

Since her diagnosis, Meghan has gathered her friends and family to participate in Walk MS every May. There is one in my hometown of Springfield, IL. They have raised over \$50,000—Meghan has—to help fight the disease. Meghan said:

I walk to give hope to others who are newly diagnosed with MS. It wasn't easy to hear those words and I think by walking I can help others find ways to be positive about their diagnosis.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society has been sponsoring Walk MS since 1988 and they have raised \$870 million to support research. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society and people such as Meghan are doing their part, but if the Federal Government is going to do something it has to do its part. We have to make an investment at the National Institutes of Health to complement the efforts by private citizens and generous people across America to fund research in these diseases.

Let me give an example. Jonah Chan and his team at the University of California in San Francisco can teach us a lesson. Dr. Chan's team invented a new technology that led to the discovery of a drug normally used for allergies that has the potential to repair the nervous system in people with MS, but this important discovery needs further Federal investment in biomedical research to move these early findings to promising treatments. Here is what I have done. I have introduced the American Cures Act. It will increase funding at the Nation's top four biomedical research agencies, a 5-percent annual budget increase over and above inflation—the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, the Department of Defense, and the Veterans' Administration medical research programs. The American Cures Act will make funding for critical biomedical research projects less political and more predictable.

Dr. Collins at NIH told me: If you gave us regular funding increases of 5 percent real growth a year for 10 years, I will prove to you that investment will come back tenfold in helping the improvement of health in the United States and reducing the cost of health care. I believe him. I have confidence in him. So why would we not do it? We should be making this commitment.

Cystic fibrosis is another example of federally funded basic research that improves people's lives. The other day Patrick Magner, a sophomore at Loyola Academy in Wilmette, IL, wrote to me about his two young brothers. John is 12 years old, a fully functioning sixth grader, and Matthew is 9 years old and plays sports in school. On the outside, one would never know they are dealing with cystic fibrosis.

John and Matt both take about 30 pills a day to help with their basic digestive functions. This doesn't include several other prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, and daily therapy. They consider themselves lucky because 50 years ago people with cystic fibrosis

didn't live long enough to even attend school. Today, with more advanced treatment, life expectancy for people with cystic fibrosis has increased over 800 percent. Research generated by NIH funding continues to give John and Matt hope for their future.

Their older brother Patrick wrote:

Without this funding, my two younger brothers might not be alive today. This funding is crucial to not only curing cystic fibrosis, but other diseases as well.

That is the promise of the American Cures Act. It allows America's smartest medical researchers to continue to find treatments to stop progression and one day, God willing, find a cure for diseases such as MS, cystic fibrosis, and many more.

Last week I joined Senator BOB CASEY of Pennsylvania on his resolution to support Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Senators WYDEN, HATCH, BROWN, MARKEY, and others on behalf of fighting this terrible disease. Together, along with the American Cures Act, these efforts are improving people's lives.

In order to lead to breakthrough cures for these diseases, we need as a nation—as a government—to take the lead. This research shouldn't be a low-budget priority; I think it should be one of the highest.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make Federal funding for biomedical research the true national priority which it is.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Washington.

KING V. BURWELL

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words about the oral arguments in King v. Burwell that took place last week. Similar to many of us on the floor today, I was here when we fought to get the Affordable Care Act passed. I know firsthand our top priority was to help all Americans get more affordable health care coverage. That goal is clear in the history and in the text of this law. I am confident the Supreme Court will reach the same conclusion; that no matter how the health care exchange is set up in any State, if people qualify for tax credits, people should get them just as Congress intended. Unfortunately, many of our Republican colleagues appear to be hoping for the opposite outcome.

I wish to take a step back to note how appalling this particular situation is. Right now Republicans seem to be rooting for a ruling that would take away millions of Americans' health care coverage. They seem to want a ruling that would put their own constituents' health at risk, and that amounts to a tax increase on 6.5 million people of about \$3,200 a year.

Working families should not have to pay the price for Republican political games, including this Supreme Court

case that they pushed for. If I were a mother who no longer has to worry about what happens if my child breaks an ankle or a struggling worker who now has a little bit more to spend on groceries because their health care insurance no longer costs so much, I would have a lot of tough questions for Republicans right now. I would wonder why on Earth Republicans are so focused on taking apart a law that is helping families get quality, affordable health insurance.

The Affordable Care Act was a critical step forward in terms of making sure our health care system puts patients and families first. Over 10 million Americans have gained coverage in the last 2 years. In fact, today the uninsured rate is at a near-historic low. Health care coverage is more affordable for families across the country, and we are seeing important improvements in the quality of care patients are getting.

We have a lot more work to do to strengthen our health care system, but there is no question that this law is doing what we set out to do: expand access to affordable health care for all—Americans. Democrats want to build on this progress.

So while we see Republicans putting politics first ahead of families' needs, Democrats are going to be focused on building on the Affordable Care Act with more coverage, not less; more affordability, not less; and better quality, not less.

We know the work to put patients first didn't end when the Affordable Care Act passed. That is why we are going to keep working to move our health care system forward, not backward, for our families.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, last month I came to the floor to launch what I call the "Waste of the Week." We look at how we spend the taxpayers' dollars. We all know the biggest issue over the past several years is now sort of fading into the ether is the fact that the government continues to spend the taxpayers' money in reckless ways, including not balance our budget and go deeply into deficit spending every year, then borrow to cover the cost, and increase our debt limit from the staggering \$18 trillion-plus and growing. My purpose in coming to the floor was to highlight some examples of this waste.

I wish to step back for a moment to say this follows numerous bipartisan efforts to deal with a larger issue, and that is our debt and deficit, in a way that we can put a budget proposal together to get us out of this mess and stop loading up our children and grandchildren with the responsibilities and costs they probably will not be able to repay without significant sacrifice in terms of their standard of living.