the keenness of our spirit ever be dulled. Let not the impacts of temporary events, of temporal matters of but fleeting moment, let not these deter us in our unconquerable pur-

With Thy blessing, we shall prevail over the unholy forces of our enemy. Help us to conquer the apostles of greed and racial arrogancies. Lead us to the saving of our country, and with our sister Nations into a world unity that will spell a sure peace, a peace invulnerable to the schemings of unworthy men. And a peace that will let all of men live in freedom, reaping the just rewards of their honest toil.

Thy will be done, Almighty God.

Amen.

I think you will agree with me that these profound words deserve to be made a permanent part of our broader World War II Memorial for a noble day that we must never forget.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

## UKRAINE

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to spend a few moments talking about a trip I took overseas last week. After honoring our fallen soldiers here at home in Central Ohio and in Southwest Ohio, I traveled to Ukraine, where I a meeting scheduled Ukraine's new President, Volodymyr Zelensky. On my way there, I stopped in London for trade meetings and briefings by our Ambassador and our excellent U.S. Embassy personnel there.

I was very eager to meet President Zelensky. First of all, along with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I have been a longtime supporter of Ukraine's quest for self-determination, democracy, and freedom from Russian aggression. As cochair and cofounder of the Senate Ukraine Caucus, along with my colleague DICK DURBIN of Illinois. I have been proud to take the lead since the Revolution of Dignity in 2014 in giving Ukrainians the lethal and nonlethal aid they need to defend themselves from aggression in Crimea and the Donbass region.

Second, I share that enthusiasm for Ukraine that is held by so many of my constituents, friends of mine, particularly in Cleveland and that area, who are proud members of the Ukrainian diaspora.

Third, I was very impressed with President Zelensky's election victory, in part because he received a remarkable 73 percent of the vote. I also thought his focus on reform and change was important for the country. I wanted to meet with him and learn more about how and why his appeals for unity largely succeeded.

Fourth, I wanted to hear more about his plans to fight the aggression from Russia on his eastern border, fight corruption at home, and put in place the reforms that will make his country stronger.

Finally, I wanted to tell him we are with him. The United States stands by Ukraine, and the ties between our two countries can deepen even further. We want to help Ukraine succeed in this historic moment.

I can report to my colleagues that I came away impressed from the meeting with President Zelensky. I was encouraged. We talked for about an hour and covered a broad range of topics. He is smart, engaging, and determined.

We had a good discussion about Russian aggression in Crimea and in the Donbass region. President Zelensky has been out to the contact line, which is where the fighting is occurring. I was there last year. There is a real war going on, and 13,000 people have been killed on the eastern border of Ukraine, on that contact line. He spoke frankly about the bravery of his troops but also about their needs in terms of the weapons systems and basic conditions. We talked about the Russian propaganda along the eastern border and the efforts to jam Ukrainian TV signals to sow the seeds for dissension for the people of the Donbass region. We talked about some ideas that would help to counter that propaganda, the jamming, and the disinformation, and I have already been in touch with the State Department about those ideas.

We also talked about the 24 Ukrainian sailors who were captured by the Russians last November 25 in the Kerch Strait in the Azov Sea. At that time, President Trump rightly refused to meet with President Putin until those sailors were free. President Zelensky and I talked about how to keep the pressure on Moscow to do the right thing. I gave President Zelensky my commitment to do everything in our power here in the Senate to keep these 24 sailors front and center until the crisis is resolved.

Recently, the United Nations issued a statement about these sailors, by the way. It read that they should be sent back to Ukraine, that their taking was wrong.

I told President Zelensky that he is now the face of reform in Ukraine and, indeed, for those of us who are watching around the world. He acknowledged that with a smile. He said that his commitment to reform is real, but he also had no illusions about how hard reform will be. Whether we are talking about fighting corruption, fighting for transparency in government, or fighting for civilian control of the military. I am very hopeful he will have the continued courage to see it through. He understands it is the only path forward and, frankly, is a linchpin of the U.S. partnership with Ukraine. As a matter of law, it is also a condition on our future defense assistance.

Finally, we talked about the importance of the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States—about 2 million people strong, thousands of whom live in Ohio, my constituents-and about how they are putting great hopes in his leadership and are willing to do all they can to help.

As I said, it was a very productive meeting, and I am grateful for his time. Of all of the messages of that discussion, the one that was the most important to me was when I asked him how he could win by 73 percent of the vote. He said:

It was not about me. It was about change and reform and the betterment of the people of Ukraine.

It was a modest and appropriate response.

The messages of our discussion were reinforced in my meetings afterward Lieutenant General Ruslan with Khomchak. He is the new chief of the general staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine—a man with great experience and knowledge. He was confident and well informed, and we had an open and detailed talk about how the United States can be helpful.

I have already begun to talk to my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee and in the Trump administration about those specifics and some requests that he had.

So, my colleagues, I return from this brief trip to Ukraine hopeful—hopeful that Ukraine is ready to write the next chapter of its long history and that it will be a chapter of freedom with a government and society that benefits all of its citizens. The United States of America must continue to be a good friend and ally in that quest. I am certainly determined to do my part to make it so.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1556

Ms. BALDWIN. I rise today to once again speak about the ongoing threat in the Trump administration to the healthcare and guaranteed protections that millions of American families depend upon. President Trump has tried to pass through the Congress repeal plans that would take people's healthcare away and allow insurance companies to discriminate against people with preexisting health conditions or refuse to serve them at all.

When that legislative repeal effort failed in 2017, instead of working in a bipartisan way to lower healthcare costs and improve access to care for all Americans, President Trump turned to another tactic-sabotaging healthcare system—and there are more Americans uninsured today than there were when he took office.

The Trump administration has even gone to court. They have gone to court to support a lawsuit that would overturn the Affordable Care Act, including its provisions that protect people with preexisting health conditions from discrimination. Just think about that. He is asking a court to strike down healthcare protections for Americans. If he succeeds, insurance companies will once again be able to deny coverage or charge much higher premiums for the more than 130 million Americans who have some sort of preexisting health condition, including more than 2 million who live in the State of Wisconsin.

What is the President's plan to protect people with preexisting conditions? He doesn't have one. He never has. And I have to say that I doubt he ever will. In fact, this administration has expanded what I call junk insurance plans. These are insurance plans that can deny coverage to people with preexisting health conditions, and they don't have to cover basic and essential health services, like prescription drugs or emergency room visits or maternity care. Most of these junk plans don't cover those things.

When I spoke about this expansion of what I call junk insurance on the Senate floor 2 weeks ago, one of my Republican colleagues responded and claimed that these plans preserve preexisting conditions protections and essential health benefits. So today I wanted to clarify the record, and let's look at the

fine print together.

One of the junk plans currently available in my home State of Wisconsin reads, "This plan has a preexisting limitation provision that may prevent coverage from applying to medical conditions that existed prior to this plan's effective date.'

Another junk plan that is sold in Wisconsin states that the plan does not comply with the guaranteed essential benefits provided by the Affordable Care Act. To quote directly, the description reads: "This coverage is not required to comply with certain federal market requirements for health insurance, principally those contained in the Affordable Care Act." The tiny fine print on this particular junk plan instructs individuals to check their coverage carefully to make sure they are "aware of any exclusions or limitation regarding coverage of pre-existing conditions or health benefits (such as hospitalization, emergency services, maternity care, preventive care, prescription drugs, and mental health and substance use disorder services). Your certificate might also have lifetime and/or annual dollar limits on health benefits."

The Affordable Care Act protects people against these insurance company abuses. Yet the expansion of these junk plans puts the power back in the hands of big insurance companies.

Let me be clear. American families do not want to go back to the days when health insurers could discriminate against people with preexisting health conditions, women, and seniors by denying them coverage or charging them higher premiums simply because they get sick.

As I have said in this Chamber many times, the people of Wisconsin want both parties in Congress to work together to make things better by making healthcare more affordable.

I have heard from several Wisconsinites who want to know why the Presi-

dent is working to repeal the Affordable Care Act and take away their protections by expanding these junk plans. They are frightened that if this sabotage of our health system continues, insurance companies will again be able to denv coverage or charge higher premiums for the more than 130 million Americans who have preexisting health conditions, again, including more than 2 million in my home State of Wisconsin

I heard from Keri from Baraboo. Keri is a three-time cancer survivor-two breast cancer diagnoses and one melanoma. She experienced her first diagnosis at age 29. Now at age 61, Keri is able to get the healthcare she needs without being punished financially for having a preexisting condition. Keri is worried that if the Affordable Care Act is repealed, she could lose her health coverage or could be charged more because of her preexisting condition.

Another Wisconsinite, Keith Brookfield, recently wrote in to my office about what healthcare means to him and his family. Keith and his son both have type 1 diabetes. Both of them have health insurance through the Affordable Care marketplace that allows them to afford the insulin, glucose test strips, and other medications they need. If the Affordable Care Act is repealed, Keith and his son likely would not even be eligible to purchase one of these junk insurance plans. They could be denied coverage entirely due to their preexisting condition.

We really need to act to stop this sabotage now. I want to protect the guaranteed healthcare protections that millions of Americans depend on. That is why I have introduced legislation, with my colleague, Senator Doug JONES of Alabama, to overturn the Trump administration's expansion of junk insurance plans, because we should be increasing access to affordable, high-quality healthcare options.

The entire Senate Democratic caucus supports this legislation, along with the two Independents who caucus with us. The Nation's top healthcare organizations, representing tens of thousands of the Nation's physicians, patients, medical students, and other health experts, support this legislation.

Anyone who says they healthcare coverage for people with preexisting conditions should support

Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1556: that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration: that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that 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. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me just say that the plans to which the Senator from Wisconsin is referring are plans that

tens of thousands of people are buying, and one of the reasons they are buying them is because it allows them to buy the insurance they want at a price they can afford

I can tell you, as I am sure the Presiding Officer can and probably everybody here can, when they travel across the country and talk with the farmers and ranchers and people who are buying their insurance on the individual market, the individual market has blown up. It has exploded. People are paying \$3,000 a month in premiums a year—and have huge deductibles. So what they are doing is they are dropping coverage because they can't afford it. One of the reasons they can't afford it is because, under ObamaCare, there were so many mandates and requirements, it drove up the price. So they have these skyrocketing premiums, higher deductibles, and higher copays.

I think that is precisely why the administration decided that, let's take these plans and give people an opportunity to buy the insurance they want

at a price they can afford.

Literally tens of thousands of Americans are now in these plans. What the Senator from Wisconsin is saying is, we are going to throw all these people off these plans. What does that do? That puts them back out, probably uninsured, which is what a lot of farmers and ranchers in places in South Dakota are doing-they are just dropping coverage because they can't afford it. Who can afford to pay \$3,000 a month? That is what ObamaCare has left us. That is why we need new solutions. This solution is one that allows people to buy a plan they want at a price they can afford, coupled with association health plans—which Democrats, I think, here in the Senate are also objecting to and opposing—which are also giving individuals opportunities to join larger groups and spread their risk and drive down their premiums. We need plans that people in this country can afford, or more and more people are going to be in the ranks of the uninsured.

So, Mr. President, I object. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I am disappointed that my Republican colleagues have once again chosen to object to protecting people with preexisting conditions.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, would my colleague yield?

Ms. BALDWIN. Senator, I would be happy to yield.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleague. I am in such strong support of her legislation, the No Junk Plans Act. I will speak briefly on it after the Senator has concluded her important remarks. But apropos of what the distinguished Senator from South Dakota just said, isn't it correct that of course a plan is more affordable if it doesn't cover anything? I would be interested in my colleague's reaction to that, as she is the lead sponsor.

I remember being in Wisconsin and seeing the wonderful support folks there have from my colleague because she has been a leader on these issues.

I am just curious, because certainly my friend from South Dakota, who is a distinguished member of the Finance Committee and works with Senator CORTEZ MASTO and me, often works with us on matters. But unless I am missing something, he said that what he is interested in is care that is more affordable. But it doesn't cover anything. What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

Ms. BALDWIN. I would concur and say that the reason they have earned the nickname "junk plans" is because, frankly, some of them are hardly worth the paper they are written on.

First of all, they do not have to comply with some of the very important protections we included as part of the Affordable Care Act—otherwise known as ObamaCare—especially to protect people who have been injured once before or have been injured once before, people who have a preexisting health condition, maybe a chronic condition that will require medical care throughout their lives.

In the old days, which apparently the Republican Senator wants to return to, there were all sorts of abuses, I would argue, that insurance companies could employ in order to limit their exposure, if you will. They had annual limits. They had lifetime limits. They had the capacity to drop somebody from coverage after an illness developed. They had the capacity to say: No, we are not going to offer you insurance. They certainly had the capacity to charge discriminatory premiums based on the preexisting condition. That causes great concern.

I just recently saw a report about how much a typical—put it this way: a woman with a breast cancer diagnosis who requires chemotherapy and radiation treatment and medication—how much she would be anticipated to spend out-of-pocket if she had a junk plan at the time that diagnosis was made. It was, on average, \$40,000.

We also need to talk about another impact these junk plans have, and that is, if you think you have a really good chance of being healthy for the next year, and you decide "This is a risk I can take," you are then fundamentally changing the structure of the marketplace for everyone else. You can anticipate that this is a choice healthier, maybe younger people will make, and it has a distorting impact on premiums in the marketplace. In fact, that is why these plans were curtailed under the previous administration. Now, this administration is greatly expanding these. They are no longer short term. They are long term, and a lot of harm will come.

I want to conclude and say that when we have an administration that first fought legislatively to repeal the Affordable Care Act and then acted administratively to undermine and sabotage the Affordable Care Act through all sorts of administrative Executive actions, including defunding the State navigators who helped people make wise selections for their insurance and also limiting the open enrollment period, and when we have an administration that has decided to go to court and asked the court to strike down a U.S. law in its entirety, we know there is sabotage going on.

I think the choice for the American people couldn't be clearer. We want to make things better, and the administration—enabled by some of my Senate Republican colleagues—is walking down a path that has led to 2 million people losing their health insurance and others at grave risk of losing it in the future.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, before she leaves the floor, I want to tell my colleague from Wisconsin—and I think I speak for the distinguished Senator from Nevada as well—we are counting on our colleague from Wisconsin to come back to this floor again and again to try to pass her bill. I just want to tell her I will be with her every step of the way because I think, colleagues, without the bill from the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin, what we are looking at is a new golden age for scam artists peddling insurance that isn't worth much more than the paper it is written on.

I was struck by my friend from Wisconsin's mentioning the old days of junk insurance.

Well, I was around for those old days. I remember when the health insurance system in this country was basically for the healthy and wealthy. If you were healthy, no sweat, you could get insurance. If you were wealthy, you just went off and paid the bills. But the insurance companies could go out there and clobber people with preexisting conditions. So that was junk insurance.

But I am even older than that. I remember when I was director of the Oregon Gray Panthers. I would go to a senior's house, and they would pull out a shoebox full of policies—10 or 15 policies. The distinguished Senator from Nevada, who has done so much consumer advocacy for consumers, I am sure knows about this challenge with seniors. These policies weren't worth the paper they were written on. Thev had-because I am kind of a lawyer in name only-what were called subrogation clauses. So if you had two policies, and they basically covered the same thing, both of them would try to squirm out of covering it. Talk about iunk insurance

Finally, I got elected to Congress, like my colleague activist, and we passed a law that said we are going to get rid of that system and that you could have really only one policy, except in unusual situations. There were strong consumer protections.

But if you look at what the Trump golden age of scams is going to bring back, there are going to be lots of people who are going to get clobbered, and, as my colleagues know, the people who are really going to get hit by this are, for example, older women who are pre-Medicare, because very often, in their late fifties and early sixties, they have a lot of difficulty trying to find jobs that pay good salaries and jobs that have good healthcare coverage.

I am so appreciative of what my colleague is talking about.

We are going to hear a lot of buzz words. Opponents of the Baldwin legislation are going to talk about how they are offering flexibility and they are offering patient-centered care. But that is just a bunch of eyewash because what they really do, as you touched on, is to fail to give patients care when they most need care.

Today, Americans ought to be protected from these worthless, predatory scams. One of the things that I was proudest of, really, before my colleagues came here, is a piece of legislation I wrote, the Healthy Americans Act. A number of Republican Senators were cosponsors of this bill. It had airtight, loophole-free protection to ensure that people with preexisting conditions didn't face discrimination.

By and large, we got that provision into the Affordable Care Act. It meant, as John McCain knew—we often talked about it—that healthcare would no longer be there just for the healthy and the wealthy. There would be real protections for those with preexisting conditions.

For all practical purposes, that was really one of the two or three centerpieces of the Affordable Care Act, because, talk about a new age in insurance, that was it. Healthcare insurance would no longer be there for the healthy and wealthy only.

Senator Baldwin is here, and what she is trying to do—I am looking at that clock—is trying to keep the Trump people from turning it back. That is what they want to do when Senator Baldwin talks about the old days—a forced march back to the days when the insurance companies could really, in many instances, just beat the stuffing out of vulnerable people.

I thank my colleague for what she is doing. I heard just a little bit about it before I came over. I basically said: Let's hold off on things for a couple of hours so I can go out there and stand with Senator BALDWIN and her allies.

I say to the Senator: To me, what is important is that you have been here today, and it is going to be even more important that you come back again and again and again so that that clock continues to move forward in terms of American healthcare and not go backward. I thank my colleague.

We are really delighted to have Senator CORTEZ MASTO on the Senate Finance Committee, where she has been doing a lot of good work in healthcare

for consumers and seniors. I look forward to her remarks and to working with both of my colleagues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, let me just say, on behalf of the State of Nevada, that I am so appreciative that I get to work with my colleagues from Wisconsin and Oregon. I thank them for their commitment because this is the No. 1 issue in the State of Nevada.

I say to Senator Baldwin: What you are doing is really standing up for people and their right to have access to affordable healthcare in this country when they need it, access to medication when they need it, and the comfort in knowing that if they purchase a plan, if something, God forbid, should happen to them, then, they will have access to that medication and those doctors when they need it. Thank you for your hard work.

I stand today because I want to tell you about one of these people in the State of Nevada. Her name is Carol Elewski. She is from Reno, NV. Carol has chronic asthma. She manages it with medications that cost up to \$400 a month—\$400 a month.

In October of 2016, Carol had such a bad asthma attack that she was admitted to the hospital for 10 days as doctors struggled to get her breathing under control. Thankfully, today Carol's health is stable, but because of her preexisting condition and high prescription drug costs, she depends on the protections of the Affordable Care Act to keep her healthcare costs in check.

This administration, as we have heard today from my colleagues, keeps chipping away at those protections. Literally, we have heard from the President that he is proud of sabotaging the Affordable Care Act. He has weakened the ACA by expanding access to these junk plans. These short-term, limited-duration plans don't cover essential services, like prescription drugs, emergency rooms visits, and maternity care.

Today, I am joining my colleagues to, once again, urge that we do away with these scam insurance policies. These plans appeal to consumers because they are low cost, but they are also low benefit, as we have heard. Many people who purchase them don't realize just how limited the coverage is. All those details are in the fine print of the policies in dense legal jargon, and it is nearly impossible to understand. I am an attorney, and I will tell you that even attorneys have difficulty understanding that dense legal jargon in some of these policies. Consumers don't know that the plans they are signing up for-because of the dense legal jargon and because they are not given specifics, and there is not enough transparency—don't even cover their preexisting conditions. Consumers may not realize that their coverage has annual or lifetime spending caps.

Take Carol, for instance. Let's say she had signed up for a junk plan instead of an ACA-compliant plan—an easy mistake to make, since companies hide the differences between the two. With the junk plan, Carol's insurance could have refused to cover her healthcare costs because of her asthma. They could have denied payment for the emergency treatment she needed when she literally could not breathe, and they could have declined coverage for the essential medications she needs to keep the asthma in check.

Under these junk plans, women who get pregnant don't get coverage for prenatal care or for delivering their babies. People with lifelong genetic conditions, like cystic fibrosis, can be denied coverage, as can those facing mental health issues.

What is more, even if you don't buy a junk healthcare plan, these plans' very existence drives up our healthcare costs in this country. That is because younger, healthier people are more likely to risk choosing a limited junk plan because those plans are cheaper. That leaves the rest of the population, including many women and children, in a much more expensive insurance pool.

Estimates say that junk plans could cost a family of four with an ACA plan over \$3,000 in increased insurance premiums every year. The No Junk Plans Act that Senator BALDWIN has introduced undoes the administration's order that allowed insurance companies to offer consumers up to 3 years of deceptive, skimpy coverage.

Under the No Junk Plans Act, customers can only use these short-term plans for 90 days. The plans would work the way they were intended—as a bridge between coverage at one job and the next.

I hear this all the time in Nevada. Americans have told us time and again what they want their healthcare to do: to cover preexisting conditions, keep down prescription drug costs, include women's health, cover mental health, and pay for emergency rooms visits.

I am going to continue to fight for what the American people want, and that is the comprehensive coverage of the Affordable Care Act.

We cannot let the administration succeed in doing an end-run around the ACA. The House has already passed legislation to do away with these flimsy and deceptive junk plans. Now it is time for the Senate to step up and do the same.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

(The remarks of Senator UDALL pertaining to the submission of S. 1753 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. LEE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

RECOGNIZING THE SENATE PAGES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today is the last day of the session for

the Senate pages who served during the spring semester. I want to thank them for their hard work and service to the Senate over the last 4 months. I wish you all well as you return to your home States with a greater appreciation for the Senate and our work here.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the list of pages graduating this week be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

Meg Balaji Elizabeth Bates Craig Birckhead-Morton Jackson Cargill Olivia Castilla Michael Cathy Brooke Culp William Deaton Gabe Fanning Caroline Ferry Cameron Fowler Sophie Hart Laura Hartman Ruthie Kesri Joe Lesser Dan McDermott George Moore Virginia Pillion Katerina Retzlaff Bella Sandoval-Encinas Matthew Shabino Caleb Shriver Hunter Steinlage Kara Swain Colby Switser Teagan Thompson John Wahlig III Jamie Yoder

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I might just add that, frequently, it is difficult to go back to boring high school. So I hope you are all able to acclimate yourselves to the real world again and always remember your experience here in the greatest deliberative body in the world.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 252; that the nomination be confirmed; that the motion 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 nomination be printed in the Record; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate resume legislative session.

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

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

The following named officer for appointment as Commandant of the Marine Corps and appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601 and 8043: To be General

Lt. Gen. David H. Berger