

The Affordable Care Act is not affordable; it is unaffordable. For Americans it has a \$2 trillion cost over the next 10 years. It is a disaster in terms of how it has been implemented. It is going to be a disaster in terms of quality care and delayed care because of the increased deductibles that almost everybody is facing. We shouldn't let it be a disaster in terms of destroying businesses.

We ought to embrace this family and their business for what they have done. They have taken advantage of the American enterprise system in a way that has built tremendous success, that has benefited not just the Green family but hundreds of thousands of people through their generosity, and their capability to empower people to get ahead.

I am glad to see my colleague, and I yield the floor.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I would ask for an additional 5 minutes for the Senator from New Hampshire.

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

Ms. AYOTTE. Thank you, Madam President.

I come to the floor today to talk about a very important case that the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments on this morning that goes to the very core of our Nation's foundation—the future of religious freedom in the United States.

As Americans we cherish our religious liberty. It lies at the heart of who we are as a people, and we know we must always guard against threats to our religious freedom enshrined in the First Amendment of the Constitution. That is why I am joining my colleagues Senator BLUNT and Senator COBURN on the floor today and speaking in support of the constitutional rights that all Americans have under the First Amendment, which guarantees the right of freedom of conscience and religious liberty.

Here is what is at stake. Americans should not be forced to give up their religious freedom or their rights of conscience simply because they want to open a family business. American families should not be forced into choosing between their family business and complying with unlawful government mandates that infringe on the First Amendment to the Constitution, and that is why this case, which is being heard today by our Supreme Court, is so important to the American people.

A provision of President Obama's health care law includes a mandate that threatens penalties on private organizations unless they involuntarily agree to violate their deeply held religious beliefs. This is anathema to the First Amendment to our Constitution. If religious institutions and faith-based organizations are forced to comply with government mandates that violate the core principles of their faith, that is a violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution, and it is contrary to what we stand for as Americans.

I have heard from people in my State who are deeply concerned about this mandate and the issue that is being considered by the Supreme Court today. They are simply asking to have the same conscience rights they had before the President's health care law was passed—the same conscience rights that are enshrined in our Constitution that protect all Americans regardless of what our faith is and regardless of our background.

This is a fundamental matter of religious freedom and the proper role of our government. It is about who we are as Americans. If the government, through mandates, can take away our conscience rights, what does that say about other rights we have under our Constitution?

This debate comes down to the legacy left behind by our Founding Fathers and over 200 years of American history. We have a choice between being responsible stewards of this legacy or allowing the Federal Government to interfere with religious life in an unprecedented way.

Protecting religious freedom and conscience rights in the past has been a bipartisan issue. Congress has a long history of protecting religious liberty. I heard my colleague talk about the Religious Freedom Restoration Act that was signed into law by President Clinton to ensure that the government should be held to a very high level of proof before it interferes with someone's free exercise of religion. That is what is at stake in the Supreme Court decision and the mandates that are being rendered by the health care law against private companies such as Hobby Lobby and others.

This is what is at stake: Under the President's health care law, companies such as Hobby Lobby and Conestoga—and we are proud to have a Hobby Lobby in the State of New Hampshire—that want to help and provide health care coverage for their employees could be forced to pay over \$36,000 per employee unless they provide drugs and devices that violate their religious beliefs and conscience rights. Why should they be forced into this position? If the Federal Government is able to violate the First Amendment in this way, what is to stop other fundamental rights from being violated?

Protecting religious freedom was once an issue that bound Americans together. I believe this effort, which is so fundamental to our national character, must bring us together once more.

I look forward to seeing the Supreme Court's decision on this issue, but this is a case that never should have been filed. The Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare, should have never violated the rights of conscience of these companies or of religious organizations, and it is time to turn this around. I look forward to the Supreme Court vindicating their rights under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which should have been respected by this administration, but that is why we

have a Supreme Court. I look forward to the Supreme Court decision, which I hope will uphold the First Amendment rights of the parties to this litigation and to all Americans.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:35 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION FLEXIBILITY ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate has received H.R. 4275, the text of which is identical to S. 1302. The Senate will proceed to consideration of the measure, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4275) to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, H.R. 4275 is read a third time and passed.

SUPPORT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY, INTEGRITY, DEMOCRACY, AND ECONOMIC STABILITY OF UKRAINE—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask to speak as in morning business.

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

WASHINGTON LANDSLIDE

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I wish to take a moment to address an issue that has really been on the hearts and minds of those back home in my home State of Washington.

On Saturday, as I am sure many of my colleagues heard, the town of Oso, WA—a small, tightly knit town alongside the Stillaguamish River—was directly hit by a massive landslide. That landslide cut off the town of Darrington, which is just a few miles down State Road 530. Houses over a square mile were simply swept away. We already know we have lost several people, and yesterday we learned there could be well more than 100 who are still missing. So right now in Washington State there are dozens of families who simply don't know if their loved ones are even still alive.

Even though Oso and Darrington are 2,300 miles away from the Nation's Capital, our hearts and prayers are with them and their families. I want them to know that in the coming days and weeks and months—and even years, if that is what it takes—all of us will stand with the people of Oso and