

Houston, TX, is far more dramatic because of climate disruption and carbon pollution. It is simply a fact that the devastation we just witnessed in Florida is far worse than the disruption and the devastation that would have occurred otherwise. That is why we all need to keep working to tackle this challenge. The United States should be in the lead in taking on the seminal challenge of humankind in our generation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CORNYN. 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.

HEALTHCARE

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to the Republican healthcare bill known as Graham-Cassidy. You would expect that Republicans' fourth attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act would be better than the previous three. In fact, the opposite is true. This bill is the worst of the four bills.

This is especially personal for me because the bill hurts California more than any other State. Before I get to this attack on my home State, I would like to list just a few of the many ways this bill harms millions of Americans and puts countless lives at risk.

This bill boots at least 32 million Americans off healthcare. There is no sugarcoating it; Graham-Cassidy cuts health insurance subsidies and slashes Medicaid funding. That will mean fewer people with healthcare, plain and simple.

The bill ends guaranteed protections for those with preexisting conditions. Anyone who says otherwise is not telling the truth. This bill says that States can allow insurance companies to charge those with preexisting conditions whatever they want. That means an end to guaranteed coverage because people with health conditions would be charged so much they wouldn't be able to afford coverage. Arguments to the contrary are just wrong.

This bill not only eliminates the Medicaid expansion, it ends Medicaid as we have known it since 1965. The Medicaid expansion in the Affordable Care Act has meant 15 million more vulnerable Americans have gained insurance. With those funds gone, they lose coverage. By radically changing traditional Medicaid, States would have to either cover hundreds of billions in additional costs or kick people off Medicaid. Again, fewer people with coverage, more lives at risk—these are facts, and they are indisputable.

This bill is also devastating for women's health. It ends the guarantee that

maternity care, contraception, and other critical services women need will be covered and bars women on Medicaid from accessing Planned Parenthood, which is the primary healthcare provider for millions of American women. We hear so much from the other side about the importance of being able to choose your doctor. This bill says that, if you have chosen a doctor at Planned Parenthood, too bad. It doesn't matter how much you like that doctor; you need to find someone else.

The bill also takes us back to the days of junk plans, when you could faithfully pay your premium and then discover you weren't covered when you got sick. The Affordable Care Act required all insurance companies to cover essential health benefits like cancer treatment, maternity care, prescriptions, and mental health. Graham-Cassidy says States can waive that protection.

Those items I described affect all Americans, but as I said, this bill is also a direct attack on California and other Democratic States. When the Supreme Court ruled that the Affordable Care Act couldn't require States to expand Medicaid to cover more families, some Republican States used that as a way to attack President Obama's legacy. Never mind that they were risking their own constituents' lives, it was a political win for them.

Now, Graham-Cassidy proposes taking Federal funds away from those States that did expand Medicaid and give it to those that refused. In California alone, 4 million have health insurance today because my State decided to accept the Federal Government's 90 percent contribution for a small 10 percent buy-in. Graham-Cassidy would end that, pulling the rug out from under those Californians. To say this is unconscionable is an understatement.

What is worse, the bill's authors openly admit this is their strategy—to redirect money from States like California and New York to Republican States. Senator CASSIDY said he is just trying to create "parity," but the reason there isn't parity is because Republican Governors and legislatures chose to put politics over people's health. States can choose at any time to opt-in and receive the 90 percent match for Medicaid expansion. Candidly, it is a revolting way to get a bill passed.

The one part of this bill that is the same as past versions is the dire cuts to Medicaid. This needs to be repeated: The only thing congressional Republicans have agreed on throughout this entire process is that children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and seniors in nursing homes get too much healthcare.

For any of my colleagues who don't realize the full extent of what Medicaid does for this country, allow me to explain. Gutting Medicaid would devastate care for children, particularly those with disabilities and complex healthcare needs. If anything in Wash-

ington were untouchable, I would think it would be providing healthcare to sick children, but apparently not.

Each Republican healthcare bill in the House and Senate goes far beyond just repealing the Affordable Care Act. It essentially ends Medicaid as we have known it since 1965, the year President Lyndon Johnson created the program. Today, Medicaid covers 36 million children, including 5 million in California. That is nearly half of all children in this country. The program has always been a partnership between the States and the Federal Government. The Federal Government has paid a fixed share of all healthcare costs for Medicaid beneficiaries.

Republicans want to end that partnership. Their plan would place strict limits on Federal payments, with States responsible for all costs above that limit. We don't have a full CBO score of this bill, so we don't have the exact numbers, but outside estimates of the total cuts in this bill show States losing over \$4 trillion over the next two decades. Let me repeat that figure: over \$4 trillion of cuts to Medicaid and health insurance subsidies within a generation.

California alone would be required to pay \$139 billion more between 2020 and 2027, and over the next 20 years, it would cost my State \$800 billion. These cuts would be backbreaking and force many States to make extremely hard choices. If California couldn't come up with tens of billions of dollars more each year, millions of residents could lose their Medicaid coverage. California's Medicaid director said, "Nothing is safe—no population, no services."

In July, I visited UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital in San Francisco. I met with three mothers—Kristin, Sally, and Nina. Their children—Maggie, Megan, and Drew—have struggled with extraordinary healthcare needs including cerebral palsy, a congenital heart defect, and VATER syndrome, which is a set of complex birth defects. If it weren't for the first-class care they received at Benioff, they wouldn't have survived.

These mothers are heroes. They have dedicated their lives to their children, doing all they can to ensure they lead full, happy lives in the face of such significant adversity. When I asked them how they and their children cope, Nina told me that you simply do your best to live the life you have.

All three of these families are middle class. They are covered by employer-sponsored private insurance, but Medicaid fills the significant gaps in coverage. It covers in-home nurses to provide around-the-clock care, as well as first-rate medical equipment—services that private insurance doesn't cover. Without in-home care, their children would have been placed in institutions to ensure access to critical around-the-clock care.

If the Senate passes a bill that guts Medicaid, mothers like these may not be able to keep their children at home.

That is a stunning indictment of a party that proclaims its commitment to “family values.” One of the first areas where these cuts could show themselves would be our country’s 220 top-rate children’s hospitals. On average, 60 percent of patients at these hospitals are covered by Medicaid. In some facilities, that number is as high as 80 percent. Those hospitals would inevitably need to reduce services and consolidate locations. Their ability to stay open would be threatened.

You don’t need to take my word on this point. The doctors and healthcare professionals who run children’s hospitals have made this point crystal clear. Dr. Michael Anderson, CEO of Benioff Children’s says, “Graham-Casidy will be devastating to sick children and their families. If Graham-Casidy is implemented, children with complex illnesses will be more likely to have less funding available to them than what they actually need.”

Dr. Paul Viviano, CEO of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles—one of the country’s top 10 children’s hospitals—said previously that the cuts like this to the Medicaid Program would “threaten” their programs and “put at risk life-saving services.” The reach of these cuts would extend far beyond patients who rely on the Medicaid Program. That is because the research and training of specialists at children’s hospitals improves care for children nationwide. If specialists aren’t available or are never trained, that hurts all children. Todd Suntrapak, CEO of Valley Children’s in Madera, CA, told me that gutting Medicaid “threatens the very viability of pediatric health care in this country.”

Gutting Medicaid also threatens the wide range of supplemental services like speech and physical therapy that allow children with disabilities to thrive. Many of the letters and calls I have received in opposition to the bill have been from mothers advocating on behalf of their children with disabilities because they know these cuts would hurt their families.

Beth from Davis, CA, has a son named Patrick with Down syndrome. Patrick also battled leukemia as a child. Despite the challenges he has faced, Patrick will soon graduate from high school. His mom expects him to secure a job and live independently because of the support he receives through California’s regional center programs.

Medicaid provides the vast majority of the \$2.5 billion in Federal funding that our 21 regional center programs receive to facilitate job-training, physical therapy, and other supports for those with disabilities. Beth wrote to me that her family has “every reason to believe that Patrick will be a tax-paying Californian and we can’t wait!” Gutting Medicaid puts the services that have allowed Patrick to be in a position to graduate from high school on the chopping block.

I would like to close by reminding my Republican colleagues that, if they

pass this bill, they are effectively abandoning families during the most painful and difficult times in their lives—telling them they are on their own. I don’t believe that is the type of country we are, and it is up to Senate Republicans to prove it. Stop advocating the dangerous repeal of the Affordable Care Act. Instead, let’s stabilize its funding and improve it so it works for all Americans.

CLIMATE WEEK

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to voice my support for the eighth annual Climate Week NYC, which took place in New York City from September 18 to 24. The 2017 Climate Week brought together businesses, governments, academics, civil society, and other stakeholders to advance international action and cooperation to better understand the science and challenges of climate change and to plan and execute actions to address this ever-evolving crisis facing humanity. Climate Week traditionally occurs during the U.N. General Assembly in support of enhanced dialogue to advance international cooperation between nations and, since 2015, to ensure the success of the Paris agreement.

As the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I strongly believe climate diplomacy must be a top priority for U.S. foreign policy. Climate change poses an imminent and long-term threat to not only our national security and economic success, but also the long-lasting prosperity of this country. Addressing this crisis requires collective action and cooperation by local and national representatives, small and large businesses, and every one of us. If the U.S. is to maintain our status as the world’s superpower, it is in our best interest to lead the global effort to address the serious challenges posed by climate change. When America leads, we not only protect and enhance our own interests, but we have the unique ability to bring others along and help forge consensus, but regardless of whether the U.S. continues to lead or if we retreat, as the President’s decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris agreement suggests he is interested in doing, the rest of the world has made it quite clear that they plan to press ahead with or without us.

That is a sad day for America’s global leadership. Moreover, it is foolish to believe that the collaborative policies and multilateral efforts around reducing global emissions will not affect the United States simply because we choose not to participate.

For example, the Trump administration refused to participate in the development of the G20’s “Hamburg Climate and Energy Action Plan for Growth,” which outlines a global economic partnership plan for a clean energy future. This week, Canada, the EU, and China are hosting a climate ministerial meeting of 30 major and emerging economies in Montreal to develop multilat-

eral actions to advance the implementation of the Paris agreement. Fortunately, the administration will be represented at this ministerial event, but not at the same levels of power as most other countries participating. Moreover, the U.S. is merely participating, when it would best serve of our interests to lead an engagement like this, where we could be steering the agenda, as opposed to ceding such leadership to China.

Increased global demand for clean energy and the incorporation of carbon accounting into world markets are clear signals that the global economy is on a low-carbon trajectory. If we stand on the sidelines as these changes in international economics take shape—with Syria and Nicaragua as the only other nations not party to the agreement—we will be the loser.

Denying the scientific and real world evidence of climate change is irresponsible, and it is equally irresponsible to deny or ignore the economic shifts occurring around the world as a result of international efforts to combat climate change.

Climate change is real. The science is indisputable. While hurricanes have always happened this time of year over the North Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, changes in the global climate—because of increased carbon emissions into the atmosphere from human activity—have created warmer atmospheric and surface water conditions that are increasing the likelihood of intensely powerful hurricanes.

We have seen the destruction caused by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria and the devastating effects they have brought to millions of Americans. My thoughts and prayers go out to all those affected. First and foremost, our country must assist and provide relief to those affected. That includes our citizens and their neighbors in the Caribbean.

As we come together as a nation to help survivors in need now, we must also act to reduce future risks and protect more people from becoming victims in the future. That means acknowledging the reality of climate change and acting to reduce pollution that has been scientifically proven to be changing our environment and causing the increased intensity of extreme weather events like hurricanes, droughts, and wildfires.

In addition to the rises in sea levels, record-breaking droughts are plaguing regions in the Mediterranean, Middle East, and East Africa. NASA’s ongoing research on climate change shows the significance of human-induced climate change, threatening our national security and our socioeconomic and diplomatic ties across the world. Reviewing the evidence we are presented with, it is clear the only way we can tackle climate change is through global leadership and action based on science and based on the urgency of preserving our way of life.