

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

lands in two world wars and other conflicts across the globe.

Through it all, the Spencer Magnet kept the community informed.

This community has survived droughts, blizzards, floods and tornadoes. We've even felt the earth shake a time or two.

We've endured divisive and bitter elections, political scandals both small and large and we've had families devastated by violent crime and tragic accidents. The Spencer Magnet was here to report that news.

There have been grand times as well. New businesses have started and flourished and the progress that changed so much of American life did not bypass Spencer County. We've seen the stage coach give way to the railroad and the railroad give way to the automobile. Modern day luxuries often taken for granted, such as running water, electric lights, radio and television were greeted with fanfare when they made their initial appearance in our community. The Spencer Magnet was here to chronicle those changes and the ones that have followed. Students worked their way through school and annually marched to receive their diploma.

Local citizens have accomplished monumental achievements and various churches and organizations have worked tirelessly to serve the community, their neighbors and their fellow man. The Spencer Magnet has been here to help the good.

Today, Spencer County continues to grow. Many families from Louisville, seeking a slower pace of life and a rural atmosphere, have chosen to make this their home. Many of these new families simply lay their heads here at night as they continue to work, shop and socialize in Louisville. But increasingly, more and more of the newer residents are becoming active in this community that they now proudly call home.

The Spencer Magnet understands the role we play in this pivotal era of Spencer County's history. Perhaps more than ever before, this newspaper is practicing community journalism by covering more meetings where decisions that impact you and this community are made. More and more Spencer Countians are expressing an interest in being involved citizens, and it is our role as a newspaper to help those same people be informed citizens.

Over this latest chapter of our history, the Magnet has been honored on numerous occasions by the Kentucky Press Association for our efforts to publish an informative, quality newspaper that serves our residents. But more important than awards, is the feedback we get from our readers. There's nothing we like hearing better than the words "We read it in the Magnet."

The Spencer Magnet is now 150 years old. We're the oldest continuously operated business in Spencer County. We're proud of that distinction, but we also do not take it for granted. That longevity had to be earned by gaining the trust and respect of readers like you. We don't take that lightly and we will continue to strive to earn that trust each and every week as we begin our next 150 years.

The next century and a half will surely be filled with a mixture of tragedy and triumph. There will be achievements and there will be failures. We will write stories about great accomplishments, and we'll most certainly have to report on heartbreak as well. But that's the nature of the newspaper. It's what William T. Burton set out to accomplish in 1867, and it's what we hope those who follow us will continue to do decades from now.

ILLINOIS STUDENT LOAN BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week my home State of Illinois took a

major step forward in protecting student loan borrowers.

On November 7, the Illinois House of Representatives voted 98 to 16 to override Governor Rauner's veto of the Illinois Student Loan Bill of Rights, which was designed to protect student loan borrowers from the well documented abuses of Federal student loan servicers. The Illinois Senate previously voted 37 to 19 to override. With the house's action, the bill became law.

I would like to thank all of those in the general assembly who voted for this bill, including Senator Daniel Biss and Representative Will Guzzardi, who sponsored the legislation. I would also like to thank the legislation's author, Attorney General Lisa Madigan, for her leadership and tireless efforts to investigate and hold Federal student loan servicers accountable.

Federal student loan servicers are contracted by the U.S. Department of Education to handle the billing and other services related to the repayment of a Federal student loan. Too often, these contractors make it more difficult for students to repay their loans by giving them incorrect or incomplete information and guidance, refusing to provide benefits to which students are entitled under Federal law, or incorrectly processing payments. I have heard complaints about servicers from countless of the 1.5 million Illinoisans holding a cumulative total of \$51 billion in Federal student loan debt.

Attorney General Madigan has heard those complaints too. In response, she initiated an investigation which resulted in an ongoing lawsuit against the Nation's largest student loan servicer, Navient. Navient has become the poster child for poor customer service and abusive practices that make it more difficult for struggling borrowers to repay their Federal student loans.

The Illinois Student Loan Bill of Rights will help to protect Illinois borrowers from these practices. Among other things, the law requires servicers to inform borrowers about their eligibility for income-driven repayment plans and other affordable repayment options. It also prohibits servicers from misleading borrowers, requires them to correctly process payments, and requires servicers to inform borrowers about their eligibility for loan forgiveness due to a disability or harmful actions by the school.

I have worked at the Federal level to provide similar protections for all student loan borrowers. I authored the Federal Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights, which I will reintroduce in the coming months. This bill was the basis for reforms to student loan servicing contracts initiated by President Obama. Unfortunately, much of that work has been rolled back by Secretary Betsy DeVos.

Thanks to Attorney General Madigan and the bipartisan actions of the Illinois General Assembly, borrowers in our State will now have new rights and protections that neither Governor

Rauner nor Secretary DeVos can take away.

TRIBUTE TO EARL "RUSTY" POWELL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for 25 years, Earl "Rusty" Powell has served as the director of the National Gallery of Art, making him the longest serving director in its history. Rusty will retire in early 2019, concluding a tenure that has marked growth and development at one of our Nation's great galleries.

Rusty's life of public service began with 3 years of service in the Navy, during which he served as a navigator in Vietnam. Upon his return, Rusty embarked on what would become a decades-long career as a curator, historian, and aficionado, earning a doctorate from Harvard before beginning his first assignment at the National Gallery of Art.

His experience there led to a 12-year tenure as the director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, after which he returned to the National Gallery for what would become the longest tenure of a director in its 75-year history. He has worked tirelessly at the National Gallery of Art to increase the accessibility of the arts by expanding the National Gallery's projects, exhibitions, and endowment.

Rusty's approach to expanding and enriching the National Gallery has been as collaborative as it has been visionary. Rather than govern with a singular vision, he included his staff and board in moving the museum forward. From the construction of the stunning sculpture garden, to the renovation of the gallery's west wing, no detail has been overlooked throughout his tenure. He has also overseen several other projects that received less attention but are of no lesser value to the current success of the gallery. All these improvements have enhanced the experience of the more than 5 million visitors that pass through the gallery every year.

Rusty's great passion for the mission of the National Gallery and his unwavering efforts to bring storied art collections to its millions of visitors each year are unparalleled. With his retirement next year, he will leave a legacy at the gallery that will never be forgotten.

Marcelle and I have treasured the evenings we have spent with Rusty and his wife, Nancy, at exhibits and events we will always remember.

I ask unanimous consent that the November 7, 2017, Washington Post article detailing Rusty's time and accomplishments at the National Gallery of Art be printed in the RECORD.

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