

ever-rising national debt. Yet this Republican tax plan is calculated to increase the national debt by a whopping \$1.5 trillion.

People cared about our national debt when that was used as a reason to propose cuts to Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security, but when it comes to financing tax breaks for foreign stockholders and big corporations, apparently that debt doesn't matter.

I have a prediction to make. I have a prediction that if this tax bill goes through and we blow up the national debt by \$1.5 trillion, Speaker RYAN and everybody else who told us about the risks and dangers of a big national debt—all of a sudden, they are going to rediscover their commitment to reducing the national debt. They forgot about it when it came to financing big tax breaks, but you know what—gosh, really, it is a big deal. And then they are not going to talk about rolling back the tax breaks they just gave the big corporations; they are going to go about cutting important investments—cutting Medicare, cutting Medicaid, cutting education.

Do you know why I am very confident that we can predict that is what is going to happen? Because our Republican colleagues have told us. It is right there in the budget. It is in their budget that passed the Senate and passed the House. Just open up those budgets. There is almost a \$500 billion cut to Medicare—\$473 billion to be exact. There is a \$1 trillion cut to Medicaid in the Republican budget. There are big cuts to domestic investments, and that is the category of our budget that funds education, modernizing our infrastructure, and medical research. It is all right there in the Republican budget.

I hope that the American public is going to have a chance to focus on this. I understand why people are trying to speed this through—speed it through the House before Thanksgiving, speed it through the House and Senate before the end of the year—but people are beginning to wake up to this. I can assure my colleagues that when they find out exactly what is in this Republican plan, they are going to be very, very angry because all those middle-class families who were sold a bill of goods, thinking they are going to get this big tax cut—uh-uh. Millions of them are going to see a tax increase to finance tax breaks for big corporations and very wealthy Americans and will pay for it by rising national debt and ultimately cuts to important health and retirement and security programs, as well as education.

I hope people will turn back now. The way to do this is the way tax reform was done in 1986—in a bipartisan, transparent fashion. Let's get back to doing this the right way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwith-

standing rule XXII, that at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, November 16, there be 30 minutes of postcloture time remaining on the Otting nomination, equally divided between the leaders or their designees, and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the confirmation of the Otting nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action. I further ask consent that following disposition of the Otting nomination, the Senate vote on the pending cloture motions on the Coggins and Friedrich nominations in the order filed, and that if cloture is invoked, the postcloture time on the nominations run consecutively.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 486 and 487.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Bobby L. Christine, of Georgia, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia for the term of four years; and David J. Freed, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Attorney for the Middle District of Pennsylvania for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Christine and Freed nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SPENCER MAGNET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate an institution in Spencer County marking 150 years of community journalism in Kentucky, the Spencer Magnet. Since the weekly newspaper began operations in 1867, it has covered celebrations, tragedies, wars, elections, and so much more. Today the Spencer Magnet is the oldest continuously operated business in Spencer County and reaches more than 4,000 homes each week.

Over the years, the paper has operated under different names with different owners. In 1925, the paper came under the ownership of Katie Beauchamp, and she changed its name from the Spencer Courier to its current title. She justified the new name because it matched her mission for the paper, to serve as a means to draw the people of Spencer County together.

For 150 years, the paper has done just that. The publication covered national and international news, but the Spencer Magnet's focus on community journalism has endeared it to many of my constituents in the area.

As the Spencer County community looks back on its history, it recognizes great successes and painful challenges, but the journalism from this newspaper has been a constant presence in community through it all. To properly mark its sesquicentennial anniversary, the Spencer Magnet is rededicating itself to its mission to draw the community together.

The population of Spencer County continues to grow and change. Now, many residents work in Louisville and then come home to the rural Spencer County to escape the city. Whatever the future may bring, the Spencer Magnet stands ready to deliver the news to its readers.

Kentucky is home to many community newspapers, which have their finger on the pulse of their readers. Organizations like the Spencer Magnet are incredibly important for chronicling our past and for shaping the news of tomorrow. I am proud to help the Spencer Magnet celebrate this anniversary. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Spencer Magnet on many years of reporting.

Mr. President, earlier this year, the Spencer Magnet published an article reflecting on its years of community reporting. I ask unanimous consent that excerpts of the article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Spencer Magnet, March 29, 2017]

MARKING 150 YEARS OF THE SPENCER MAGNET

(By John Shindlebower)

This community has been through a lot over the past 150 years. We picked ourselves up after a devastating Civil War that was especially brutal on a border state like Kentucky. We survived economic hardships including a great depression and a great recession and we saw our young men die in far off