:

Please see it in your heart to care about the people of Michigan who work but do not get insurance through their employer.

So, finally, let me just say, doctors know this is a bad bill. Nurses know this is a bad bill. Hospitals know this is a bad bill. Insurance companies know this is a bad bill. I know that even many of my Republican friends know this is a bad bill. Their amendments haven't changed that. Costs go up and care goes down. Preexisting conditions come back. Millions lose their coverage.

What we should be doing is working together to stabilize the marketplace, reduce out-of-pocket costs, and lower the outrageous costs of prescription drugs—by the way, not giving a tax cut to prescription drug companies, as is in this bill, and other companies as well.

Felicia, Nick, Chelsey, and millions more like them in Michigan and across this country deserve that much.

I sincerely hope that when it comes time to vote on whether to proceed to this bill, that the majority of the Members in the Senate will say no.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mrs. McCASKILL. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for today's vote on confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 104, William Francis Hagerty IV to be Ambassador to Japan. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.●

HELP FOR WILDLIFE ACT

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, a few weeks ago, I joined Senators BARRASSO, CAPITO, KLOBUCHAR, BOOZMAN, and BALDWIN in introducing S. 1514, the Hunting Heritage and Environmental Legacy Preservation—HELP—for Wildlife Act.

This bill represents a more than \$100 million annual Federal investment in the protecting the bay. The bill has several provisions, one of which reauthorizes the programs at the heart of restoring and maintaining the health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. S. 1514 reauthorizes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's, EPA, Chesapeake Bay Program through 2022 at \$90 million per year, which is more than the program has ever been funded in its history. This unique regional partnership, managed by EPA through the Chesapeake Bay Program office in Annapolis, helps program partners collaborate to achieve the goals of the voluntary, bipartisan Chesapeake Bay agreement. Because this program expired in 2005, reauthorizing the program is critical to secure necessary appropriations and reject the Trump administration's proposal to eliminate the program.

S. 1514 also reauthorizes the Chesapeake Bay gateways and water trails network and the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Grants Assistance Program, which provides \$6 million per year throughout the watershed in technical and financial assistance to State, community, and nongovernmental partners to increase access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The bill also reauthorizes the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, NFWF, until 2023. As the Nation's largest conservation grant-maker, NFWF has been instrumental in completing conservation projects in Maryland and around the Chesapeake Bay. In 2016, the State received nearly \$5 million in funding for projects protecting and restoring habitat for fish and wildlife.

S. 1514 also reauthorizes the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, NAWCA, which provides grants to increase and protect wetlands which not only provide habitat for wildlife, but also reduce the severity of flooding and coastal erosion, and improve water quality. In the 2014 to 2015 grant period alone, Maryland received \$1 million from the NAWCA program, which was

leveraged with nearly \$3 million in additional contributions by outside partners to protect 1,600 acres of wetlands in the State.

The bill reauthorizes the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act for another 5 years and authorizes \$6.5 million to be spent each year on conservation projects that protect more than 350 different species of birds which summer in the United States and winter in the tropical regions. Twenty-one different State birds are neotropical migrants, including Maryland's famous and beloved Baltimore Oriole.

S. 1514 codifies the National Fish Habitat Partnership, a collaboration between public agencies, private citizens, and nonprofits for promoting fish conservation. America is home to more than 3,000 species of fish, and 22 percent of the stream miles in this country are at high or very high risk of current habitat degradation. Over the past few years, \$175,000 in funds from this program were used in Maryland to rehabilitate three different streams, funding which was 27 matched by \$843,000 from private investors. The partnership estimates that the improved habitat in the three streams for brook trout provided a total socio/economic impact of \$9.2 million.

I am proud that S. 1514 contains so many provisions to help the Chesapeake Bay and the State of Maryland.

I would like to speak for a minute about the importance of reauthorizing these programs and the "power of the purse." As my colleagues in the Senate well know, the "power of the purse" is the two-step process of authorizing and appropriating. Authorizing legislation can establish, continue, or change programs and activities, and it signals to the appropriators that they should fund these programs. The budget process is not complete until the appropriations process provides the actual funding for the activities and programs established through the authorization process.

Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney has said that President Donald Trump is sending a deliberate message to Congress about spending money on unauthorized programs. With the President putting an emphasis on boosting defense spending without adding to the deficit, administration officials are looking closely at expired authorizations. By reauthorizing these programs, we are sending our own clear message back: these programs matter to our constituents and to us.

Mr. Mulvaney said lawmakers too often ignore the "regular order" process of approving a budget, authorizing specific programs, and then appropriating the money for those programs. "We actually spend a lot of money in the federal government on programs that aren't authorized at all," he said. "Either they used to be authorized and they lapsed, or they were never authorized in the first place. They simply were appropriated without any authorization. It's the wrong way to do it."