

themselves hours ahead of time by the side of the road so they could tell me about their diagnosis. One young woman was sobbing on the side of the road in Meriden, CT, as she explained to me her lupus diagnosis and how, without the Affordable Care Act and the protections it provides her, she would not have insurance; she would not be able to afford the medications that keep her well and alive; and her life would be ruined. Those individuals are freaking out today because they have watched this President—and frankly this Republican Congress—use every power at their disposal, every tool in their toolkit to try to take away these protections for people who are sick, for people who, through no fault of their own, just have higher medical bills than the rest of us. They don't feel like they should be discriminated against or forsaken by the health insurance marketplace because of their unfortunate diagnosis.

The latest assault on people with pre-existing conditions comes through an effort by the administration to allow States to sell insurance plans that don't cover basic medical needs, plans that would allow for a skimpy set of benefits to be sold out on the insurance marketplaces. Now, admittedly, that might be good news for pretty healthy people who don't want to pay for a full insurance product because they think they don't need it.

The first problem with that is you are only healthy until you are not healthy. The second bigger problem is, when all the healthy people go to these skimpy plans—sometimes called junk plans—and all the people with pre-existing conditions get left behind on the regulated plans, where insurance is real, where it covers everything you need, costs go down for the healthy people, and they go through the roof for the sick people, which is the entire problem we were trying to solve in 2009 and 2010. It is, in fact, the problem the Republicans say repeatedly out on the campaign trail and back in their districts and States that they want to solve too. I don't know that I have met a Republican Senator who doesn't say that they don't think people with pre-existing conditions should be discriminated against. Yet this rule the administration is proposing is going to allow States to do just that. It will allow for a "have and have not" insurance system, in which people with pre-existing conditions are charged more and people without pre-existing conditions are charged less.

My intention was to come down to the floor today and offer a unanimous consent request to get us on the road to solving this latest assault on people with pre-existing conditions. Let me explain to you what my request was going to be. I understand there are Republican objections, and there is not the ability to object today when I make this request, so I will reserve the right to make that request until early next week.

Here is the substance of the request I was planning to make today. Last week, the House of Representatives passed a piece of legislation called the Protecting Americans with Preexisting Conditions Act, and what this legislation would have done—and will do, if passed and signed by the President—is prevent HHS from taking any action to implement the administration's waivers for States to set up these junk plans, these skimpy plans.

It is in keeping with the intent of the Affordable Care Act, which is to allow flexibility for States—there is an ability under the Affordable Care Act for States to innovate and to be flexible, but the Affordable Care Act says you can't do that in a way that hurts consumers. You can't do that in a way that provides less coverage to consumers.

The rule the Trump administration is proposing, in many of our minds, is a violation of the Affordable Care Act in and of itself, which is still the law of the land, but this piece of legislation would clarify that you cannot allow for the development and widespread sale of these junk insurance plans without dramatically harming the healthcare of the 130 million Americans who have preexisting conditions.

So my intent was to ask for a unanimous consent request to bring this bill for a vote in the Senate. I will do that next week.

At some point, we have to act like we actually are the U.S. Senate. It is not enough to just say over and over again that you support people with pre-existing conditions and then do nothing as the administration launches a daily, nonstop, unending, unceasing, relentless effort to destroy healthcare for people with preexisting conditions.

This is the latest assault on people with preexisting conditions, but it stands in a very long, ongoing line of actions by this administration, backed up by Republicans in the Congress, to try to reduce coverage and increase costs for people with preexisting conditions.

It started, of course, with the whole repeal effort, which would not have replaced the Affordable Care Act with anything meaningful. The bill that passed the House of Representatives would have stripped healthcare away from 30 million Americans. The tax bill that included a portion of healthcare repeal that was passed and signed by the President eliminates healthcare for 13 million Americans, and many of those have preexisting conditions.

As we speak today, the administration is readying to go to court with a whole bunch of Republican attorneys general to ask the Federal judicial system to overturn protections for people with preexisting conditions. So having failed to get the entirety of the bill repealed through the Congress, the administration now is going to court to try to get the protections for people with preexisting conditions repealed.

Once again, this Congress, this Senate is silent on that case. We have of-

fered another piece of legislation to stop that lawsuit from going forward. We don't have any takers on the Republican side. This assault is real. I didn't make it up. It is not imagined. If this court case that the Trump administration is pushing succeeds, overnight the entirety of the Affordable Care Act will be invalidated, and there is no plan to replace it.

If these junk plans go into effect—listen, maybe I will be wrong. I hope I am wrong. Maybe there will not be a flight of people to these skimpy plans, but much of the analyses I have seen suggests that will happen. If it does, there is just no way, other than for the cost to go up for everybody who is left behind on the regulated plans. I don't know about you, but when I talk to my folks living paycheck to paycheck in Connecticut, they don't have a lot of room in their budget for increased premiums for healthcare. They are maxed out as it is.

So I will stand down for now, but I will be back early next week to offer this unanimous consent request. I hope, if my colleagues turn it down, if they don't want to bring up a piece of legislation that would stop this latest regulatory assault on the Affordable Care Act, that they will come to the table with other ideas as to how to protect people with preexisting conditions from this campaign of sabotage by the administration; that they will finally recognize that this assault on the Affordable Care Act in the court system is a really awful precedent to set.

It is going to come back and bite all of us as legislators if it is successful. Without any real hope of a replacement for the Affordable Care Act, it leads to a humanitarian disaster in which 20 million to 30 million people lose insurance because of it.

This is as important as it gets. There is very little that matters to people more than their health and their healthcare, and I hope that possibly next week we can come together as a body and finally do something about the administration's attempt to take away these protections for sick people and people with complicated diagnoses all across the country.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### JOINT REFERRAL OF NOMINATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the nomination of Robert Wallace, of Wyoming, to be Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife, sent to the Senate by the

President on May 13, 2019, be referred jointly to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 189, 192, and 194.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nominations.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Jane L. Corwin, of New York, to be Commissioner on the part of the United States on the International Joint Commission, United States and Canada; Robert C. Sisson, of Michigan, to be Commissioner on the part of the United States on the International Joint Commission, United States and Canada; and Lance V. Yohe, of North Dakota, to be Commissioner on the part of the United States on the International Joint Commission, United States and Canada.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Corwin, Sisson, and Yohe nominations?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 185.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Matthew H. Tueller, of Utah, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Iraq.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the mo-

tion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Tueller nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 172; that the nominations be confirmed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

#### IN THE COAST GUARD

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Coast Guard to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C. section 271(e):

#### *To be rear admiral (Lower Half)*

Capt. Brendan C. McPherson  
 Capt. Douglas M. Schofield  
 Capt. Andrew M. Sugimoto  
 Capt. Richard V. Timme  
 Capt. Todd C. Wienmers

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

#### REMEMBERING SEYMOUR BRYSON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, basketball brought Seymour Bryson to the Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in 1955. He had a record-setting career at the school, winning most valuable player all 4 years, setting a then-school record in scoring and holding the school's record for rebounds, which stands to this day. As remarkable as his basketball career was, Seymour went on to make his mark with more than four decades of work making SIU a better place.

Seymour was a three-degree alumnus of SIU, earning a bachelor's degree in

social work in 1959, a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling in 1961, and a doctorate in educational psychology in 1972. At the time, he was one of three African Americans to progress from assistant professor to full professor at SIU, first African-American associate dean of a college, and the second of three African-American deans.

Generations of all ages could come to Seymour for advice. It was that kind of trust that earned him leadership roles throughout the community. He was active in a variety of roles, including president of the Carbondale chapter of the NAACP, member and chair of the Diversifying Faculty Initiative, president of the Jackson County 708 Mental Health Board, and president and member of the board of directors of the Carbondale United Way.

Seymour received numerous awards throughout his life, including the Senator Emil Jones Mentoring Award, the Introspect Access Award, the Distinguished Service Award from the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education, and the 2019 SIU Distinguished Alumni Award for his humanitarian impact.

His family was never far from his heart. He loved time with his grandchildren. They had wonderful trips to Dairy Queen and seeing movies together. They got their love of reading through him and their trips to bookstores. He captured much of these moments in film as an amateur photographer.

Seymour helped define what it meant to be a Saluki in his career and life. He passed away on May 5, we remember him for his service to his community.

Seymour is survived by his loving wife of 59 years, Marjorie Bryson; son, Todd Bryson; daughters, Robin Bryson and Keri and her husband Stephen Burns; grandchildren, Jordan Bryson, Keric Young, Kendall Young, Adrian Bryson, Francesca Sanchez, Fernando Sanchez, and Isaiah Burns; sisters, Susie Barnes and Janice Bryson Carol and her husband Paul Henry of Carbondale, and brother, Raymond and his wife Cynthia Bryson; and a host of nieces, nephews, and dear friends.

#### REMEMBERING HARVEY WELCH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it didn't feel historic at the time for Harvey Welch, but it was. Harvey, a native of Centralia, IL, came to Southern Illinois University Carbondale on a basketball scholarship and became the first Black student at the university to letter in basketball in 1951. He achieved this 3 years before the Brown v. Board ruling found school segregation unconstitutional.

Harvey played basketball at SIU from 1951 to 1954. He also was the first Black student to complete the ROTC program at the university. When he finished college, he joined the U.S. Air Force and was one of the first three Black officers to be promoted to lieutenant colonel.