

JOINT MEETING OF THE TWO HOUSES—ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:33 a.m., took a recess subject to the call of the Chair, and the Senate, preceded by the Secretary of the Senate, Julie E. Adams; the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, James Morhard; and the Vice President of the United States, JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr., proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear an address delivered by His Excellency Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan.

(The address delivered by the Prime Minister of Japan to the joint meeting of the two Houses of Congress is printed in the Proceedings of the House of Representatives in today's RECORD.)

At 12:16 p.m., the Senate, having returned to its Chamber, reassembled and was called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SASSE).

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1191, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1191) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1140, in the nature of a substitute.

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1179 (to amendment No. 1140), to require submission of all Persian text included in the agreement.

Blunt amendment No. 1155 (to amendment No. 1140), to extend the requirement for annual Department of Defense reports on the military power of Iran.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today because I noticed that the minority leader, the Senator from Nevada, had some nice

things to say about me on Monday in his remarks. He said that I was "relentless" in my "condemnation of ObamaCare." Those are his words. I appreciate the minority leader's kind remarks, because he is right. As a doctor, I am relentless in my condemnation of the President's health care law, a law that has done incredible harm to so many people all across this country.

Minority Leader REID also said that he had the facts about the law. Most of those facts seemed to come from a New York Times opinion column by the renowned liberal icon Paul Krugman.

So let me share some real facts with the minority leader. The insurance plans offered in the health care exchanges are so expensive that they are a horrible deal for most Americans. That is why the President had to give out subsidies—to help hide the costs. The Congressional Budget Office said that Washington will spend \$850 billion on those subsidies over the next decade. That is a fact.

According to a new study by the health research company Avalere, ObamaCare plans are extremely unpopular among people who don't get the huge subsidies to buy the plan. Only 2 percent of the people who don't qualify for subsidies have actually bought insurance through the exchanges. That is a fact. It is an alarming sign of how high the cost of ObamaCare really is.

It is not just the premiums that are sky high. This year, the average deductible for ObamaCare's silver plan is almost \$3,000 for a single person and more than \$6,000 for a family. Now, that is according to something called HealthPocket, which is a Web site that helps people actually compare insurance plans. That is a fact, and \$6,000 is a lot of money for a hard-working family to pay for their deductible.

Now, the minority leader said that Paul Krugman's opinions should be treated like facts—not as facts but like facts—because as Senator REID said, "this isn't some high school teacher talking about the merits of ObamaCare." Well, I agree on that point. High school teachers are far more likely to have had actual experience with the damage that is done by the ObamaCare health care law than has this New York Times columnist.

That is what we learned from a report at KMOX TV in St. Louis on April 23. Their report talked about the Parkway School District in Missouri. It was Senator REID who said this isn't some high school teacher. Well, this report from St. Louis said ObamaCare is forcing the school district to outsource the employment of substitute teachers. Why would they want to do that? It is in the face of a \$4 million penalty for not offering health insurance to the part-time teachers. That is a fact. And those substitute teachers are real people who are being hurt by President Obama's health care law.

Here is another fact reported by Politico on Monday afternoon. This was

their headline on April 27: "Study: ACA exchange enrollees take tax hit."

According to a new study by the tax preparers at H&R Block, almost two-thirds of people enrolled in ObamaCare exchanges had to pay back some of their subsidy with their taxes this month. The average amount people owed the IRS was \$729. That is a fact. It is a big hit to a lot of families who thought they were going to get help to pay for their ObamaCare premiums. It does not even count the people who decided that the insurance was just too expensive and decided not to buy it. According to H&R Block, those people paid the IRS an average tax penalty of \$178. That is a fact. It is only going to be higher next year when people sit down and fill out their taxes.

I remember another speech Senator REID gave on the floor on ObamaCare. On February 26, 2014, he said: "Despite all that good news, there's plenty of horror stories being told." "All of them are untrue."

That was Senator REID a year ago.

Republicans had been citing—this is Senator REID—examples of people being harmed by ObamaCare, and Senator REID said that all of them were "stories made up from whole cloth."

Well, here is a horror story from the minority leader's home State newspaper—Nevada—very recently. This was an article from earlier this month, the Las Vegas Review-Journal, April 7. The headline was "Past state ObamaCare sign-up glitches now haunt Nevadans at tax time."

Here is what the article says:

How did a Reno collections agent end up in collections himself?

The answer:

He bought coverage in 2014 through the state's health insurance exchange.

According to the article:

Rick Furst is still ironing out wrinkles in a plan purchased in May through the Nevada Health Link and its contractor, Xerox. His cascade of issues has included bad coverage dates, unpaid medical bills and an incorrect tax-credit form.

This man told the Las Vegas newspaper, "My credit was excellent, and now my credit is shot." His credit was excellent, and now his credit is shot. Does Senator REID think this man from his home State of Nevada made up his story out of whole cloth?

People are having their lives turned upside down by the disgraceful failure of these ObamaCare exchanges. That is a fact. It is a cruel and costly side effect of this terrible health care law. Paul Krugman of the New York Times did not talk about that fact in his opinion column in the New York Times the other day.

Another thing he and the minority leader are not talking about is the fact that many Americans now have less access to actual care because of the health care law. Well, they should have known about that fact; it was reported right there in the New York Times itself on Sunday, February 8, 2015, with the headline "Insured, but not covered." "New policies have . . . many