

energy is both creating jobs and helping us to lead a way toward a clean energy future. That is why, last year in the House, I led the charge against harmful solar tariffs that threatened to roll back the progress we have made and why I introduced legislation to train our veterans for good-paying jobs—solar jobs—that can both support families and reduce our carbon footprint.

I will continue these efforts here in the Senate because our energy independence and the future of our planet should never be partisan issues.

HIRE STUDENT VETERANS ACT

Madam President, in Nevada, we care for one another, and we believe in looking out for one another, and that is especially true for our veterans, who make up a significant part of our State. Over 226,000 veterans call Nevada home. Our heroes in the armed services and their families risk everything—everything—to protect our Nation. One way we can honor them is by helping our heroes successfully transition to civilian life once they have completed their military service.

After talking to countless veterans and military families in Nevada, I introduced the Hire Student Veterans Act as my first bill in the Senate. This bipartisan legislation incentivizes business to hire our student vets who are currently using their benefits to study. We made a promise to take care of our veterans when they return home, and the last thing they should have to worry about is not being able to obtain a good education or a good-paying job. I know this commonsense legislation will further ensure that our student vets are on the pathway toward success and that Nevada and our Nation will benefit from their continued contributions.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Madam President, in Nevada, we are leading the way; we are doing right by hard-working families in areas like clean energy and technology. As a former computer programmer, I am so excited about our State's growing tech industry, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Small Business Committee to provide our tech startups the tools they need to succeed and create jobs and on the Commerce Committee, where we are tackling important issues like cyber security and privacy and, for our rural communities, critical access to rural broadband, which they sorely need.

In all of these efforts, I look forward to bringing new stakeholders to the table because we can all gain so much insight when we listen to our constituents and we embrace bold ideas to improve their lives.

We have also grown our economy and created good-paying jobs by legalizing recreational marijuana in our State. This industry is bringing millions of dollars in revenue to Nevada. Yet our marijuana businesses continue to operate on a cash-only basis as a result of outdated Federal laws that are block-

ing their access to important financial services. We cannot expect these businesses to succeed when the Federal Government refuses to keep up with the times. That is why I am supporting bipartisan legislation to give marijuana businesses access to our banking system so that they can safely operate and continue contributing to our economy.

It is through bipartisan action that we can encourage economic growth in every corner of our State and every corner of our country.

Since coming to Congress, I have consistently made it a priority to reach across the aisle on issues where both parties can find common ground. At a time of increasing political division and partisan gridlock, it is even more important for both sides to come together, to make progress on the issues that are impacting Americans at home.

I am so proud of the work I have been able to do with my colleagues from both parties. Last Congress, I was named one of the most bipartisan freshman Members during my first term and was one of the first Democrats to be recognized with an award by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for supporting pro-growth policies.

I will continue to take every action to fight for Nevada's hard-working families. We must act boldly, and we must do more to provide opportunities—opportunities for our children through improving education and working across the aisle to invest in our children's future.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF STEM ACT

Madam President, earlier this year, I introduced the Building Blocks of STEM Act. In the Senate we are going to try to make those investments in early childhood STEM education. My bipartisan, bicameral bill will give our kids the opportunities to explore STEM-related fields at an early age and set them up for success because we need a 21st century education if we hope to succeed in a 21st century economy.

It is only through robust, quality education that we can build that strong workforce that will grow our Nation's economy and ensure that our children and our Nation will ultimately succeed.

Protecting our environment and public lands, embracing clean energy, honoring America's heroes and their families, supporting economic growth, investing in our children's education, these are just a few of the ways we can work together across the aisle.

We can improve lives by listening to the voices of those who sent us here to represent us and by working together to create a healthy, educated, and economically empowered future for all and, most importantly, by agreeing everywhere we can, especially on the issues that matter most to families at home.

HEALTHCARE

Madam President, there is no issue that matters more than healthcare. I

have met with countless parents, grandparents, families, who rely on access to healthcare to keep themselves and their precious loved ones healthy.

One of the reasons Nevada ranks near the bottom when it comes to access to care is that we continue to face a shortage of physicians, particularly in primary care. This is especially true for Nevadans living in rural and Tribal communities, with many of our State's residents having to drive hundreds of miles to seek medical care or they simply go without care.

We know that many other States face similar problems. We need forward-thinking solutions to make sure that States like ours have enough doctors to serve our population. We need to help communities in rural and underserved areas gain access to telehealth programs so that we are able to provide better access to critical services, not just to Nevadans but to all Americans, no matter where they live.

We need transparency when it comes to drug pricing because no person should be forced to decide between paying their bills and buying lifesaving medication. Let's not forget that we need equal access to healthcare for women, for LGBTQ, and for underrepresented communities.

We must protect our healthcare system from sabotage by this administration. This month, the Trump administration made yet another move to take healthcare coverage and critical protections away from millions nationwide, instructing our own Justice Department to refuse to defend the Affordable Care Act. We are no longer just talking about stripping away protections for those with preexisting conditions, as if that weren't enough. We are in even more dangerous territory than before because if our healthcare law is completely wiped out, we will see an end—an end—to the tax credits that make coverage affordable for middle-income families; we will see an end to preventive care without copays, like health screenings and contraceptives; we will see an end to the ability of young adults under the age of 26 to stay on their parents' insurance; and we will see an end to Medicaid benefits, which have helped over 200,000 Nevadans get coverage.

If this administration has its way with invalidating our healthcare law, it would spell disaster for primary care providers and the millions of Americans who rely on its protections for access to quality, affordable care.

Healthcare is one of the top issues at every kitchen table in communities like Winnemucca and Henderson and across this country. I can't even begin to count the number of Nevadans who have shared with me how they would be affected by this disastrous decision and who tell me what it means in their personal lives not to have to live in fear of being denied coverage for a preexisting condition. Over 1.2 million Nevadans live with a preexisting condition. We all know what is at stake if

these individuals are denied access to care.

There are plenty of ways we can work to improve the Affordable Care Act and lower healthcare costs, but destroying the law and leaving our loved ones at risk is simply unacceptable.

As a member of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions here in the Senate, I am working on solutions each day to bring resources, accountability, and relief to our healthcare system, including supporting legislation to bring down our skyrocketing drug costs and programs that bolster telemedicine in our rural and underserved communities because healthcare is a personal issue that affects each and every one of us, and we all know that just one diagnosis can change your life in an instant.

The Senate today faces many challenges, none more so than the polarization and division that prevents us from coming together in pursuit of the public interest. In his farewell address, Nevada Senator Richard Bryan stated: "If we can restore civility in our public discourse, as we debate the great issues and policy differences of our time, if we can apply the rules that govern the process by which we conduct the Senate's business fairly to all, and if we can work together for the common good, I am confident that the future of the Senate can be as bright as the past."

So this is my pledge to all of you: I will be an independent voice for all Nevadans by agreeing where I can and fighting where I must. There is nothing more important to me than taking care of my home, our home, your families, and all of our families because home means Nevada to me.

During my first few weeks as a Senator, I joined Senator MANCHIN in helping lead the effort to defend the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act. Our resolution will direct the Senate legal counsel to intervene in the Federal court case, where our healthcare system is under attack, to defend our current law, including protections for preexisting conditions.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 18

Madam President, that is why, as my first action while holding the floor of the Senate, I would like to ask you this:

As in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Rules Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 18 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the resolution to be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Ms. ROSEN. This is why Nevadans sent me here—to protect their healthcare. And that is what I am

going to do; that is what I will continue to do.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The Senator from South Dakota.

MEDICARE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if you are in a shaky financial situation, wondering how you are going to meet your obligations, your first instinct isn't generally to wildly increase your spending, unless, of course, you are a congressional Democrat.

Our Nation's Medicare system is on shaky financial ground. Democrats' answer is to massively expand the program to the tune of trillions of dollars.

Two weeks ago, the Social Security and Medicare trustees released their annual report. According to the report, beginning in 2026, Medicare will not be able to meet its obligations. This doesn't even seem to register on Democrats' radar. They steamroll right past the program's already shaky financial status and ask the American people to believe that, somehow, massively expanding the program to include almost the entire U.S. population at a pricetag of staggering proportions will work.

It is difficult to overstate just how unrealistic Democrats' Medicare for All fantasy is. Start with the pricetag: \$32 trillion over 10 years. To put that number in perspective, that is more money than the Federal Government has spent in the last 8 years combined—on everything. That \$32 trillion estimate is likely too low, as it was based on an earlier version of the Medicare for All plan of the Senator from Vermont. His new plan also includes a massive new benefit—funding for long-term care, an enormously expensive part of the healthcare system.

Democrats' last attempt to have the government run a long-term care program fell apart before it was even implemented because the program was not financially viable.

Let's leave aside for a minute the tremendous cost and the tax hikes on ordinary Americans that would be required to pay for it. Let's talk about the massive difficulty of implementing such a system. The junior Senator from Vermont expects people to believe that the government can successfully transition more than 180 million people off of their private insurance and into government-run healthcare in 4 years. To put that in perspective, the Obama administration had 3½ years to implement the ObamaCare exchanges, which were intended to cover a tiny fraction of the number of people who would be covered under Medicare for All. As I am sure most Americans remember, the government couldn't put together a working website in that 3½ year time period. Yet Democrats somehow expect us to believe that they can smoothly transition 180 million Americans into government-run insurance in just 4 years.

We are also somehow supposed to believe things will be much more effi-

cient with government running your healthcare. It is certainly true there is a lot of bureaucracy in our current healthcare system, but I am fairly sure the answer is not giving control of healthcare to the mother ship of bureaucracy—the Federal Government. Democrats also apparently expect Americans to believe that the Federal Government will be able to deliver almost unlimited healthcare for free. Unfortunately, no matter how much money the Federal Government takes in with higher taxes, there will eventually be a limit to how much it can spend on healthcare.

What happens when it can't afford to meet demand, which, by the way, tends to increase substantially when something is offered for free? I will tell you what happens: long wait times and rationing of care, which have become the hallmarks of socialized medicine in other countries.

There is no question that our healthcare system is not perfect. Republicans are currently working on legislation to address some of the healthcare challenges facing Americans, but destroying our current health system to fix the problems we have would be like razing a house to the ground to fix a leak in the bathroom sink.

There are lots of good things about our healthcare system. A lot of people in this country are happy with their healthcare. We need to preserve the good things about our system and fix what is not working and not force everyone into a fantastically expensive one-size-fits-all, government-run healthcare system that would reduce everyone's quality of care.

The Democratic chairman of the House Rules Committee, discussing a House hearing on Medicare for All, recently said: "It's a serious proposal that deserves serious consideration on Capitol Hill."

I would argue that it is the exact opposite. The only things that are serious about this proposal are the serious consequences it would have for the American people if it were ever implemented. It is deeply irresponsible of my Democrat colleagues to peddle this government-run nightmare as a legitimate healthcare solution. One of our former colleagues, Tom Coburn, used to say: If you think healthcare is expensive now, wait until it is free.

Let's hope Democrats decide to take a more serious approach to healthcare reform before Americans are forced to live under the ugly reality of their socialist fantasy.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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