Democrats who might otherwise support their leadership's unprecedented filibuster of a veto-override motion.

I am urging every Democrat who still believes their party should be about workers, not deep-pocketed special interests and extremists, to join us. Vote for cloture. Vote to override. Keystone's bipartisan coalition in the Senate is only a few votes shy of the two-thirds majority we would need to override this partisan veto and bring Keystone's jobs here to America. And it is not too late to stop your party from venturing down a path even further afield from the interests of American workers and the middle class. So join us. Together, let's support Keystone's American jobs and infrastructure.

KING V. BURWELL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, across the street the Supreme Court will hear arguments today in an important case. King v. Burwell is the latest reminder of a law that is as unwieldy as it is unworkable—ObamaCare.

ObamaCare has been one rolling disaster after another for middle-class Americans. First, it attacked seniors by raiding Medicare to finance more government spending. Then it canceled health plans for many who had been told they would be able to keep the plans they liked. And who could forget the Web site debacle? The hits have kept on coming ever since—fewer choices, higher costs, increased tax burdens borne by the middle class, and even more headaches at tax time. In fact, we now know that the Obama administration sent inaccurate ObamaCare tax information to nearly 1 million people. America's middle class deserves a lot better than the hurt of ObamaCare.

We have heard a lot of predictions about what might happen if the Court finds for the plaintiffs in this case, but we have also seen Republican ideas about how to help Americans who may be harmed again by ObamaCare's broken promises. For instance, Republicans think it is better to give Americans and States the freedom to choose what is right for them rather than trying to impose costly mandates from Washington such as ObamaCare.

Regardless of how the Supreme Court rules, I look forward to continuing to work with my Republican colleagues because while ObamaCare is a law that is all about higher costs and broken promises, Republicans think health care should be about helping middle-class Americans instead.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

Mr. REID. Mr. President, most of the issues that come before this body are complex and nuanced. Rarely are we faced with simple issues. But today we have a very simple, clear-cut issue before us. It is as straightforward and clear-cut as any one question could be. Do you support American workers or do you not support American workers?

Under our law, workers have the right to unionize and have their voices heard in the workplace. Through elections, workers choose for themselves whether to form a union.

Last year the National Labor Relations Board took important steps to modernize and streamline union election procedures—commonsense, simple advancements. Rule changes are good for workers and good for businesses.

This whole fight isn't about business versus workers. We would have to search long and hard to find a business that opposes what the NLRB did. It is all the anti-union rhetoric of the Republicans here in the Senate.

The reform that the NLRB pushed forward allows employers and unions to file forms electronically—kind of the modern world in which we all live. It also allows communications with workers by email and cell phone—pretty reasonable, it sounds like to me. Yet today Senate Republicans are trying to roll back rule changes instituted by the NLRB.

Later this afternoon we will vote on a resolution of disapproval to undo these commonsense reforms. Republicans think they are striking a blow against labor unions with votes like today's, but what they are really doing is undermining American families.

American workers and their families have come to rely on many of the benefits provided by collective bargaining: higher wages, safe working conditions, decent health care. It is no surprise that some of the most prosperous times in American history—namely, the middle 20th century—came about in times of record union membership. Even today in my home State of Nevada, unions protect wages for casino employees on the Las Vegas Strip, up at Lake Tahoe, and all over the State. We ensure through the unions safe working conditions—certainly for miners in Elko and around the State—and also, with rare exception, quality health coverage for educators statewide.

So I want to be very clear. This is about whom the Republicans really are attacking, and it is the middle class. Each time Republicans throw roadblocks for workers to organize, they are weakening the middle class.

I support American families. I support American workers. I support the middle class. Senate Democrats support the middle class. We do not support this Republican attack on unions. We will vigorously fight any attempt to weaken worker protections, including today's resolution vote.

OBAMACARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I will briefly comment on my friend the Republican leader further trying to come to the floor once again to try to minimize the disastrous attacks on ObamaCare.

The House has voted 57 times to repeal that law. Each time, the result is the same. As Albert Einstein said, the definition of insanity is someone who does something over and over again and gets the same results. So it is insane what they have done in the House, and it is really insane what they are trying to do here in the Senate.

There is no question about the case before the U.S. Supreme Court. The language is clear. Almost 10 million people will lose health insurance. And we have seen in the press the last few days that very terrible things would happen to families if they lost their health care. What my friend the Republican leader is talking about doing is turning it back to the insurance industry. If you had a preexisting disability, no insurance. They set arbitrary limits as to how much they would pay. It was a time of dread for families who were trying to insure their boys and girls, mothers and fathers.

So I hope the Supreme Court will listen to the will of the American people and the will of the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives which passed this law. We all knew the intent of Congress. We still do. The law is very clear, and the Supreme Court should follow the law.

Mr. President, will the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S.J. Res. 8, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 8) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be 2 hours of debate remaining, equally divided in the usual form.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum, and I ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided between the minority and the majority.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the median time today between when a union files an organizing petition and when employees vote on whether to unionize is 38 days, or just slightly over one month. Some 95 percent of all organizing elections take place less than 2 months after the date an organizing petition is filed, and approximately 70 percent of these elections are won by unions. All in all, I think anyone would agree that unions are doing pretty well and that this is a pretty fair process.

In fact, the current median time between union organizing petitions and union elections surpasses the goal set by the National Labor Relations Board itself. One would think it would be a classic case of ''if it ain't broke, don't fix it.''

Apparently the Obama nominees on the National Labor Relations Board don't agree. They proposed a new rule which will go into effect next month and that will drastically shorten the time between the initial organizing union petition and the union elections to anywhere from 11 to 22 days.

While the current situation, if anything, gives an advantage to unions, it also provides adequate time for employers to express any concerns and for employees to hear the pros and cons of the union proposal. The new NLRB rule would remove these protections.

Businesses would have to respond to the union organizing petition within 7 days of its being filed, which would leave employers scrambling to research any arguments they want to bring up at the union organizing hearing. Small businesses, which frequently lack experience dealing with unions or in-house counsel to provide advice, would be hit particularly hard by this rule.

But it is not just businesses that would suffer. Under the new rule employees would have very little chance to research and consider the benefits and drawbacks of joining a union. They would be forced into a hasty decision with little opportunity to change their minds later on.

In addition, the rule also presents substantial privacy concerns for employees. Under the current system, employers already have to give unions employees' names and home addresses. The new rule would expand that disclosure requirement to include employees' cell phone numbers, email addresses, work schedules, and shift locations. Worse, the rule contains no additional requirements for safeguarding that information or disposing of it appropriately. Given the ever-growing concerns about privacy, it is astonishing that any employer would be forced to give up so much sensitive information without the explicit permission of his employees.

This new rule is unfair to employers and it is unfair to workers. There is a reason it is called the ambush elections rule. It would ambush employers and employees alike. Unions would have unlimited time to organize, while employers would be given almost no time to present their concerns and exercise their free speech and due process rights. Employees would be pushed into making the long-term decision about whether to join a union without all the facts.

Government should not be in the business of tilting the playing field in favor of unions at the expense of workers and businesses. The NLRB'S ambush elections rule is unfair and undemocratic. I hope Congress will pass the joint resolution of disapproval we are considering today, and I hope the President will sign it. The rights of American workers and businesses should not be sacrificed to the demands of unions.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I come to the floor to support S.J. Res. 8. I thank my friend and colleague from Tennessee for bringing the resolution to the floor to disapprove the rule that the National Labor Relations Board has proposed that basically creates what are commonly referred to as ambush elections for votes to create labor unions in workplaces.

The concerns I have with this NLRB mandate is that it is another draconian example of what I consider to be the hyperpartisan business and labor environment the National Labor Relations Board has created over the last several years. The NLRB is advancing a pro-union agenda nationwide in the guise of government policy. The NLRB's proposed policy is simply not necessary, particularly in light of the fact that some 70 percent of union organizing elections already succeed under the NLRB's current policy. Clearly the pro-union majority of the National Labor Relations Board is not satisfied with unions winning 70 percent of the time. They now want to run up the score so the unions win 100 percent of the time.

Many people, when they think about labor unions and organizing, think about big business, but I am here to talk about the negative effect this proposal will have on small businesses. A 50-employee operation or a 250-employee operation, is a business that does not have the legal, financial, or administrative resources that a big business has to be able to react in the short timeframe the NLRB wants to mandate.

Today the median time for holding elections on labor union organizing petitions is about 38 days. This rule would bring that down to just 8 days before an election would be required to be held. This would make it virtually impossible for the vast majority of America's small businesses to respond to the unionization effort and many of the employees themselves who may not want to be unionized would be swept aside by the compressed timeframe as well.

We have several examples of this in North Carolina, but rather than get into a lot of details, I will just explain why this new ambush election rule is not needed.

The petitions to unionize workplaces are already handled expeditiously. As I said, the average or median time for holding a vote is now 38 days. And again, the success rate for the unions is 70 percent. Let me say that again, 70 percent of the elections that are held under the NLRB's current rules result in employees being unionized.

By turning elections into this sort of ambush will put small businesses at a severe disadvantage against the powerful unions targeting them. For instance, take one small trucking company down in Greensboro, NC, that would suffer serious economic consequences if this rule goes into effect. Guy M. Turner, Inc. was founded by two brothers in 1924 and 90 years later it is still a family owned business employing less than 250 people, clearly it is not a mega-corporation. Yet, if the NLRB imposes this new rule, this family business will have: little time to obtain competent counsel to counter union targeting of the company, little time to answer questions, marshal facts, or prepare arguments to share with their employees regarding the potential consequences and effects of unionization.

And if that were not bad enough, under the NLRB's new proposal, employers would also be prohibited from expressing any views regarding the unionization effort—thus essentially eliminating the employer's right to free speech regarding the potential adverse effects of unionization on the workplace and the company's future viability. However, the NLRB's new rule would impose no such restrictions on a big union's right to speak in favor of unionization or the future benefits they promise it will deliver.

A little common sense and a hard look at reality clearly demonstrates that the regulations enforced today are working not only effectively, but in favor of large unions most of the time. I hope Senators will support Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee chairman LAMAR ALEXANDER, and the thousands of businesses and hundreds of thousands of employees, who oppose this regulation because it is an unnecessary and ill-advised effort to tilt the playing field in the workplace totally in favor of the large labor unions and their efforts to unionize the American workplace.

I ask unanimous consent that the time for the quorum call be equally divided.

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

Mr. TILLIS. 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.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, what is the pending order for the morning?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is on S.J. Res. 8 with divided time.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Chair.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, this morning I rise, along with the women of the Senate, to speak about the issue of human trafficking.

We are 4 days from International Women's Day, and all of the women of the Senate have taken up the issue of human trafficking. Many of us wish to speak about it today. We are all working on it. Many have been leaders on this issue. My colleagues will see Republican and Democratic women coming to the floor.

As the senior woman and senior Democratic woman, I have convened over the years a dinner among the women of the Senate. The purpose of the dinner was to create a zone of civility, to create camaraderie, as well as to see where we could work across the aisle to focus on a particular issue.

The women of the Senate do not have a caucus. There is no lockstep. We discuss our different views on budgets and bottom lines and other issues. We discuss questions such as, What is the best way to approach the deficit? What are all of the deficits in our country we are facing, not only the fiscal deficit, but the deficit in research and development, and other deficits?

At one of our dinners we said, What is it that we want to work on together in this particular Congress? What is the issue that brings us all together across party lines that would have an impact on what we do at home, what would have an impact in our global community, and what would have an impact particularly on women and children, girls and boys, around the world? That is what we decided we wanted to work on—the despicable, vile issue of human trafficking. Human trafficking. That means a whole organized network and networks to buy and sell human beings as if they are a commodity, to buy and sell girls and to buy and sell little boys for the whole purpose of sexual exploitation.

This is an enormous issue. Many of our colleagues in the Senate have been working on authorizing legislation, and a great deal of it is pending in the Judiciary Committee. We have joined together and asked the Judiciary Committee to hold a hearing on the major trafficking bills, and we thank Chairman GRASSLEY and Ranking Member LEAHY for holding the hearing, as well as for joining with us in moving legislation.

This is not just a woman's issue; this is a human rights issue. So we have a Klobuchar-Cornyn bill. We have a Collins-Leahy effort. We are all working on this together. But it is we, the women of the Senate, who continue to be a force to make sure we will focus on it within our own government and around the world. We will be looking at what are the most significant efforts we can take.

The numbers are startling and discouraging. Twenty-one million people are trafficked globally every year—21 million people. It is the third largest global crime—right up there with the selling of weapons of mass destruction, and right up there with selling drugs, and drug cartels. In fact, in many instances, it is the same organized crime network. If someone is willing to sell a person and treat them as a commodity, they are willing to sell drugs, they are willing to sell guns, they are willing to sell nuclear fissionable material. They are willing to do anything.

This isn't just about recruiting girls in Asia or girls and women in Central Europe; this is in our own country, where 800,000 people are trafficked each year.

When I met with my FBI agents in Maryland and the U.S. Attorney's Office to discuss this issue, they told me that the I–95 corridor is a corridor for violence and trafficking and that we are a hotspot for trafficking activities, because we have a seaport, we have a major interstate highway, and we have big sporting events. Can my colleagues imagine such activity at sporting events such as the big games? The playoffs that we so enjoy in Baltimore are also part of trafficking.

But we know our local law enforcement and our FBI are on the job. We have programs such as Operation Cross Country. Last year, the FBI helped recover close to 170 children who had been forced into prostitution, with simultaneous raids, and they put 281 pimps in jail.

We are going to take the first step. There are many bills pending where the women of the Senate have really thought about this, worked on this, taken leadership on this, and they will talk about their various legislative initiatives.

As the chair of the Appropriations Committee, I wanted to look at not only the great work my colleagues were doing in authorizing, but what we could do now for the money. Last year, in the 2015 omnibus, with the full concurrence of then-Vice Chairman SHELBY—a really strong advocate on this issue—and then across the aisle with HAL ROGERS in the House, we put $42 million in the Justice Department to make sure we were fighting trafficking. We included a $28 million increase for programs that provide grants that are lifesaving, as well as life-rescuing services to victims. These funds were to ensure that law enforcement could enforce the law and make sure victims had emergency shelters and counseling, supporting a true rescue mission.

We also made sure the FBI had additional resources to find those criminals and bring them to justice, and to focus on efforts such as a program called ''Innocence Lost'' that focuses on the trafficking of children. We funded human trafficking prosecution by adding more money for civil rights attorneys to identify the large trafficking rings to do it.

I don't want to sound like an accountant; I want to sound like one of the women of the Senate who thinks about these women who have been recruited around the world and the children who are being nabbed and grabbed, and the exploitation of lost children, sometimes runaway youths.

We want to say to them that our Federal dollars are working hard, and we are going to look at how authorizers and appropriators really work together. We want to pass some of this new, fresh thinking on how to attack and deal with this problem. We are going to look at the Appropriations Committee across all subcommittees to see what we can do.

The women of the Senate are going to be a voice and a vote on this, and we know we have good men of the Senate who also work with us and support us. So working shoulder to shoulder, we can do something to make it safer for our communities and have a big impact around the world. We will do it because we took the time to listen to each other and figure out ways we can work together. Let's get it done, and let's get it done now.

I would now like to yield time for someone who has been a real leader on this issue, and a member of the Committee on the Judiciary, who has brought some new, fresh thinking and fresh approaches but also has been wise and prudent for her taxpayers and, I might also add, a former attorney general in the State of Minnesota. She is a great warrior, and she has made sure that she has some new ideas. Senator KLOBUCHAR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge Senator MIKULSKI and her leadership. Anyone who wondered how hard she was going to keep working after she announced she wasn't running again for the next year—I think we just saw the answer right here. She hasn't slowed down one bit. She is already here advocating for some incredibly important bills, and I am also glad to see that Senator SHAHEEN and Senator HIRONO are here. They are going to speak shortly.

Given I have been able to talk about this at length on the Committee on the Judiciary, I will be brief and say this:

I have an important bill with Senator CORNYN, and it is a bill, a version of which has already passed the House, a bipartisan bill, the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act. Also, Senator CORNYN has a bill with me and a number of other people called the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. My bill passed through the Committee on the Judiciary last week after the hearing that Senator MIKULSKI referred to, 20–0, on a vote. And Senator CORNYN's bill, which I have also cosponsored, passed on a near-unanimous vote. Senator LEAHY and Senator COLLINS, as was mentioned by Senator MIKULSKI, have an important bill—the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act. We are hopeful we can get these done, along with what Senator FEINSTEIN is doing, and many others, in the coming days on the Senate floor.

I think the first message here is this is bipartisan. I don't think any sex trafficker wants to hear we are doing some tougher stuff to go after them, but we are. It is very important that this be bipartisan.

I give you one example of a case charged last week out of Minnesota. A 12-year-old girl—not even old enough to get a driver's license, not even old enough to go to her first prom—gets a text. She goes to a parking lot at McDonald's. She thinks there is a party. A guy puts her in a car and drives her to Rochester, MN—the Twin Cities—rapes her and then takes pictures of her and puts it on Craigslist. The next day two other men buy her off of Craigslist and rape her.

That happened in Minnesota. That is happening all over the country, where 83 percent of the victims are not from other countries, 83 percent of the victims are from our own country. This is the third biggest criminal enterprise—international criminal enterprise—in the world. Only after illegal drugs and illegal guns comes selling young girls and young boys for sex. This is going on in the oil patch in North Dakota. It is going on in the city streets in Baltimore. It is going on in small towns in Minnesota. That is what we are seeing happening across our country.

I appreciate all the support of my Democratic and Republican colleagues. What this bill does that we passed 20–0 out of the Committee on the Judiciary—the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act—is it takes this model that has been really successful in Minnesota. We just got a 40-year sentence last year against someone running a ring who basically says, are you going to prosecute the 12-year-old? No. That 12-year-old is a victim.

When you start thinking like that and you start thinking of these victims as actual victims, then you give them services. Then they turn their lives around, and then they testify against the guys who are running these rings. That is how you make the cases. If you prosecute them, my guess is they are going to go right back to that pimp who brought them into this world in the first place.

That is why this has been adopted already in 15 States, and 12 States are looking at it. What our bill does is simply takes an existing grant program and creates incentives so that other States will adopt this as well.

We also have the ability for these victims to access programs that help people get jobs.

Finally, the national sex trafficking strategy. We do not have one in this country. That is in this bill as well. You can see why it got widespread support.

I am excited about these bills because finally we are working on something together. I would like to get them done as soon as possible. There are a lot of bills that have passed in the House. We are going to have to coordinate all these efforts, as Senator MIKULSKI said. But this is the moment in time where we can finally say not just to the rest of the world but to girls in our own country that we are going to stand up for them and we are going to stand up against these people running the rings.

Why has this gotten worse in the last few years? We love the Internet, but people are advertising on the Internet. They are getting away with it, and we have to make sure we are sophisticated, more sophisticated than the perpetrators who are committing these crimes.

I see that our great Senator from New Hampshire, Mrs. SHAHEEN, is here.

I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Will the Senator from New Hampshire yield for 1 minute?

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I will.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I want to say this is not a Democratic women's issue. We are in this on a bipartisan basis. I want to note that the Democratic women are here because the Republican women are chairing committees and subcommittees. I know the Senator from New Hampshire, Ms. AYOTTE, will be on the floor shortly. The distinguished Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, is at a very important Navy appropriations committee hearing. So when my colleagues see us, don't assume it is just Democratic women. It is all of us together. But their responsibility has them at another duty station right this minute. I wanted to explain where we are.

I yield the floor back to Senator SHAHEEN of New Hampshire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I wish to echo what my colleagues Senator MIKULSKI and Senator KLOBUCHAR have said about this being a bipartisan issue. This is an issue that affects everybody in this country—Republicans, Democrats, Independents. It is a critical issue for the Senate. It is a critical issue for the House. It is a critical issue for State legislatures across the country.

I am so pleased to be able to join my colleagues and thank Senator MIKULSKI for her leadership for such a long time on this issue and so many others, and commend Senator KLOBUCHAR for everything she is doing to address this issue. I am so pleased to join Senator HIRONO as well this morning, and look forward to seeing my colleague from New Hampshire coming to the floor shortly.

This Sunday, March 8, nations across the globe will observe International Women's Day. It is an annual occasion to celebrate the achievements of women across the globe. But it also recognizes the obstacles that still stand in the way of equal rights and opportunities for women. Over the last century, women have fought for equal rights and opportunities, and we made enormous advances in much of the world. Humanity has learned that women's rights are human rights, and those rights include being respected as full and equal partners in all aspects of the economy and society. We have learned that when women succeed, families succeed, communities succeed, and nations succeed.

However, as my colleagues have pointed out so eloquently, across the globe countless millions of women continue to face not only the denial of basic human and civil rights, but outright violence and bondage. We would like to think of slavery as a thing of the past, particularly here in America. But the tragic reality is that this scourge continues to thrive in the 21st century. We are here this morning to shine a spotlight on the modern slave trade and to encourage all of our colleagues here in the Senate to work with us to end it.

An estimated 27 million people are trapped in the multibillion dollar marketplace that trafficks in slaves. Victims include forced migrant laborers, bonded laborers, and sex slaves, including women forced into marriages as de facto slaves. Tragically, as we have heard, children account for the majority of modern slaves, many of them trafficked and sexually exploited.

Let's be clear. As Senators KLOBUCHAR and MIKULSKI pointed out, modern-day slavery is not confined to impoverished and backward countries. I was recently briefed on a human trafficking case investigated in my home State of New Hampshire. This case involved forced prostitution. Fortunately, three arrests have already been made. The investigation is still ongoing, so I can't talk about the specifics of the case, but fortunately several of the victims have been rescued.

I want to state the obvious and point out what Senator KLOBUCHAR also pointed out: If modern slavery can exist in communities in New Hampshire, in Minnesota, in Maryland, it can exist anywhere in the world.

I am proud the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, led by Chairman CORKER and our Ranking Member MENENDEZ, is spearheading new legislation which I have cosponsored to fight the modern slave trade on a global

scale. Our bill is titled the Ending Modern Slavery Initiative Act of 2015, and it was unanimously reported out of committee last week.

It would authorize the creation of a nonprofit foundation to be known as the End Modern Slavery Initiative Foundation. This new foundation would fund projects to rescue victims of modern slavery and to prevent individuals from being victimized by slavery. In addition, it would pursue the strict enforcement of laws to punish individual and corporate perpetrators of modern slavery.

I want to again commend the work of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary under the leadership of Chairman GRASSLEY and Ranking Member LEAHY, as well as the work that Senator CORNYN and Senator KLOBUCHAR are doing. The Committee on the Judiciary advanced three bipartisan bills to crack down on criminals involved in human trafficking and to assist victims with the rehabilitation.

As we are talking about the prevalence of human trafficking, I think this picture of the areas of human trafficking shows while it is stronger in particular regions of the country—up the I–95 corridor—it is all over the country. The Presiding Officer's home State of Arkansas—a small state like New Hampshire—is one of those States where we see a big red hotspot for human trafficking. We see it all across the country. It is why we need to do everything we can nationally to respond to this scourge.

As we look forward this week to celebrating International Women's Day on Sunday, let us also remember the millions of women who have been left behind, who are being exploited by traffickers and trapped in modern slavery, who are desperate to have their humanity recognized and rescued. I urge all of our colleagues here in the Senate to join us in supporting legislation that will combat and hopefully ultimately end modern slavery, the scourge of human trafficking.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, we also are joined today by Senator HIRONO, who for many years served with me on the Committee on the Judiciary. She is now on the Intelligence Committee, but has been very active in this issue as a member of the Committee on the Judiciary, and we thank her for being here today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking Senator MIKULSKI for her leadership on this issue as well as on so many other important issues.

I rise today with many of my fellow women Senators from both parties in drawing awareness to the terrible crime of human trafficking, and not just drawing awareness, but to call upon all of us to take action to stop this crime.

According to the International Labour Organization, there are an estimated 21 million victims of trafficking globally, something that Senator MIKULSKI has already mentioned. That is 21 million people. That is more than the total population of 48 States, including Hawaii, who are trafficked every single year. Only Texas and California have more than 21 million people.

The most recent estimates available show that between 14,500 and 17,500 people were trafficked into the United States in 2005. That is why I am working to enhance our ability to protect human trafficking victims seeking refuge in our country. Right now, many families are torn apart at the border because current law requires adult men to be transferred to a border location hundreds of miles away from where they were intercepted.

Meanwhile, their families, who are often with them, are sent back across the border at the place where they were intercepted with no money and no idea of where their husbands or fathers were taken. The situation leaves women and children vulnerable to trafficking, sexual violence, and other dangers.

I have also sought to place independent child welfare professionals at Border Patrol stations to provide basic humanitarian assistance to unaccompanied children held in our border stations. This would ensure appropriate screening of children to identify victims of persecution or trafficking. It also would ensure that children are not held for longer than necessary in U.S. Custom and Border Protection facilities.

At the peak of our attention to the crisis of unaccompanied minors last year, nearly 50,000 children arrived at our Nation's southern border. Much of our attention in this body was paid to dealing with these children once they reached our border. These children from noncontiguous border countries not only deserve protection but are required by U.S. law to receive certain protections.

But what about the children who might not have reached the relative safety of our border stations? Who knows how many fell victim to traffickers? How many were diverted to other places with even less protection than what they might have received in the United States? Throughout the past year, we have heard stories about children and young women who never made it to the Texas border. We know that criminals have taken advantage of this crisis in Central America by enticing families and children who are looking for a way to escape extreme violence.

When I visited the Rio Grande Valley last year, I heard heartbreaking stories from advocates who all too often saw children and young women fall victim to trafficking. Advocates even saw instances where vulnerable girls were preyed upon by criminal traffickers even after they were released from U.S. Government custody. We must continue working together to protect these young people who are seeking a better life away from the violence of their country.

Domestic trafficking is also an issue. Last year I met with the Hawaii Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council and learned of their important work with police, prosecutors, and other personnel to better identify minors who have been trafficked into prostitution rings. These minors are victims. They are not criminals. Like Hawaii, other States are turning their attention to stopping domestic trafficking.

There are a number of Senate bipartisan bills on domestic trafficking, as mentioned. For example, I joined Senator KLOBUCHAR on her bill, the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act. I also joined Senator LEAHY in his Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act to better assist these vulnerable youth in receiving the services they need to return to some sense of normalcy in their lives.

We are working in both the international and domestic arenas to better address, combat, and eliminate human trafficking. This is an issue that crosses country borders. It is certainly an issue that crosses partisan lines. We can find common ground to get something meaningful done in Congress.

I see that I am joined by my colleague from North Dakota. I also saw my colleague from New Hampshire.

I yield my time for the Senator from New Hampshire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I would like to thank the Senator from Hawaii. This is such an incredibly important issue. It is an honor to see my colleague from North Dakota as well. This is a great example of an incredibly important issue that is a bipartisan issue. Unfortunately, human trafficking, sex trafficking—this is something that impacts everyone. This is something that the women of the Senate have been very focused on, but it crosses all party lines. We want to work together to end this modern day slavery. Unfortunately, the funding for this is really supporting criminal syndicates and so many other crimes. It is also supporting terrorism.

So working together, we hope to make meaningful progress to end this slavery that is happening for too many young people in this country who are vulnerable. But let's make no mistake. This happens in every single community in this country. I had the opportunity to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee last week, along with Senators MIKULSKI, COLLINS, and GILLIBRAND, regarding the importance of legislation to fight sex trafficking and ensure, most of all, that we understand that the victims of these horrific, horrific crimes need our support.

We need to ensure that we can get them back on their feet, help them get

the support they need and make sure they can lead productive lives—and hold the traffickers accountable. Those who are participating in trafficking need to understand that we are going to work together to ensure they are held fully accountable and the victims do not get blamed for these crimes.

The Judiciary Committee heard from experts who are dedicated to changing lives and helping victims. Their work is incredibly important. In my State of New Hampshire, the Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, which I had the privilege of working with as attorney general, has done some tremendous work in supporting victims and also in bringing attention to the trafficking in New Hampshire and across this country.

What we know is that sex trafficking is something that is devastating. This is something where we need to work with local, State, and Federal agencies, working together to prevent trafficking, to provide support for those who are vulnerable in the community and are often targeted, whether they are runaways or people who are homeless. But also there are people who come from communities where it is not the homeless who are targeted. Children and women and also boys are targeted for trafficking.

Last week I was encouraged to see that the Senate Judiciary Committee passed two bipartisan pieces of legislation of which I was honored to be a cosponsor: Senator CORNYN's Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act and Senator KLOBUCHAR's Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act. I am pleased to be a cosponsor. I cannot wait for these bills to come to the floor. I hope our leadership makes this a priority because this is such a strong bipartisan issue.

Also last week the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed Senator CORKER's End Modern Slavery Initiative Act, which aims to eliminate modern slavery throughout the world. It is totally unacceptable in this day and age that people are trafficked the way they are. But to mention it again, modern slavery is being used to support terrorism. It is being used to endanger the world as well. So we have to work to end it.

I also recently helped reintroduce the bipartisan Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act, which helps prevent sex trafficking. This has been a very useful program in the State of New Hampshire. I see my colleague here from North Dakota. I know she shares with me—having been an attorney general of her State—that we understand that these are horrible crimes that happen in every single community, from my home State of New Hampshire to her home State of North Dakota. We are going to work together to make sure that we can end human trafficking, that we can hold those accountable who are traffickers, and, most of all, that we can support the victims of these horrible crimes.

So with that I would like to turn the floor over for the Senator from North Dakota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from New Hampshire. I think as we begin to have this broader discussion and as we begin to explore the kind of path for other projects such as this one—whether it is domestic violence, whether it is sexual assault and changing outcomes—we know the first obstacle is awareness.

The first thing we need to do is to take these horrible issues, these dark blotches in our society out of the shadows and put them into the light and develop a plan and a strategy that will not only deal appropriately with the law enforcement component of prosecuting and finding appropriate penalties for people who engage in modern day slavery, but also it is important that we look to prevention.

So I want to first take this opportunity to thank the senior Senator from Maryland, BARBARA MIKULSKI, for not only bringing together several of the Senate women today who are coming to the floor to call for action, to stop the scourge of human trafficking but also for her long-term commitment to women and children and society's most vulnerable.

I think we all know that Senator MIKULSKI has stood tall, which for a woman of her stature is always a little tough. She has stood tall for those who have no voice in society and for those who are engaged in some of the most horrible victimizations that we can imagine, which today is the victimization of sexual human trafficking. So as the Senator from New Hampshire has talked about and as a former attorney general of North Dakota, I think I know how difficult it is to shine a light on a problem that most people do not recognize or are, unfortunately, unwilling to admit is a problem.

When we began in the 1990s to talk about a different strategy to combat violence against women and domestic violence, which was an issue that had lurked in the shadows. In fact, for many States that was an issue that was considered a public health issue, not a criminal justice issue. I, along with a number of my women colleagues who were elected attorneys general, along with this body, and most noticeably now, Vice President JOE BIDEN, began to have an ongoing discussion about the Violence Against Women Act and what we needed to do not only to protect victims but to change the dynamic.

I think that as we began to take that problem out of the shadows, as we began to address the concerns of so many women who for years—literally years—had been victimized in their home, in a place that should be the safest place for human beings, we were able to build awareness and change outcomes. There is still a lot of work to do in domestic violence. But we believe that great strides were made simply because we were willing to point the finger and shine the light and say that this is not acceptable in our society.

I see a lot of similarities in this fight that we are waging today against human trafficking. With the right strategy, the right partners, the right policies and persistence, we are going to turn the tide on human trafficking.

While there continues to be much time and attention focused on intervention and recovery—I think that is rightfully so—and on criminal prosecution, I would like to take my time today to talk about preventing human trafficking in the first place. As the Senator from the State of New Hampshire discussed, the bills that are addressing this—the homeless youth bill—are absolutely critical to being a point of intervention, to prevent children from being on the streets, from being extremely vulnerable to victimization, from being extremely vulnerable to traffickers, and by helping those children off the street, by beginning to address the issues in their home that led them to flee in the first place. I think that is a very important first step to preventing human trafficking and human sex trafficking among minors.

I also think it is important that we learn from the experiences of other places.

Last year I traveled to Mexico City with Senator KLOBUCHAR, who, as we know, has been a fierce advocate and a wonderful partner on this issue, beginning not only with her work in the Senate but her work as the Hennepin County attorney.

I also traveled there with Cindy McCain. I think we would be remiss if we did not raise her voice and her name in this body today. She has been a global leader and a tireless leader, working not only in her State of Arizona but all across the globe. She has stood up to people who say this is not a problem. She has stood up to people who would just as soon sweep this under the rug and forget it is happening. She has been a leader and a champion of not only the people in her State and the women and children of this country but the women and children of the world. I am proud of our association, and I am proud of our friendship and the work we have been able to do together.

When we went to Mexico, we heard from countless government officials and NGOs about the difficulties they face stopping this unspeakable crime.

What I was particularly struck by were the stories of women and children coerced into this life—not forcefully, not being grabbed off the street against their will, but forced and coerced through promises of a better life, promises of someone to love and care for them. Unfortunately, for many of these young girls, these promises are short-lived because these girls and women are quickly pushed into a world of

physical abuse, drug use, and forced sex with hundreds, if not thousands of men. What was once a promise of a better life is a nightmare relived countless times a day as these victims are sold time and time again, their value now strictly as a commodity to be constantly traded over and over again. Imagine the horror of their lives. Imagine the horror of their existence.

How do we prevent this from happening? We must make sure to work with survivors. We must ask survivors to go to communities, to go to vulnerable populations, and tell their stories. The women and children who are most vulnerable and most susceptible need to hear firsthand the tactics used and, most importantly, the reality of following these false promises.

Shortly after returning from Mexico City, I met with Madai Morales Albino from Mexico. She is an amazing survivor of human trafficking. She was sexually exploited for 2 years, and she successfully escaped while being transported from Mexico to New York City. She is now an activist, and she talks about her experience and helps to teach and prevent this crime among the youth. She has become a role model for the younger girls at the shelter where she was cared for in Mexico. She attends national and international forums and workshops as a speaker to talk about her experience and the horror of human trafficking. She is currently studying to become a lawyer so she can continue to help girls who are now trapped in human trafficking.

The strength and courage of this young woman is awe-inspiring, and she is changing outcomes. We need more people like her in the world. We need more of her courage in the world, the courage to tell a story and then the courage to reach out and relive that horror through telling a story every day, the horror that was her existence.

We must also bring hope to the hopeless and love to those who do not feel loved. We can do this through increased educational opportunities, increased job opportunities, providing the necessary social services infrastructure, and working to build a safer, stronger community overall for women and children around the world.

Most importantly, what we should not bring to this is judgment; instead, bring a helping hand, bring an opportunity for a new life. Whether we are talking about the streets of Mexico City, Baltimore, or Indian Country in North Dakota, we can and we must do better. We can start taking action immediately in the Senate. We can directly impact efforts to prevent human trafficking in the United States by providing the resources necessary to work with some of our most vulnerable and most susceptible—our runaway and homeless youth.

I urge the majority leader to bring forward S. 262, the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act, a bill championed by my great friend Senator LEAHY. We all recognize that homeless youth are some of if not the most vulnerable and susceptible to trafficking. This is certainly true in North Dakota. It is certainly true in Mexico City. I am certain it is true in every community where runaway and homeless youth exist. This bill would provide much needed resources to this population and would complement other antitrafficking legislation being addressed in the Senate that addresses prevention, intervention, and recovery services to victims.

I also call on the majority leader to act by urging him to also bring S. 166, the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act, and S. 178, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, to the floor for a vote. I have worked tirelessly to push both of those bills since the last Congress. The Judiciary Committee reported two bills out of committee last week with unanimous support, and it is time to bring those bills to the floor for a vote. I believe all three bills should be part of a comprehensive approach to preventing trafficking and supporting victims.

We must do everything we can in our power to stamp out human sex trafficking in our backyard, across the country, and across the world.

With that, I yield the floor to my great friend from the great State of New York, Senator GILLIBRAND.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I also rise to speak about human trafficking, and I associate myself with the comments of Senator HEITKAMP.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that is alive, active, and must be stopped. Many of the stories we hear from traffic survivors sound more like plots in a horror movie than real life in the United States of America, but these stories are not fiction. Over and over we hear stories about young Americans forced into captivity, about young Americans forced into sexual exploitation, about young Americans who have no freedom to say no to a violent pimp but are still tagged with prostitution charges before they even turn 18. Human trafficking is a crime that rips families apart, breaks down the trust in our communities, and shatters young American lives.

It is long overdue for Congress to pay close attention to this issue, and I commend my fellow female Senators for bringing this issue so boldly to the floor of the Senate.

Today I will talk about what Senator HEITKAMP talked about—the vulnerabilities that led to these young boys and girls becoming trafficked and how vulnerable they remain even after they have managed to escape from their pimps and their captivity.

In small towns and big cities, thousands of Americans are trafficked each year. Every single institution these boys and girls ever relied on simply failed them, failed to protect them. Their families failed to protect them. Their schools failed to protect them. The foster system they were given to failed to protect them. Our laws are failing to protect them.

Last month alone, in Rochester, NY, the U.S. attorney announced the arrest of seven people on trafficking charges. Their victims were as young as 14 years old. The U.S. attorney said: ''The victims in many cases were singled out because they were identified as being vulnerable.''

We have the responsibility in Congress to end these crimes against the most vulnerable among us. We should pass Senator LEAHY's Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act, which would provide real help to runaway youth, who are especially vulnerable to this exploitation. We should support Senator KLOBUCHAR's Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act, which would stop the prosecution of minors who have engaged in commercial sex acts. We should pass Senator CORNYN's Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which would support programs for survivors of human trafficking and child pornography and ensure that the johns who are buying trafficking victims are actually prosecuted in Federal court.

We need a law that would vacate the criminal convictions of trafficking victims because these girls and boys are not criminals; they are not prostitutes; they are victims who deserve a chance to lead a fulfilling life. I will be introducing an amendment to Senator KLOBUCHAR's bill that would vacate the criminal convictions of trafficked victims who were forced to break the law while they were trafficked. No victim of human trafficking should have to go through life—even after gaining their freedom from their trafficker—with prostitution charges on their record. We have an obligation to protect the most vulnerable Americans, and this vacatur amendment would help us do just that.

I know that if Congress does its job and does everything it can to help victims of human trafficking, thousands of young women and men in this country will have a chance to live a fulfilling life.

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

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

Mr. MURPHY. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes.

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, today is a make-or-break day for millions of Americans who are better off because of the Affordable Care Act. As we speak, the Supreme Court is hearing

oral arguments on a case known as King v. Burwell to decide whether Americans have access to health insurance subsidies through their State exchanges or whether opponents of the law—the very same people who continued to push for over 40 votes in the House of Representatives to repeal or undermine the Affordable Care Act, the same people who shut down this government last year because of their obsession with repealing the law—will win out with a paper-thin legal argument. It would not only be a devastating blow to millions of Americans who are currently receiving subsidies for their insurance, but it would destroy the individual health insurance markets in those States and would represent an incredible power grab by the Supreme Court that would undercut the impartiality of that Court.

At the heart of this case is the Affordable Care Act, both the text and congressional intent. The question is, Did Congress intend to allow all Americans to benefit from affordable quality coverage across this country, whether they are in a State exchange or a Federal exchange?

To answer that question, you don't have to leaf through many pages of the Affordable Care Act; you can stop at the very first title, which is on the very first page. The first section reads: ''Title I. Quality, Affordable Health Care for All Americans.'' All Americans—not some Americans who live in a State that set up an insurance exchange like AccessHealthCT, but all Americans.

Before I go into a little bit of detail on this case, I wish to speak about this little boy. His name is Devin, and I was fortunate to meet with him just this last week. He is 8 years old. This picture is from maybe 1 or 2 years ago during one of his first trips to Washington. He lives with his parents and younger sister in western Connecticut.

Devin is one of about 20,000 people with hemophilia in this country. To stay healthy and to support his active life, which includes baseball, karate, and snowboarding, Devin has to take an injection every other day. The injections cost about $4,000 per dose, about $50,000 per month. Despite the challenges his disease presents, Devin was all smiles when we talked about what he liked to do, about school, and about how much you need to walk when you come to the Capitol to lobby, as Devin has the past couple of years.

The benefits of the Affordable Care Act are very clear for Devin and his family. His family will never have to worry about annual or lifetime limits on his health care. He won't have to worry, nor will his parents have to worry about him being denied insurance over the course of his life just because of his condition.

It isn't hyperbole to say that an adverse decision by the Court would be life-threatening for Americans like Devin who rely on these new insurance protections.

Obviously, Devin and his family aren't the only ones to benefit from this law. Just last week HHS released the final report on enrollment and showed that 8.84 million people have signed up for coverage in healthcare.gov States—Federal exchange States. An additional 2.8 million signed up through State-based marketplaces, such as in Connecticut, for a total of 11.6 million people who have private health care insurance because of the Affordable Care Act and its subsidies which are being spread across the country. By the way, add another 10 million people who are on Medicare because of the Affordable Care Act and we see why the uninsurance rate in this country is spiraling downward.

The tax credits the law provided for people making less than 400 percent of poverty are critical to the success of this law because they make coverage affordable. According to an HHS report from earlier this month, nearly 8 in 10 consumers are getting coverage for $100 or less after these tax credits.

In my home State, we had a goal to enroll 70,000 new individuals through private insurance and Medicaid, and we hit over 200,000. But the good news doesn't stop there. According to a new report since the ACA was passed, 9.4 million people with Medicare saved $15 billion on prescription drugs, an average of about $1,600 per beneficiary. For preventive care, there are 39 million people with Medicare and Medicare Advantage who took advantage of at least one preventive service with no cost sharing in 2014. That is why the Times, USA TODAY, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, and Politico are saying the simple message that now, more than ever, Americans understand the Affordable Care Act is working.

Yet despite the fact it is working, opponents of the law are continuing to try to tear it down. So let us be clear about what a negative decision from the Supreme Court would mean. It would mean that anywhere from 8 to 10 million Americans would lose their health care coverage and another 5 million children could lose their coverage as well.

Subsidies are important because the law envisions three interlocking sets of provisions: insurance protections to fix the abuses within our old system, the individual coverage provision to ensure we have a viable risk pool inside insurance, and, finally, tax credits to help people purchase insurance. Subsidies are the glue that holds all of that together.

That is why a victory for the plaintiffs would be devastating for everyone, not just those who receive subsidies in healthcare.gov. The individual markets in these States would fall into a death spiral if this law was overturned. If subsidies disappear, then people can't buy coverage. If they can't buy coverage, then the law says the individual mandate in those States has to disappear. If the individual mandate disappears, then healthy people don't buy coverage and the insurance protections, such as the ban on discrimination against people with preexisting conditions, simply cannot work. The insurance reforms either vanish or rates spike to catastrophic levels for people who decide to get coverage.

Don't take my word for it. The American Hospital Association warns that ''many more people will get sick, go bankrupt or die''—or die—if the Court finds for the challengers. The health insurance industry says taking away the tax credits would ''create severely dysfunctional insurance markets'' in nearly three dozen States.

Frankly, we don't even need to talk about the detrimental effects in these States because this is about congressional intent, and the intent is clear. Sometimes when we try to figure out intent we have trouble because the people who wrote the law aren't here any longer or they have passed away. Well, there are hundreds of people who voted for this law who are still in Congress. All we have to do is ask them. There is not a single person who voted for this law who will tell us they wrote the law in a way that would result in the denial of subsidies to people who are getting health care through the State exchanges.

The plaintiffs say this is a carrot-and-stick approach; that the intention was to deny subsidies to people in States that didn't set up their own exchange as a way to force them to set up their own exchange. Well, there is not a single Member of Congress who voted for the law who says that is how it was designed.

Frankly, we don't even need to get to intent. We don't even need to survey all the people who voted for it. We just have to look at the law itself. The plaintiffs focus on one line that says that subsidies shall go to State exchanges, but they ignore another line in the law that says if States don't establish their own exchange, then the Federal exchange becomes the State exchange. That is just as plainly written as the one line that is the foundation of the case.

But the entire structure of the law relies on States that don't set up their own exchanges getting Federal subsidies. Why would we even set up a Federal exchange if there weren't going to be subsidies associated with it? There would be no customers in the exchange if the intent of the law was to deny subsidies to people who bought into Federal exchanges. We wouldn't even have a Federal exchange.

Second, we would have established the insurance protections in a fundamentally different way. We would have said insurance protections apply to States that set up State exchanges and they do not apply to States that don't establish State exchanges, because again, as I said before, without those subsidies, the insurance protections simply don't work from an actuarial basis.

But that is not how the Affordable Care Act is written. The act says the insurance protections apply nationally, regardless of whether it is a State or Federal exchange. Why is that? Because subsidies were going to flow to a State no matter what kind of exchange they established.

Lastly, when Congress has historically engaged in this kind of carrot-and-stick endeavor with States, we make it totally transparent. We lay out in the statute here is what we expect you to do, and if you don't do it, here are the consequences. We don't hide the consequences to be derived at through a Supreme Court case, as is the stated belief of the petitioners in this case.

Lastly, the plaintiffs say: Well, don't worry about it. If the Supreme Court overturns this, we will just fix it. Congress can just come back and fix that line. Well, Congress isn't fixing anything these days. We can't even keep the Department of Homeland Security open and operating. Republicans have had 6 years to provide an alternative to the Affordable Care Act. We haven't seen anything more than a memo or a press release. If the subsidies disappear, they are not coming back. Congress is not fixing this problem, and 10 million Americans will lose their coverage.

I want to finish by talking about one more story, and this is the story of a woman who lives in Westport, CT. She works as a massage therapist, but since she is self-employed she was uninsured and couldn't provide insurance for herself. Last year, when the Affordable Care Act was implemented, she found out she qualified for coverage in Connecticut and that coverage finally gave her the opportunity to see a doctor. She wrote the President and said:

> The cancer has been detected at a very early stage, which, with a 98 percent survival rate, has saved my life. Moreover, the cost of this screening and minor procedure will be far less than the cost of treating a more developed cancer. Thank you, Mr. President, for assuring the passage of this critical legislation. You have profoundly improved the quality of my life.

The facts are clear. The Affordable Care Act is working. The intent of Congress is clear: to provide subsidies to all Americans, no matter their ZIP Code. The language of the bill is clear. That leaves us with one conclusion. If the Supreme Court overturns this portion of the law, it will be a plain and simple political power play. It will usher in a new era in which the Supreme Court becomes just another legislative body. They will be calling the authors of this bill liars and replacing the authors' stated intent with their own political judgment.

For the sake of Devin and Ann and millions of others who would benefit from the Affordable Care Act and for the sake of American democracy, I hope they uphold the law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I first wish to say to the Senator from Connecticut that this Senator agrees with him. It should never come down to this. The whole purpose of that section of the Affordable Care Act is in fact to provide insurance to as many people as we can, especially the 40 million people who for years and years have been going without insurance, and it is doing a pretty good job.

In the second year of expanding the State exchanges or the Federal exchange, as the Senator has described, lo and behold, of the 8 to 9 million nationwide, over 1 million of those 8 to 9 million are in my State of Florida. So I thank the Senator for his courage, his insight, and his clarity and his statement.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Mr. President, I want to talk about S. 615. It is legislation filed last Friday, and this Senator was 1 of 11 Senators who filed it originally. There were five Republicans and six Democrats, and it was filed by the chairman and the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

This is legislation giving Congress a say with regard to a potential agreement that would be enacted in the negotiations between the United States, which includes the P5 plus Iran—over preventing Iran from having a nuclear weapon.

This Senator was assured by the Republican sponsors of this bill that the bill would not come up until after the negotiations had concluded on March 24. Obviously, this Senator would not have sponsored legislation that would try to predetermine or nix the negotiations before they had a chance to succeed.

Yesterday or the day before the majority leader filed a rule XIV to bring the process directly to the floor. It is my understanding he is intending to go to that legislation next week, but that still is almost 2 weeks before the negotiations are to conclude.

I want the negotiations to be successful. It is very important to the national security of the United States that Iran not have a nuclear weapon. That is obvious to the national security of Israel as well. Yet we are about to take up legislation that would start talking about the lifting of sanctions before an agreement has even been reached.

Well, this Senator is not going to have any part of that. Therefore, if this legislation is brought up before the negotiations conclude on March 24, this Senator will not support the efforts to proceed to the consideration of the legislation in the Senate.

It is one thing to enter into these matters of considerable national security and try to disrupt them, it is another thing looking at the consequences if these negotiations don't succeed and we can stop Iran from having a nuclear weapon, that one alternative, a very serious alternative, is war, but it is another thing to make representations to a Senator that are not fulfilled, and this Senator doesn't like it one bit.

I conclude by saying there has been a lot of commentary about the Prime Minister's speech yesterday. This Senator feels like where the Prime Minister was arguing against negotiations that are ongoing before the negotiations are concluded—I don't think that is in the interest of the United States. I don't like that one bit.

This Senator also feels that when a foreign leader comes in front of the Congress—the representatives of the American people—for what to this Senator is obvious political advantage in an election that is to take place in just 2 weeks, I don't think that is right either.

This Senator is one of the strongest supporters of Israel, and this Senator has had the privilege not only of the perspective of Armed Services but also my past service for 6 years on the Intelligence Committee.

I have visited with all of the intelligence apparatus of Israel, and it has been a seamless effort in trying to protect the interests of the United States and Israel with our intelligence apparatus. When partisan politics is injected into this, it is not good, and it is not good for the relationship.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, sadly, today the Republicans are again coming to the Senate floor—not to help the working people who work every day to make our country great—but to silence their voices.

They aren't here to reward the hard-working families that work from paycheck to paycheck just to give their children a better life and the education that they deserve. They aren't here to pass a highway bill that would support millions of jobs.

Instead, they want to hold the highway bill hostage to big polluting Canadian special interests and build the Keystone pipeline which will only create 35 permanent jobs.

They aren't here to raise the minimum wage. They aren't here to expand the child care tax credit. They aren't here to ensure equal pay for equal work. They aren't here to try to make college more affordable for middle-class families. They aren't here to help workers get health care—we know that because right now Republicans are suing to take away health care from more than 8 million Americans.

They certainly aren't here to fix our Nation's broken immigration system. If Republicans were interested in that, they would be supporting the reasonable, commonsense immigration measures proposed by President Obama that will result in indisputable economic gains for our country—raising the Nation's GDP by up to $90 billion over the next 10 years.

No, the majority in the House and Senate don't have time for any of these measures to help working families—they are too busy pursuing their latest attack on the middle class.

I oppose this resolution because it would impede one of the basic rights of America's workers: to form a union.

If enacted, this resolution would prohibit the National Labor Relations Board from implementing rules to streamline and modernize union election procedures that will ensure union elections are conducted in a more fair and efficient manner.

These employees who work so hard deserve a union elections process that is free from unnecessary delays and wasteful stall tactics.

Let me tell you a little bit about those tactics. This comes from the testimony of someone who represents unions in California.

In 2010 a petition for representation was filed for approximately 45 automobile mechanics. Even though there were well-established NLRB rules that governed the proceedings on a petition for a unit of automobile mechanics, management asked for hearings, extensions, filed objection after objection, until finally, 427 days after the petition was filed, the union was certified.

Corporations are getting the benefits of increased profits and productivity. Why should they be allowed to stall these proceedings? Why do they oppose giving these workers a voice so that they can improve their working conditions and wages?

First, let me tell you what these rules do not do: They do not mandate timetables for elections to occur. Rather, the new rules simply eliminate existing barriers that get in the way of providing both employees and employers with access to a fair election process.

These rules do not prevent employers from discussing their views on unions with workers. What these modest changes will accomplish: The new rules, which will go into effect on April 14, will reduce unnecessary litigation on issues that are not relevant to the outcome of the election. The new rules will modernize the current outdated process. In the past, employers had to send out mail through the post office, which cost time and money. The new rule will allow employers and unions to file forms electronically. It will also allow the use of more modern forms of communication to employees through cell phones and email.

Instead of standing up for workers across the country who are struggling with stagnant wages, Republicans have chosen to challenge these commonsense reforms.

The right to form a union is a right guaranteed by the National Labor Relations Act and by the First Amendment of our Constitution.

These modest changes will merely allow workers to exercise that right in a fair and efficient process in order to protect their rights, increase wages, and grow our Nation's middle class.

What is so sad is that this is just the latest attack on the middle class and their economic security. Instead of taking up more floor time going after the rights of workers, let's fight to help working families. Instead of trying to undo measures that help the middle class, let's fight to do more for them.

At a time when wages are stagnating, instead of trying to silence the voices of hard-working men and women, let's fight to empower them through collective bargaining.

I urge my colleagues to support modernization and oppose this resolution. Let's let our workers know that we hear them, that we support them, and that we will fight to make life better for our middle class families.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the NLRB's current election process has some glaring problems, contrary to what some of my Republican colleagues have claimed.

For one, the process is inefficient. In many cases across the United States, frivolous litigation and needless delays threaten the rights of workers who want to vote on union representation. Federal appellate courts have called union election delays ''inexcusable,'' ''deplorable,'' and ''egregious.'' The new reforms specifically target those systemic inefficiencies and excessive delays.

Secondly, the current system is outdated. Right now, the NLRB, employers, and unions are barred from filing forms electronically during the election process. And it does not allow for the use of modern forms of communication to employees through cell phones and emails. The updates will adapt the election procedures to few forms of technology.

Another problem is the current system is unpredictable. Right now, the election process for one region of the country could be substantially different in another region. That adds to inefficiencies and confusion. The new reforms will provide uniformity and certainty in elections across the country.

There is a clear problem here. The NLRB made modest, but important, changes to modernize and streamline the process.

Mr. President, today, we have heard a lot about the National Labor Relations Board. We have heard about employers delaying workers their right to decide on union representation. We have heard about current election process that is outdated and inefficient. But, really, this debate is about what kind of economy we envision for our country.

I believe that real, long-term economic growth is built from the middle out, not the top down. Our government has a role to play in investing in working families, making sure they have the opportunity to work hard and succeed and offering a hand to those who want to climb the economic ladder and provide a better life for themselves and their families.

Our government and our economy should be working for all families, not only the wealthiest few. Thankfully, we have had the opportunity to put some policies into place over the past few years that have pulled our economy back from the brink and have started moving it in the right direction.

But we have a whole lot more to do. Over the past few decades, for most workers wages have stayed flat or have fallen over the past five decades. That means that across our country today, too many families are struggling to make ends meet on rock-bottom wages and poor working conditions on the job.

While the middle class's share of America's prosperity is at an all-time low, the biggest corporations have posted record profits. In Congress, we should be working on ways to build an economy that works for all families, not just the wealthiest few.

Unfortunately, once again, instead of sticking up for workers, my Republican colleagues are rushing to the defense of the biggest corporations that have an interest in keeping wages low and denying workers a voice to improve their workplace.

Workers have the right to decide whether they want union representation. To ensure they are able to exercise that right, the National Labor Relations Board helps make sure workers have a free and fair up-or-down vote.

So the NLRB was absolutely right to carry out its mission to review and streamline its election process to bring down these barriers that prevent workers from getting a fair vote. After a rigorous review process, in December of last year the NLRB made reforms to their election process.

These updates will make modest, but important, changes to modernize and streamline the process. They will reduce unnecessary litigation on issues that won't affect the outcome of the election. The new reforms will bring the election process into the 21st century by letting employers and unions file forms electronically. They also will allow the use of more modern forms of communication to employees through cell phones and email. These reforms will simply standardize the election process across regions, which will help all sides know what to expect during the process.

But some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle take great offense to these modest changes. Instead of standing for workers across the country who are struggling with stagnant wages and poor working conditions, Republicans have chosen to challenge these common sense reforms with a resolution of disapproval. Instead of talking about how to create jobs and help working families who are struggling with stagnant wages, Republicans would rather roll back workers' rights to gain a voice at the bargaining table.

Let's be clear. This rule is about reducing unnecessary litigation. And using cell phones and email to transmit information in 2015 is just common sense.

By law, workers have the right to join a union so they can have a voice in the workplace. That is not an ambush.

It is their right, as guaranteed by the National Labor Relations Act and by the First Amendment of our Constitution. So when workers want to vote on whether to form a union, they are not looking for special treatment. They are simply trying to exercise their basic rights. We as a nation should not turn our backs on empowering workers through collective bargaining, especially because that is the very thing that helped so many workers climb into the middle class.

In Congress, we need to continue to work to expand economic security for more families. That should be our mission to move our country forward. This resolution would simply be a step backward.

Instead of attacking workers who just want a voice in the workplace, I hope my colleagues will reject this resolution. I hope Republicans will join Democrats and work with us to protect workers' rights, increase wages, and grow our Nation's middle class.

I truly hope we can break through the gridlock and work together on policies that create jobs, expand economic security, and generate broad-based economic growth for workers and families—not just the wealthiest few.

Mr. NELSON. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. JOHNSON. I yield back all our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time for debate having been expired, the joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 67 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Blunt	Capito
Ayotte	Boozman	Cassidy
Barrasso	Burr	Coats
Cochran	Hatch	Risch
Collins	Heller	Roberts
Corker	Hoeven	Rounds
Cornyn	Inhofe	Rubio
Cotton	Isakson	Sasse
Crapo	Johnson	Scott
Cruz	Kirk	Sessions
Daines	Lankford	Shelby
Enzi	Lee	Sullivan
Ernst	McCain	Thune
Fischer	McConnell	Tillis
Flake	Moran	Toomey
Gardner	Paul	Vitter
Graham	Perdue	Wicker
Grassley	Portman	

NAYS—46

Baldwin	Heitkamp	Peters
Bennet	Hirono	Reed
Blumenthal	Kaine	Reid
Booker	King	Sanders
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schatz
Brown	Leahy	Schumer
Cantwell	Manchin	Shaheen
Cardin	Markey	Stabenow
Carper	McCaskill	Tester
Casey	Menendez	Udall
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Mikulski	Warren
Feinstein	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Franken	Murphy	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murray	
Heinrich	Nelson	

NOT VOTING—1

Donnelly

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 8) was passed, as follows:

S.J. RES. 8

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures (published at 79 Fed. Reg. 74308 (December 15, 2014)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the veto message on S. 1, the cloture motion be withdrawn, and at 2:30 p.m. today the Senate vote on the question of overriding the President's veto of S. 1, the Keystone bill, with the time equally divided in the usual form.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Is there any way the time could be changed from 2:30 p.m. to 2:20 p.m., otherwise there are four people who may miss their planes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the majority leader so modify his request?

Mr. MCCONNELL. The request is that the vote occur when?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. At 2:20 p.m. instead of 2:30 p.m.

Mr. MCCONNELL. That is fine.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, the vote on the veto override will occur at 2:20 p.m. Senators should be in the Chamber and prepared to vote from their seats. This will be the last rollcall vote of the week.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE APPROVAL ACT—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the veto message on S.1, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message to accompany S. 1, a bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2:20 p.m. will be equally divided.

Who yields time?

If no one yields time, the time will be divided equally.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary order at this time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is on the veto message to accompany S. 1.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, if we could have order in the Senate, I wish to open debate on S. 1.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will be in order.

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank the Presiding Officer.

Senator CANTWELL will be comanaging this bill, and I thank her very much for her strong leadership.

The vote that is going to occur at 2:20 p.m. is a very important vote.

I rise today to oppose the attempt to override President Obama's veto message of S. 1, the very first bill the Senate majority brought to the floor.

As I look at this bill, it says to me that the only people who are helped by this bill are the big Canadian special oil interests.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, the Senate is not in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will be in order.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, the Keystone Pipeline is presented as something that is going really to help this economy and help oil prices. I think the only thing it helps, frankly, are the special interests in Canada—the special big oil interests—which, by the way, will carry the filthiest, dirtiest, tar sands oil into our great Nation.

If we look at the history of the tar sands, we will find that misery follows the tar sands. We still have terrible problems in Michigan and Arkansas because there was a spill of this dirty, filthy oil, and they cannot clean it up because it is so, so difficult to clean.

This is a picture of a tar sands spill in 2013 in Mayflower, AR. That has not been cleaned up because this is tar sands oil. We had a spill in Michigan, and we know that since 2011 they have not been able to clean up that spill. So why would we build a pipeline to bring dirty, filthy oil into our great Nation and our great communities when we know the dangers?

Mr. President, I ask again that there be order in the Senate.