Shaheen	Udall	Warren
Stabenow	Van Hollen	Whitehouse
Tester	Warner	Wyden

The motion was agreed to.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The clerk will report the bill.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator WYDEN or his designee be recognized to offer a motion to commit the bill, the text of which is at the desk. I further ask that the time until 8 p.m. be equally divided between the leaders or their designees; that at 8 p.m. the Senate vote in relation to the motion to commit with no intervening action or debate; and that following the disposition of the Wyden motion, the majority leader be recognized.

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

The Senator from Oregon.

MOTION TO COMMIT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I call up the motion that I have at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oregon [Mr. WYDEN] moves to commit the bill H.R. 1 to the Committee on Finance with instructions to report the same back to the Senate in 3 days, not counting any day on which the Senate is not in session, with changes that—

(1) are within the jurisdiction of such committee; and

(2) eliminate provisions that would raise taxes on millions of middle class taxpayers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, this is a historic day, as the Senate begins consideration of tax reform that will help boost America's economy, create more jobs, and leave more money in people's paychecks.

The House and Senate passage last month of the fiscal year 2018 budget resolution marked an important first step toward tax relief for American families and job creators that will jump-start economic growth. The resolution gave the Senate Finance Committee the headroom to come up with comprehensive tax reform, and it instructed the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to save $1 billion. Finance Committee Chairman HATCH and Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairwoman MURKOWSKI both deserve praise for developing legislative recommendations that fit with the budget resolution's reconciliation instructions, and I thank them for their efforts.

Yesterday, the Senate Budget Committee took the next step by combining the legislative recommendations from the Finance and the Energy and Natural Resources Committees and reporting the combined bill to the full Senate for consideration. This put our Nation one step closer to real tax reform while advancing American energy security.

It is past time for us to act. A lot of things have changed since the last major tax reform in 1986, and unfortunately our Tax Code hasn't kept pace with those changes. It is an outdated mess that is hurting American workers and holding back our economy. That is why we need tax reform that will make our system simpler and fairer and allow people to keep more of what they earn. The bill before us will do that. It will help grow the economy, create jobs, and ensure that hard-working Americans aren't missing available tax relief.

This bill also will provide relief to small, family-owned businesses. We want to make sure that small businesses, which currently employ the majority of the private sector in Wyoming and are the backbone of our communities all over the country, have the opportunity to grow and provide more jobs.

If you care about jobs, if you care about American companies staying here and being able to compete globally, then you should also care about reforming our business tax system. America has the fourth highest corporate rate in the world. We need to encourage companies to bring back their overseas money to increase the number of jobs here in the United States. Lowering our uncommonly high and uncompetitive business tax rate would be one of the quickest ways to solve the problem. It is time we make America a more inviting place to invest, to do business, and to create jobs.

We heard a lot of rhetoric yesterday in our committee meeting where we reported this bill, and I expect we will be hearing a lot more of the same arguments over the next couple of days. So I want to address some of the claims made by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle yesterday.

Several Members complained that there have been zero hearings on this reconciliation legislation and that this has been a rushed process. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The entire 2018 budget reconciliation process has been open, transparent, and subject to regular order, starting with the passage of the Senate budget resolution. The Senate Budget Committee marked up the budget over 2 days and accepted amendments from both sides of the aisle to make the resolution stronger. In fact, for the first time ever, the minority was given a copy of the chairman's bill 5 days prior to the start of the markup. According to many of my colleagues, it was one of the most transparent budget resolution markups in history.

The budget resolution, complete with the reconciliation instructions being used this week, was then debated on the floor in an open process that allowed every Senator the opportunity to offer and vote on amendments to improve the resolution before its final passage. That set in motion the instructed committees' process for producing recommendations.

Over the last 6 years, the Senate Finance Committee has held 70 hearings on how the Tax Code can be improved and streamlined to work better for all Americans.

Earlier this month, the Senate Finance Committee held a 4-day markup before finally approving tax reform legislation designed to modernize our Tax Code. The markup lasted 23 hours and 34 minutes over the course of those 4 days. Of the more than 350 amendments filed, 69 were asked to be considered in committee. An additional 35 amendments, offered by both Democrats and Republicans, were included in the final bill reported out of committee.

On November 2, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing to receive testimony on the potential for oil and gas exploration and development in the so-called 1002 area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, or ANWR. On November 15, after adopting a bipartisan amendment, the committee approved, with bipartisan support, legislation authorizing responsible development in the 1002 area and meeting the $1 billion reconciliation deficit reduction target.

Let me explain what we are talking about. ANWR is 19.3 million acres. It is about the size of South Carolina. The 1002 area is 1.57 million acres—about the size of Delaware. The area within 1002 that we are talking about for development is just 2,000 acres, which is smaller than the Fargo, ND, airport.

When the Budget Committee met yesterday, consistent with our responsibility under the Congressional Budget Act, we were only allowed to combine the recommendations of the two committees. We reported the combined bill to the full Senate. As provided by law, no amendments were allowed because, under the Budget Act, our committee is prohibited from substantially changing either committee's approved recommendations. Now that this bill is on the floor, however, it will be subject to the amendment process. For reconciliation bills like this, the amount of amendments that can be offered is unlimited.

Several Members yesterday accused us of no longer caring about overspending and the debt. Again, this is completely false. Better tax policy will boost the value of everything we produce, and this will mean more revenue for the Federal Government.

The cost of this bill that you will hear my colleagues on the other side of the aisle argue assumes the bill has little effect on the economy. That assumption is based on the sluggish growth we have had recently. In 2016, annual GDP growth was 1.6 percent, but our historical average growth is 3.2

percent. Under President Trump's efforts and the hope that he has brought to working Americans, our economy has grown at more than 3 percent over the last two quarters. If we only get to 2.4 percent growth in the private sector, this bill will be paid for. If we reach 3.2 percent growth, part of the debt will be paid down with the extra revenue that will be generated.

We have tried stimulus, and it left us with the 1.6 percent. We have tried cutting. In Washington, if you don't give the amount of increase that people are asking for but you give them more money than they had last year, that is considered a cut. So cuts haven't worked here, either. So what is the other option that we have? Growing the economy.

Now, I want to repeat that in 2016 the annual GDP growth was 1.6 percent, but our historical average growth is 3.2 percent. And under President Trump's efforts and the hope he has brought to working Americans, our economy has grown at more than 3 percent over the last two quarters, without this. If we only get to 2.4 percent growth in the private sector, this bill will be paid for. I believe we can reach the 3.2-percent growth, and part of the debt will be paid down from the extra revenue that will be generated.

Some people will say that after tax cuts before, the deficit has gone up. I hope you check and see that the revenue has gone up, but the spending went up bigger. It is like somebody winning the lottery and spending their winnings twice.

This reconciliation bill will make concrete reforms to the broken U.S. Tax Code and put the American economy back on a growth track. This tax plan is an investment in hard-working Americans, one that will produce more jobs and result in higher wages and a stronger and more competitive American economy.

You are probably going to hear a lot of screaming going on in speeches this week. Please don't confuse volume with veracity or truth.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to help pass this bill. It will not only benefit hard-working Americans, but it will make our economy and our country stronger.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I listened to the remarks of my colleague, the distinguished Senator from Wyoming, and he said there were 70 hearings on taxes. I think it is important that the American people know that there was not one single hearing—not one—on this bill. There were no discussions of the specific provisions in this legislation. There was no hearing on the personal responsibility requirement in the Affordable Care Act, which is so essential to that law and to what we ought to be looking at strengthening in the years ahead with respect to cost containment. So I just want to set the record straight right at the outset of the debate. Since I have heard once again that there were 70 hearings, I think it is important that the American people know that there was not one on this bill.

Contrast this to 1986, when Democrats and Republicans got together and there were more than 20 hearings—more than 20 discussions on specifics about how to work together and find common ground on this enormously important issue.

The Senate is 20 hours of debate away from a broken promise of truly historic proportions. This was supposed to be the year that the working people of America regained a powerful voice in Washington. Instead of a strong voice, what they got was a big con job. If this Republican tax bill passes, Washington is going to reach into the pockets of working Americans and cut a big check to multinational corporations, to tax cheats, and to the politically powerful and well connected.

The bill before the Senate would enshrine an economic double standard that makes permanent second-class treatment of Americans who work hard and do their best day in and day out to provide for their families. For the cops, for the nurses, for the mechanics, and for those who work retail, this Republican tax plan is a big gamble. They don't get any special tax dodges—no Cayman Islands deals for them. Those folks are stuck clinging to the hope that they will not be among the millions hit with an immediate tax hike. Even for those lucky Americans who do see some benefit, there is bad news coming down the pike. All they get out of this Republican plan is the fleeting sugar high of temporary tax cuts.

That is not the case, though, for multinational corporations or powerful high fliers who wield big political power in this town. Under this tax plan, the basic message to them is this: You can pay what you want, when you want, and, if you are lucky—really lucky—you may pay hardly anything at all. That certainly is not what working people were promised in the fall 2016 campaign. That is not what Republicans have spent month after month telling Americans their tax plan would do. The Republican rhetoric doesn't match the reality of this tax plan, and every day we get frightening news reports about the harm it is going to do to working people and the middle class.

Just yesterday, I received a letter from the independent congressional tax experts known as the Joint Committee on Taxation, and they gave us really important information about the bill. Buried in one of those answers was information that ought to put a scare into millions of Americans who work hard every day to get ahead. This bill showers trillions of dollars on multinational corporations, but the fact is, these multinational corporations are already awash in cash. What it means, according to these independent congressional tax experts, is that interest rates are going up. The Federal Reserve will have to tighten the screws of the economy.

But here is the bottom line for what it means for a middle-class American in North Carolina, or Oregon, or anywhere else in the United States: If you want to buy a house, this bill is going to make it more expensive. If you want to buy a car, this bill is going to make it more expensive. If you want to get a credit card, this bill is going to make it more expensive. If you want to take out a student loan, this bill is going to make it more expensive.

It is not just harm for typical families. The cost of doing business is going to rise for the brewery owner or the tool-and-die maker who wants to build a new facility or purchase new equipment. They would like to hire new workers, but they will find that the money they need to do it is getting drained by higher interest rates.

In short, higher interest rates will wipe out the benefits of this bill for a lot of small businesses and add pain to the tax hikes that are going to hit millions of families. The only businesses and individuals who will not feel the effects I just described are those sitting on mountains of cash—those who will never need to borrow to get ahead. That is just one of the latest of truly frightening details about what this destructive bill would do.

If there was any doubt remaining, it is clear based on those tax experts that individual working Americans and families are going to be on the hook for handouts to multinational corporations.

Republicans have spent months shouting from the hilltops that they were bringing jobs back. The President made it a centerpiece of his campaign. Jobs are coming home, he said. Corporations that ship jobs overseas are going to be punished. The plight of so many mill and factory towns is over. It is too bad that those talking points from stump speeches and interviews never made it into the proposals on paper, because the tax plan that is actually before the Senate does the opposite.

Under the new notion of taxes for American companies overseas called the territorial system, corporations will get a bigger tax cut if they lay off their American workers here in the United States, pack up, and move abroad. It creates colossal new loopholes, a true bonanza of new tax gifts for the tax cheats, for the people who have sophisticated help to cut corners.

When it comes to international tax rules, my view is that the United States shouldn't get suckered into a race to the bottom with a bunch of no-tax, resort-lined islands to please the tax avoidance industry and their lobbyists. That is a truly expensive competition in terms of taxpayer dollars and jobs, but this Republican plan forces working Americans to pay up.

The tax experts we rely on here in the Congress make it clear that the Republican corporate tax scheme loses revenue, but the individual tax changes raise revenue. That is a whole lot of tax lingo for saying that working people are going to get fleeced so that multinational corporations can pay a lot less.

Here is how it is going to work. More and more Americans will face a tax hike with every passing year. Stealthy tax tricks will force people into higher tax brackets over time, heaping a heavier burden on their shoulders. Millions of working Americans are going to lose their healthcare and the tax credits that make insurance affordable for them and their family. Put all together, it is an immense amount of money being taken from people who are already walking an economic tightrope—an economic tightrope in North Carolina and Oregon and everywhere else—where they balance food costs against the fuel bill and the fuel bill against the cost of housing. An immense amount of money is being taken from them and being handed to multinational corporations that ship jobs overseas.

This is not a plan to create red, white, and blue jobs. This is not a plan to turn the lights back on in factories that went dark many years ago. This is a plan to sell out millions of Americans—American workers and their families—and the damage will get even worse when the deficit climbs into the stratosphere.

As I begin to touch on the deficit, I want to note that it didn't have to be this way. I wrote two fully bipartisan Federal income tax reform bills with our colleagues. I believe they were here before the Senator from North Carolina joined us: Dan Coats, now the head of national intelligence, and Judd Gregg, the former Republican chair of the Budget Committee. The three of us—Senator Gregg first, then Senator Coats—made changes to ensure that American companies could be competitive for red, white, and blue jobs. We understood that you had to have a competitive rate to grow those companies. But we certainly didn't create new breaks for shipping jobs overseas, and—because I am going to touch on the deficit now—our proposal was revenue neutral.

So it didn't have to be this way. That is what Senator MANCHIN and Senator KAINE said yesterday, along with 17 Democrats. We wanted a bipartisan alternative that didn't create new incentives for shipping jobs overseas and that didn't jack up the deficit, but I certainly was surprised when I saw early on that Senate Republicans, who had given so many speeches on their concern about the deficit, said: It is kind of OK with us if we have a net deficit of $1.5 trillion. And as the Joint Committee on Taxation has essentially indicated to me, it would be higher than that.

All of the deficit hawks in the Republican Party just flew away. That was surprising because it seems like just yesterday when the Congress couldn't buy lunch without a whole cast of Republican deficit hawks doing some pretty serious hollering about the deficit. But based on history, what is coming next is pretty predictable. We have seen the movie before. The deficit hawks come flying back after ideas like the one we are looking at in the Senate become law. We have already heard the Speaker say, what is next? Entitlement reform, which means Medicare, Medicaid, and anti-hunger programs.

The Speaker said that is what is next. That is next on the docket. Everybody listening ought to know that is code for attack, and it is multiple fronts on these kinds of programs for the most vulnerable people in our country—the lifeline programs, the safety net programs I have just described. What we are going to hear, because this is the script from earlier movies, is we have these big deficits. Oh, my goodness. There is a lot of red ink. America can't afford the safety net. They will say we have to do something. Instead of being willing to go after the people at the top, history says the people who really face the burden of those deficit reductions are the most vulnerable.

The first big legislative push after the Bush tax cuts, for example, was an all-out assault on Social Security. The fact that it was stopped doesn't mean Medicare or Medicaid or other safety net programs like Social Security are going to be safe this time around.

The policy on offer, in my view, is simply a disaster. It makes a mockery of the approach Ronald Reagan took with a big group of Democrats. I know so many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle admire President Reagan greatly. This bill is the opposite of what President Reagan did.

What President Reagan did is he said to those big multinational corporations: I have to ask you to give up some money in order to make sure the middle class, the individual ratepayer, will get a fair shake.

This is just the opposite—180 degrees away from what Ronald Reagan did. We are going to have an amendment on the middle class pretty soon, but what could be more stark than the fact that the tax cuts for the multinationals are permanent, and the relief for the middle class is temporary. This bill is the opposite, the total opposite, of what Ronald Reagan worked on in 1986.

Our colleague Senator ENZI—and I have worked with him often, and I am sad to see us have such differing views on this—said we have had 70 hearings. I can tell you, the once storied Senate Finance Committee never even attempted once to craft a bipartisan bill. We said for months that was our preference. That was what was stated in the letter the vast majority of Senate Democrats signed. That is what we said when we were invited to the White House to meet with the President. We said it repeatedly.

I mentioned the two bills I wrote. They are the only two bipartisan Federal income tax reform bills—the only two we have had since 1986. By the way, they didn't go as far as Ronald Reagan went. Ronald Reagan, in 1986, said, for purposes of taxes, a dollar is a dollar is a dollar.

We are going to have the same rate for those who make money on investments that we do for those cops and nurses who get that wage, that ordinary income. I have indicated on the floor that Senator Bradley, former New York Knick—and as I like to say, another tall Democrat who served on the Senate Finance Committee with a much better jump shot than mine—is incredulous at this process. He is just slack-jawed when he asks about what is being done to bring both sides together. Senator Bradley, and others on the Republican side, in 1986, flew all over the United States to get together with senior Republicans and Jim Baker, Richard Dorman, and others to talk about the specifics of getting bipartisan tax reform together. You hear the stories, and you see that is the way you tackle an issue like this. Bill Bradley flew all over the country to work with Republicans to get a bipartisan tax reform bill. Right now, the majority on the Senate Finance Committee wouldn't walk down the corridor of the Dirksen building once to talk about anything resembling how we would put together a bipartisan proposal. So the process we have seen here makes a mockery out of Reagan-style reform.

Some have asked, was this foreordained, did it have to be. I have already made it clear that I don't think it had to be. It is hard work putting together a bipartisan bill. Senator Gregg, for example, when he was in the Senate, I think was one of Leader MCCONNELL's top economic advisers—chairman of the Budget Committee. We used to say in our house, Judd Gregg is scary smart. We sat next to each other in chairs in our office for almost 2 years to put together a bill. It is heavy lifting, but it can be done. A lot of that work was brought into other efforts since then—the question of the Bush proposal, bipartisan commissions, or a variety of other ones. It is pretty hard to do when the majority leader says, on the first day, the very first day out, we are going to use the most partisan process—budget reconciliation and, in effect, say: What we are telling the other party is we don't want your ideas because we don't need your votes. Sometimes it got almost a little ridiculous because I know there were times when statements were made by the Republican leadership that no Democrats were interested in bipartisan tax reform, despite the fact that in the few instances where a White House official would call and ask our opinion, Senate Democrats would meet. That was the point of the press conference that was held yesterday with 17 Democrats from various parts of the country, as well as legislation I have described that was written.

By the way, in the work product Republicans finally produced, they took some of the ideas from the bipartisan bills; for example, increasing the standard deduction, but we tripled the standard deduction without any takeaways, like the State and local deduction or the permanent exemptions, and what that meant is, in the bipartisan bills, if you passed something like that, people adjust their wages, and immediately working-class folks get hundreds and hundreds of dollars more in every paycheck. Not only were there no discussions—and I have seen Republican Senators stand out on the floor sometimes and hold up a sign: What we are doing is the Wyden-Coats bill. Nothing could be further from the truth, whether it is on the international provisions I mentioned or the personal provisions. I was so proud to stand with Senate Democrats in a meeting yesterday put together by Senators Manchin and Kaine, once again, stating that it doesn't have to be this way.

What is the rush to take taxes for multinational corporations from 35 to 20 percent? Back when I was working with Senator Gregg and Senator Coats, the Republicans, we didn't have multinational corporations saying we should go to 20 percent. The difference between 25 and 20 percent is $500 billion.

My colleagues yesterday were saying—moderate Democrats—we are serious about tax reform, both on the individual and the corporate side, but it ought to be based on bipartisan give-and-take, not something like we have seen.

Republicans in Congress and the administration's top salesmen have spent months and months telling the American people that in the long run, their bill is going to pay for itself with explosive growth. They had cheerleaders, those who cooked up these phony growth forecasts based on revenue-neutral reform proposals that don't exist. Respected economists will tell you tax cuts don't pay for themselves. In fact, when we had a chance to have some discussion not about a specific bill but some ideas about taxes, the Republican economists who were before the Finance Committee said the tax cuts wouldn't pay for themselves.

The honest predictions say that any growth caused by this bill is going to be modest. After they have spent years insisting—I can't tell you how many times I heard this—that we would have dynamic scores, Republican Senators are rushing the independent scorekeepers to try to get a thorough analysis, but we don't have it as we are on this floor debating the bill.

Finally, we ought to forget that this bill has been getting a rewrite behind closed doors for weeks now. A number of my colleagues on the other said what was important to them is we have what is called regular order. Regular order is probably not a concept people talk about in too many coffee shops unless they traditionally get eggs or toast or something, but what it means is, you have a process where both sides work together, and you have a chance to discuss ideas and differing approaches or offers. We haven't had anything like that. We haven't had an open process with open debate and real amendments. What we have seen is a mad dash to pass a bill that can't stand scrutiny in broad daylight. If this bill really got scrutinized and had a chance to be examined, we would see a lot of Americans coming to their Senators and saying: Senator, no way—no way—should you support that bill.

What is on offer is a plan to force working people and working-class families to pay for handouts to multinational corporations and tax cheats. This bill does not deserve to pass. My view is, it really doesn't deserve the ink that was used to print it on paper. The process that has culminated in this scramble to drive this through, drive it through with the most arbitrary process imaginable, I consider shameful.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the last time Congress modernized the Tax Code was in 1986. That was more than 30 years ago, which is quite obvious to anybody who can subtract. In the generations since, the Tax Code has grown out of control. It has been a dream come true for whom? The professionals in accounting and the lobbyists who protect the loopholes. But it happens to be a real nightmare for most Americans. I would say, for most Members of Congress, as one reads regularly, very few Members of Congress do their own taxes.

The outdated Tax Code helps the powerful and the well connected but hurts American workers. It hurts American industry, and it hurts America's ability to compete with the rest of the world. That means lower wages and less employment.

The bill that passed out of the Finance Committee moves us very much in the right direction to make our Tax Code simpler, fairer, and more competitive. At the heart of the legislation is a middle-class tax cut. A typical family of four with two children making $59,000 a year could see a tax cut of more than $1,700. That is very significant tax relief, but you would never know it by listening to the rhetoric of my colleagues of the other political party. They have repeatedly recited the tired line that Republicans are only interested in giving tax cuts to the wealthy. In fact, they began pushing that narrative even before this bill was written. In going way back to September, they started analyzing a bill that didn't even exist. It was a charge made by a document that was put out, called the Big Six framework. But the framework was no piece of legislation; it merely provided guidelines from which to start for the tax-writing committees.

The partisan Tax Policy Center then filled in the gaps with policy assumptions and crafted an analysis to fit its narrative and its analysis of a piece of legislation that had not even been written. The problem is that its narrative hasn't changed. The Finance Committee provided policy details that it should have used to change its narrative, but it still keeps with the same old rhetoric. I think even the Tax Policy Center would have to agree that the Finance Committee's product differs drastically from the underlying assumptions of its initial analysis.

I am going to try to explain what the Tax Policy Center says about the tax law that we ought to pass in comparison to our bill, and you will see that there seems to be a real closeness in some of the ideas that ought to be done that we get from the left that are in this bill, but they don't even recognize it.

The Finance Committee used all of the available tools it was granted under the unified framework to target more relief to middle-income taxpayers and retain the progressivity of the Tax Code. Let's take a look at some of the major features of the Finance's bill and how it provides relief for the Nation's middle-class and low-income earners.

First, it nearly doubles the standard deduction, which means that many lower income Americans will be removed from the tax rolls completely and that tax filing season will be simpler for millions more. Second, it doubles the child tax credit from $1,000 to $2,000 and moderately increases its refundability. Both of these are made possible in large part by repealing personal exemptions. Personal exemptions for the taxpayer and spouse help to increase the standard deduction, and the personal exemptions for children help with increasing the child tax credit.

Interestingly enough, these provisions mirror a proposal that was put out by the leftwing Tax Policy Center in December of just last year. Nearly identical to the Finance bill, the very liberal Tax Policy Center's paper argued for repealing personal exemptions, nearly doubling the standard deduction, and increasing the child tax credit to $2,012. According to the authors of the liberal Tax Policy Center's proposal, such a change would ''reduce complexity, remove inequities, and mitigate marriage penalties.'' That is exactly what the bill before the Senate does, but they don't seem to recognize that. They sure wanted that as a goal last year.

The fact is that these changes provide more tax relief to the middle class and at the same time simplify the Tax Code. As the liberal Tax Policy Center's paper points out, the value of the personal exemption is largely dependent on the tax bracket of the taxpayer. The higher the tax bracket, the more benefit that comes from the personal exemption. In comparison, the child tax credit generally lowers a taxpayer's tax liability dollar for dollar regardless of the tax bracket. As a result, repealing the personal exemption in favor of expanding the child tax credit makes the Tax Code more progressive and targets more relief to lower and middle-income taxpayers.

Admittedly, there are some differences between what was suggested by the liberal Tax Policy Center and what is in the bill before us. Its proposal would have been more generous on the refundable feature of the child tax credit, but on the opposite end, it would have made the child tax credit available to everyone, including to millionaires. The Finance's bill is less generous to the affluent because it phases out the credit for married taxpayers with incomes of over $500,000. One would think that those on the other side—meaning the Democratic Party—in their finding fault with this bill, would offer some credit for taking this rather progressive approach to providing family tax relief, but no. They continue repeating their line over and over that this bill is a tax cut for the wealthy.

Another major feature of the Finance's bill that provides relief to middle-class and lower income earners is the reduction of tax rates for middle-bracket taxpayers. First, it retains the 10-percent bracket, which many on the other side expressed concern about being repealed based on the Big Six framework. They were wrong in using the framework, but they have not admitted that.

Next, it lowers the current law's 15-percent bracket to 12 percent and expands its applicability.

Additionally, it reduces what is essentially the current law bracket of 25 percent down to 22 percent and what is essentially today's current law 28-percent bracket to a much wider 24-percent bracket. These rate reductions target tax relief to the very heart of America's middle class.

One may be wondering how this middle-class tax relief bill will be financed—largely by repealing the State and local tax deduction, also known as the SALT deduction. Our colleagues on the other side have tried to argue that the repealing of the State and local tax deduction is a tax increase on the middle class. Nothing could be further from the truth in considering the reduced tax brackets, which I just discussed, in combination with the higher standard deduction and the doubled child tax credit.

The repeal of the State and local tax deduction is actually a very key piece of this legislation that makes the middle-class tax cuts possible. The State and local tax deduction overwhelmingly benefits the so-called wealthy, who our colleagues on the other side vehemently argue should receive no tax benefits under this bill.

I am going to tell you now how the liberal elements in this town see the State and local tax deduction as something that should have gone away anyway, and now they are complaining because we are doing away with it. Don't take my word for it. Here is what several partisan think tanks have said about the State and local tax deduction in the past.

According to the Tax Policy Center—remember that is the leftwing organization finding fault with the bill even before it was written—about 40 percent of the State and local tax deduction benefit goes to taxpayers with incomes exceeding $500,000. So we do away with the State and local tax deduction because it benefits wealthy people, and they don't give us any credit for it.

Keep in mind that tax filers with incomes of half a million or more make up only about 1 percent of all tax filers, making it a very lopsided benefit. Here is what the very leftwing Center for American Progress has said about the State and local tax deduction:

> The deduction for state and local taxes disproportionately benefits high-income taxpayers, property owners, and residents of high-tax states. That is because these groups pay the most taxes at the state and local level. It also benefits high-income taxpayers because any kind of deduction is worth more to people in high tax brackets than in low tax brackets.

I just finished quoting the Center for American Progress, which said that the State and local tax deduction ought to be done away with because it benefits wealthy people. Yet they complain to us that our tax bill is a tax benefit for the wealthy.

To further illustrate who eliminating the State and local tax benefit really hits, I would like to highlight a recent Bloomberg article entitled "Tax-Hike Fears Trigger Talk of Exodus From Manhattan and Greenwich." This article is not about the concerns of middle-class police officers or teachers on repeal of the State and local tax deduction. Instead, it highlights concerns of wealthy hedge fund managers who may now consider moving out of the high-tax State of New York. The Bloomberg article states:

> The problem for the Connecticut hedge-fund set—and, more broadly, for a lot of the Wall Street crowd—is that Republican proposals in both the House and Senate would drive up taxes for many high-earners in the New York City area. By eliminating the deduction for most state and local taxes, an individual making a yearly salary of $1 million . . . would owe the Internal Revenue Service an additional $21,000.

This legislation repeals that deduction and makes the person making a yearly salary of $1 million pay $21,000 more in taxes, and liberal groups are proposing doing away with it, and we put it in our bill so that we don't let these wealthy people get the benefit of the tax deduction, and they don't recognize it. So I ask my colleagues on the left: Are you prepared to go to bat over SALT deductions for millionaire hedge fund managers?

From listening to my Democratic colleagues' rhetoric, I am really surprised by this article. I thought Republicans were all about "tax cuts for the wealthy" and giveaways to Wall Street. But this article suggests otherwise. In fact, these types of taxpayers are likely to experience sizable tax hikes under the proposal on the Senate floor now.

According to the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation, by 2023, nearly 30 percent of taxpayers with incomes exceeding $1 million will experience a tax hike. That does not sound like a giveaway to the wealthy to me.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that motions to commit be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH INSTRUCTIONS

Mr. WYDEN moves to commit the bill H.R. 1 to the Committee on Finance with instructions to report the same back to the Senate in 3 days, not counting any day on which the Senate is not in session, with changes that—

(1) are within the jurisdiction of such committee; and

(2) eliminate provisions that would raise taxes on millions of middle class taxpayers.

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH INSTRUCTIONS

Mr. Wyden moves to commit the bill H.R. 1 to the Committee on Finance with instructions to report the same back to the Senate in 3 days, not counting any day on which the Senate is not in session, with changes that—

(1) are within the jurisdiction of such committee; and

(2) are made through regular order and a bipartisan process resulting in substantive provisions contributed by both parties.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I agree with my colleagues that we need tax reform, but we need tax reform that simplifies the Tax Code, bolsters the middle class, and helps small businesses to create jobs. I think we can do that, and we can do that in a fiscally responsible way, but we need to work together, Republicans and Democrats, as we did the last time we did tax reform.

Unfortunately, these priorities are not reflected in the bill that is before us. Instead, it is a partisan, fiscally irresponsible giveaway to the wealthy and the largest corporations in this country, and it comes at the expense of the middle class and small businesses.

We know that the wealthiest Americans will see massive tax breaks from this bill, including President Trump himself. In fact, the New York Times has estimated that President Trump and his family would save more than $1 billion from this tax bill.

How does this legislation pay for these tax cuts? Well, it asks today's middle class and future generations to foot the bill. The nonpartisan analysis from the Joint Committee on Taxation has found that the bill will raise taxes on millions of middle-class families making less than $75,000 a year. The bill sunsets any middle-class tax breaks in 2026, and at the same time it makes tax breaks for large corporations permanent. It increases the national debt by $1.5 trillion.

I think the headline in the current Forbes Magazine says it all. It says

''The GOP Tax Bill Is The End Of All Economic Sanity In Washington.'' As more people look at this bill, they are beginning to see how it will hurt middle-class families across the country.

Over the past few weeks, I have heard more and more concerns from people throughout New Hampshire, and I just want to take a minute to highlight some of these concerns. I met recently with the New Hampshire Realtors and homebuilders. They are major advocates for home ownership in New Hampshire. They told me that this bill is nothing short of an attack on home ownership. In particular, they are concerned about the impact of repealing the State and local tax deduction, which would be a huge hit to middle-class families in New Hampshire. Right now, more than 200,000 Granite State homeowners use the State and local tax deductions so that they are not double-taxed. That is about one-third of taxpayers in New Hampshire. It is particularly important to us where property taxes account for 66 percent of all State and local taxes. That is a higher share than any other State in the country.

Homeowners are also concerned about proposals to limit the mortgage interest deduction, including on home equity lines of credit, where homeowners in New Hampshire are going to get hurt more than others because we have approximately 14 percent of homeowners who have a home equity line of credit, compared to 3.8 percent nationally. The result is, according to the Realtors and the homebuilders, that home values will decline significantly.

According to the Association of Realtors, this bill will put downward pressure on home values by as much as 18 percent in New Hampshire and 10 percent nationally. If we look at this chart for New Hampshire, we can extrapolate this across the rest of the economy.

If we look at this tax bill, this is the impact on homeowners in New Hampshire. Values are going to be reduced by about 18 percent. That is equivalent to what we saw after the financial meltdown in 2008, where, again, we had about that same reduction in property values—about 18 percent. That is a huge hit for us in New Hampshire and for people across the country.

I thought the Realtors put it very well when they said: It is simply unfair to ask homeowners, who pay 83 percent of all Federal income taxes, to take a greater tax burden so that the biggest corporations in this country can have steep tax cuts. It doesn't make sense.

I also heard significant concern from students, colleges, and businesses that this bill will raise taxes on students trying to get the skills they need to get ahead. That is really crazy because when we do that, we don't create the workforce we need for the future. The House bill, for example, would eliminate the ability of individuals to deduct the interest on their student loans, and it would tax graduate students on tuition assistance. I heard from a graduate student who, right now, is making $20,000 a year on a stipend. That is what he is trying to live on. If this bill goes into effect, he will pay $5,000 of that in taxes. It doesn't make sense. We need to be encouraging our students to get graduate and higher education degrees so that they can take on the jobs of the future.

Again, in New Hampshire, it is a particular problem, where student loan debt is higher than the national average. For the graduating class of 2016, New Hampshire had the highest per capita student loan debt in the country. The average debt for New Hampshire graduates was $36,367. We know, nationally, student loan debt has roughly tripled since 2004 to a staggering $1.3 trillion. That is higher than the total credit card debt. What this legislation is likely to do is to make that worse for young people who are trying to get out of college, have their student loans paid, get married, start families, buy a house. If they continue to have this impact, they are not going to be able to do any of those things.

The top challenge that faces New Hampshire businesses and so many businesses across this country is finding skilled workers. The last thing we should be doing is making education more expensive.

I also serve as the ranking member on the Senate Small Business Committee. Small businesses employ more than half of our workforce. They make up more than 99 percent of all employers. We need to work in a bipartisan way to enact tax reform that supports our small businesses. Again, this bill, unfortunately, doesn't provide meaningful reform for small businesses and the problems they are facing with the Tax Code. First of all, this bill doesn't address the top issue that we have heard from small businesses—tax simplification and the cutting of redtape in our Tax Code.

For entrepreneurs, time is one of their most valuable resources. Every wasted hour spent filling out forms or navigating confusing tax rules is an hour they can't spend innovating, marketing, and growing their businesses. The tax system is so difficult to navigate that 89 percent of small businesses turn to outside tax preparers to fill out their forms and file their returns. The compliance burden for small businesses is 67 percent higher than it is for large businesses, and it costs about $18 billion annually.

Tax reform should be an opportunity to help us help small businesses focus on what they do best, and that is running their business. Instead, this bill will result in even more redtape and complexity.

According to a former Joint Committee on Taxation economist, if this bill becomes law:

Treasury will be writing regulations and Congress will be enacting technical corrections for years. There are more ticking time bombs in this bill than in a Roadrunner cartoon.

A recent poll of small business owners from Businesses for Responsible Tax Reform found that a majority of them oppose the plan. This is polling that has just been done in the last week or so; 61 percent oppose, and only 28 percent support.

Small businesses are even more concerned about the impact this tax bill will have on our debt and deficit. In fact, 61 percent of small business owners oppose raising the debt by $1.5 trillion to pay for tax cuts.

Increasing the debt will inhibit our ability to address the real challenges facing small businesses, such as educating a skilled workforce, building out broadband in rural areas, and fixing our broken infrastructure.

Then there is the repeal of the individual mandate, which is a part of this tax proposal. According to CBO, repealing the individual mandate, as this bill does, would cause 13 million Americans to become uninsured by 2027. It would sharply raise premiums for those who purchase insurance on the individual market.

Now, we have heard from our colleagues that they think that including the Alexander-Murray legislation would help address that, but that is not designed to address the underlying healthcare bill that we have in this country. All that will do is address the uncertainty in the marketplace.

Repealing the individual mandate is going to deny health insurance to millions of Americans. It is going to cost middle-income families more, and, ultimately, it is going to have an impact on people's abilities to provide for their families and the long-term health of this Nation. That is not the kind of investment we should be making in the future of this country.

There are many more issues with this tax bill, but my time is limited. If we look at who is opposed to this bill, there are so many organizations: the Realtors, the homebuilders, the AARP, and the Fraternal Order of Police. They have all come out in opposition, and that is just to name a few.

I have heard from nearly 3,000 Granite Staters who have expressed their opposition to the impact of this bill, and as more and more people have a chance to read it, that number is going to continue to grow.

You know I want to work with my colleagues here. I think Republicans and Democrats should genuinely reform the Tax Code. It is long overdue. But we need to do it in a way that is transparent, that looks at where we want to go in the future and what we need to be investing in in this country. We need to work in a bipartisan way that puts the middle class and small businesses first and that doesn't leave a massive debt for our children and grandchildren. If we pass this legislation, that is exactly what we are going to be doing—leaving future generations to deal with a massive debt without the benefits of the investment that we should be making in this country.

So it is a sad day for America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am honored to follow my distinguished colleague from New Hampshire and begin, actually, where she finished. This massive tax cut has indeed so many ticking timebombs that are unknown at the moment because it has been rushed and rammed through this body, as well as the House, without the kind of regular order that should be given—the intense scrutiny and attention that is due a historic, massive measure of this kind.

The idea that it has regular order is absolutely absurd. If this is regular order, it is surely regular order lite. There have barely been the most cursory of hearings—barely an excuse for hearings—no real markup, no real opportunity for the public to be heard, no real scrutiny of the complicated and numerous provisions that will affect people for years, decades, maybe generations to come.

The last tax cut was in 1985. The last so-called reform, passed in the mid-1980s, involved scores of hearings, meetings, and sessions for the public to be heard, dwarfing, making a mockery of this process. This process has been, in fact, a mockery of democracy. It is a classic bait and switch. It is a promise that is unfulfilled—a tax cut, initially, for people, which then disappears after a couple of years, when the wealthy continue to enjoy their tax cut.

There are winners and losers in this measure. Let's be very blunt. The winners are the wealthy. The losers are the middle class. The winners are special interests. The losers are the American people. The winners are people who already have it made. The losers are people who want to fulfill the American Dream and make it for themselves, people who are pulling up the ladder for others to climb and to make it real for them.

The measure that we have before us is the result of a promise—middle-class tax cuts—and that promise was made by Donald Trump, who said also that he would not benefit. He sent his Small Business Administration Administrator, Linda McMahon, to Connecticut to say: ''Everyone will experience a tax cut.''

This plan is a scam. Yes, some people will receive a tax cut initially, but if you earn less than $75,000 within the next decade, you will be worse off under this plan. In Connecticut that means that 468,200 taxpayers in the bottom 80 percent of income distribution will experience a tax hike under this plan. The majority of people in Connecticut are losers, even though there may be a wealthy segment at the very top of the income distribution who are winners.

Our children and grandchildren are surely losers because they will inherit the whirlwind of additional debt. The $1.5 trillion underestimates the amount of debt that will be added. I saw a cartoon in one of the newspapers that showed a rowboat filled with water, and one of the characters said to the other: Drill another hole in the bottom of the boat to let the water out. And the sea was the Dead Sea. That is what this measure does. It fills our boat—not only ours but our children's and grandchildren's boats—with additional debt. They are losers even though the wealthiest are winners.

The losers include, also, first responders. Earlier this month, the president of the Fraternal Order of Police wrote a letter to the House and the Senate leadership urging Members of Congress to protect the State and local deduction as it is. This measure eliminates that State and local deduction, devastating for Connecticut but also for first responders, firemen, and police across the country, and our teachers who depend on the adequacy of Federal funding for essential services, which will be reduced.

Because there is no incentive for State and local taxes—they can't be deducted anymore—States like Connecticut, New York, and California, we know are the losers and our middle-class taxpayers are losers. That is why the National Education Association has found that gutting the State and local tax deduction will seriously harm already underfunded public education, risking nearly 250,000 education jobs, including over 5,000 teacher jobs in the State of Connecticut. It will lead to about $250 billion in cuts to public education over the next decade. While we are talking about education, there is eliminating the deduction for interest on student loans. What could be more stupid at a time when we are encouraging young people to invest in their futures and we should be investing in them?

Ultimately, also, the losers are our job creators, the folks who need infrastructure, which will go unrepaired. Our roads, bridges, railroads, VA facilities, broadband, airports, and ports are all desperately in need of rebuilding—not just repair but true rebuilding, modernization, and innovation.

There is no requirement or opportunity here for repatriation of the trillions of dollars parked overseas. There is no provision for any sort of incentive for companies to repatriate and invest in an infrastructure bank. So we will continue to see neglect and disregard for that very important infrastructure.

It is clear who will be the winners. Despite all these losers, corporations that move overseas to evade taxes and benefit from special interest loopholes to lower their effective tax rates are going to be richly rewarded.

Senate Republicans have decided to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil and gas drilling.

Those special interests are the winners. The bill borrows $1.5 trillion so those special interests and corporations can have those benefits, but it will also line the pockets of those corporate CEOs—not just the corporations but the CEOs. That is equivalent to the cost of all veterans' healthcare and benefit payments to every single veteran in America over the next decade.

With $1.5 trillion, by the way, you could also pay off all the student loan debt in America. Think of the difference in lives that would make. Think of all the young students debt free. Think of the vistas and the dreams that could be fulfilled. Think of the economic growth that would be generated.

Think also of the false promises and the bait and switch. When corporate CEOs were asked by the President's chief economic adviser, Gary Cohn, how many of them will create jobs with these corporate tax cuts, nary a hand went up in the audience. That is a picture that says a thousand words.

I end my words now simply with a warning that Americans, far from buying this bait and switch, will see the proof in their pocketbooks and wallets. They will see the result of this consummately partisan measure run through without regular order, without real consideration, without the scrutiny that it needs and deserves, without public and popular support if we move ahead as the Republican leadership apparently appears intent on doing. Now is the time for us to show some backbone. I urge my colleagues to do it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise this evening to speak about tax reform, which is so important for families in Nebraska and throughout this country. The last time Congress comprehensively reformed the Tax Code was in 1986, and we all agree it is long overdue. My priorities for tax reform have always been threefold: delivering relief to the middle-class, unleashing small business growth, and making our country competitive globally. This bill before us accomplishes these goals.

American families have struggled over the past decade, and too many in our country have found themselves living paycheck to paycheck. Wages for workers have stagnated while the prices of goods and services have continued to climb. Things are only just starting to turn around and, as I travel across my State, Nebraskans have begun to tell me they are finally feeling confident about the economy again. That needs to continue, and the best way to do it is by putting more money back into the pockets of regular Americans. This bill does that in one of the best ways possible, by doubling the standard deduction and protecting the first $24,000 that married couples earn and the first $12,000 individuals earn from Federal taxes.

Increasing the standard deduction is pro-family, and it helps to foster the American dream. It not only leads to Americans keeping more of their hardearned money, but it also means that simplifying the code will help them save money in tax preparation as well. According to the nonpartisan Tax Foundation, a married couple with two kids making $85,000 per year, will see their taxes decrease by $2,224. This reform provides money that will allow Americans to plan for their future and to pay their bills. It can be a downpayment on a house or it can be put away for future college tuition or for retirement. It gives millions of earners more empowerment to use these savings for their lives as they see fit.

Simplifying the code isn't the only family-focused provision included in this legislation. The Senate bill doubles the child tax credit from $1,000 to $2,000 per child. According to the Department of Agriculture, parents of a child born in 2015 are likely to spend more than $233,000 raising a child to age 17. That doesn't even include college tuition. Doubling the child tax credit will allow families to keep up to an additional $4,000 every year if they have two children or more. This credit builds a stronger future by helping families all across our country keep more money to raise happy and healthy children.

In addition to these changes, this legislation will preserve many other popular deductions. This includes the charitable deduction, medical expense deduction, the student loan interest deduction, the mortgage interest deduction, and the low-income housing tax credit. This bill also continues popular savings programs such as the 401(k)s and individual retirement accounts. These saving incentives are key tools that allow individuals to provide for their families and to prepare for retirement. It empowers Americans to plan ahead.

There are also commonsense provisions in this bill that have been overlooked during the current debate. These are changes everyone here can agree are long overdue. For example, this reform takes away the tax-exempt status for professional sports leagues. We all love sports, but professional sports leagues like the NFL and the PGA shouldn't be allowed to use exemptions for nonprofits to avoid paying taxes. These are for-profit leagues where commissioners make tens of millions of dollars. They should be treated for what they are, and that is a money-making enterprise.

I also want to take the time to address a misconception. Some have argued that this bill will tax the tuition waivers graduate students receive from their universities as a part of attending to their studies. There is no such provision. Ph.D. research is a staple of higher education, and it drives our Nation's innovation. It helps us better understand our world and often leads to incredible technological advancements. We in the Senate support graduate studies, and none of us want to make it more difficult to obtain graduate degrees or do research at the highest levels. We will not be taxing you for tuition you don't pay while earning a master's or doctorate degree.

There are some other important provisions in this bill that haven't gotten the attention they deserve, and I want to take a moment to discuss some of them. The Senate tax reform retains nearly all of the education incentives that are present in the current Tax Code for students and for teachers. For example, we keep the Hope credit, which allows taxpayers a credit of up to $2,500 per student, per year, for qualified tuition or related expenses. We also keep both the Coverdell and the 529 education savings accounts. These accounts promote saving for school, and they help parents prepare for future tuition. Finally, we double the educator deduction, which helps teachers make their classrooms as friendly for learning as possible. This is a pro-education tax reform bill, and it acknowledges education is a key to our country's future success.

We must also recognize that our economy has changed over the last few decades, and our Tax Code needs to catch up to the times. We have the chance to make history, one that will help working families. My Strong Families Act, which is included in this legislation, would be the first nationwide paid family leave policy in American history. If we want to build a better future for our children, we must tackle problems for families juggling those responsibilities between home and the workplace.

This plan has the potential to make life much easier for working families across our country by providing a tax credit as large as 25 percent for employers who offer up to 12 weeks of paid family leave to their employees. Under programs set up by employers, employees would be able to take an hour, a day, or weeks off for purposes like taking care of a sick child or an ailing parent to make sure they get to a doctor's appointment. They could also take maternity or paternity leave to bond with a newborn or recently adopted child.

In 21st century America, the number of dual-income households is on the rise. According to the Department of Labor, 70 percent of mothers with children under 19 participate in the labor force, with over 75 percent employed full time. For those without the means to take unpaid time off, the burdens of caregiving are a real burden. A recent study from the Pew Research Center found that most individuals who make higher salaries usually have access to some kind of paid family leave, but those making less than that are not always covered. This is why my paid family leave plan limits eligibility to those earning below $72,000 per year. We want these benefits to target hourly and lower salaried workers. We want to increase access to paid family leave for those who need it the most.

While my friends on the other side of the aisle focus on the stick approach to paid family leave—pushing mandates or the creation of new government programs—this bill pursues the carrot approach, and Americans agree with us. A recent study showed that 87 percent of Americans supported a limited government approach that enables employers to provide the benefit themselves.

It is not hard to understand why. The plan balances the need of 21st century workers with the real-world challenges that small businesses face today. Eric Dinger, who is the CEO of a Lincoln startup named Powderhook, put it the best. Eric told me:

> I want to offer my employees paid leave, but a mandate forcing me to do so would be hard. I have to make payroll. [The Strong Family Act] is much more workable and wouldn't provide a disincentive to hire anyone.

I agree.

Another of my constituents, Alison Ritter—an employee at Applied Systems, Inc., in Lincoln—is helping her company's leadership develop a paid leave policy. In reaction to my bill being included in the tax reform proposal before us, she told me:

> This concept would change the game for many newborn babies and their parents, allowing them the time they need to bond and establish a nursing routine without as much of the stress and guilt they face today. It would provide families with the financial support they need in order to do what's best for their family, but also help businesses that struggle with putting a plan in place due to the financial burden extended absences create. . . . Our country wins when we focus on and invest in healthier families.

Sara Rasby, who is the co-owner of Lotus House of Yoga, which has locations across my State agreed:

> It is refreshing to see a policy that supports the family and small business unit. As co-owner of a small business and a mother of two young children, I know firsthand how challenging it can be without paid leave. A mother and/or family needs time to adjust and bond. . . . This bill would help parents, families, and small business owners be more at ease with the transitions and changes that come with maternity leave. Additionally, it will create more community awareness on the importance of supporting the family structure through policy.

We need to get this done for people like Eric, Alison, Sara, and other business owners, caregivers, and working parents throughout the country.

I also said my goal in this process is to promote policies that will ensure small businesses succeed. There are over 29 million small businesses throughout our country, and these small firms drive our economy. They have generated over 60 percent of the new jobs created over the last two decades and have made up nearly 98 percent of our exports. They are often the face of our country to the world.

This reform will provide small businesses with additional incentives to invest and grow. When small businesses make money, they invest it back into their businesses and help grow their local economy. Places like Lincoln and Omaha are well known to the entrepreneurial community as bustling hubs of innovation. This bill provides a 17.4-percent deduction for the large majority of small businesses, which will lower their tax bills and give them more financial flexibility. The preservation of things like the 1031 like-kind exchanges and the stepped-up basis will further help our small businesses, especially agriculture businesses.

Small businesses don't have the professional resources to deal with the Tax Code that comes in at over 74,000 pages. Simply doing taxes—let alone paying them—has become a burden on too many of our small companies. Moreover, they cannot take advantage of all the corporate deductions or the little-known loopholes like big companies can. This is not fair. It hurts our competitiveness globally, stifles strong economic growth, and it favors big corporations, which have offices full of lawyers and accountants. This tax reform lessens this disparity and deserves support from everyone who wants to promote American entrepreneurialism.

Lastly, this legislation goes a long way toward making America competitive internationally. A large part of this is lowering the corporate tax rate. At 35 percent, America's corporate tax rate is a full 13 percentage points higher than the average rate of our competitors from the developed world. This is a big reason why companies are fleeing our shores, and they are choosing to set up their headquarters or invest outside of America. These so-called inversions have been on the rise in recent years, and there is little reason to think that trend will reverse if we stand by and do nothing.

This legislation will put us in line with our trading partners and, once again, make America an attractive place for business, which will lead to more jobs and higher wages for our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

MOTION TO COMMIT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 3 minutes to wrap up on the first vote we are going to have on my motion.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, this first motion, the first motion the Senate is going to vote on, is a straightforward proposition. The motion says: Let us send this bill back to the Senate Finance Committee on a bipartisan basis and come up with a plan that actually works for the middle class.

I am going to wrap up just by recapping the Republican rhetoric on this tax plan. First, it was said to be a guaranteed middle-class tax cut. Then, it was merely focused on the middle class. Next, it was an average tax cut across a variety of income cohorts. Now the numbers are actually in. Republicans want to run up enough red ink to threaten Medicare and Social Security and still raise taxes on more than half of the middle class. The Senate, on a bipartisan basis, can do better than this.

I urge my colleagues to support this proposal to send the bill back to the Finance Committee and, on a bipartisan basis, come up with tax reform that actually works for the middle class.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Wyden motion.

Mr. WYDEN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 285 Leg.]

YEAS—48

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Bennet	Harris	Nelson
Blumenthal	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Brown	Heitkamp	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Udall
Donnelly	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Franken	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—51

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Strange
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

AMENDMENT NO. 1618

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on behalf of Senators HATCH and MURKOWSKI, I call up amendment No. 1618.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL], for Mr. HATCH, proposes an amendment numbered 1618.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks on Thursday, November 30, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 1, with 1 hour of debate remaining on the Hatch-Murkowski amendment. I further ask that any debate time tonight count against the underlying bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise to commemorate November as National Adoption Month. During this month, we are reminded of the importance of adoption to so many families and children in Iowa and all across the country. As Americans are celebrating the season of Thanksgiving with family and friends, adoptive families are celebrating with their new families, giving thanks for the joy of somebody they adopted.

Since the first recognition of National Adoption Day 16, 17 years ago, nearly 65,000 kids have been adopted on National Adoption Day, which is always celebrated on the Saturday before Thanksgiving each year. In 2016 alone, over 4,700 adoptions were finalized on National Adoption Day.

National Adoption Month is certainly a time to celebrate the joys of a new family; however, it is also a reminder of the obstacles that so many children may face. Nationally, there are over 425,000 children in foster care. Over 100,000 of these children are hoping to be adopted. In Iowa, there are about 1,000 kids in foster care who are eligible for adoption.

This year, the special focus of National Adoption Month is older youth waiting to be adopted. Teenagers, unfortunately, face more difficulty in being adopted than do younger children.

As cofounder and cochair of the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, I have had the chance to hear directly from teenagers in foster care. In fact, our Senate Caucus on Foster Youth has a couple, three seminars every year just to listen to older youth in the foster care system, particularly those who are about ready to age out. These young people tell me that, more than anything else, they want a loving family. They tell me that they need families and that nobody is too old to be adopted. The support that parents provide to teens is critical to navigating the transition to adulthood—from making decisions about higher education to finding a job or buying a car. A loving family continually provides the support teens need to succeed.