

163 Cong. Rec. S7383 (Nov. 29, 2017)

[7282]

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I come to the floor to voice my very strong support for the tax reform legislation that will come before the U.S. Senate this week.

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[7383]

This bill also eliminates the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate, which is a penalty that mainly impacts the middle class. Let's talk about this. In 2015, more than 34,000 West Virginians were penalized under this mandate, and 81 percent of those people—81 percent of the 34,000 people—who were penalized with a tax penalty, because they could not afford to buy insurance or they chose not to, were assessed a tax penalty for that decision. That 81 percent earns under \$50,000 a year.

There has been a lot of misinformation about this provision, so let me just clarify. No one is being forced off of Medicaid or a private health insurance plan by the elimination of the individual mandate. By eliminating the individual mandate, we are simply stopping penalizing and taxing people who either cannot afford or decide not to buy health insurance plans. I, for one, want everyone to purchase and be able to purchase a health insurance plan, but that is a personal decision, at the end of the day, that a family makes. If you opt not to purchase, which I hope you would not, your government shouldn't be taxing you, and that is what has happened.