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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Government Shutdown; Sen. Elizabeth Warren on Negotiations & Impact]

TONY DOKOUPIL: It is day two of the government shutdown. Still no deal. Democrats say they are trying to stop a GOP spending plan that could raise health care costs for many Americans, millions, in fact. Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren joins us for more on the state of things. Thank you for coming back to us. We appreciate having you on, as always. I wonder what state of things are right now? Eventually, someone's going to have to compromise, someone's going to have to blink and make a deal. Also, someone's going to get the blame. Are any negotiations going on right now?

SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN (D-MA): So, look, the Speaker of the House just said last night he didn't plan to negotiate and didn't want to negotiate. But here's the thing to remember. Americans – we've had a broken health care system for a very long time, but in July, the Republicans all by themselves with no Democratic votes, voted to cut health care for 15 million Americans. Just knock them off their health care coverage. And voted to raise insurance premiums for tens of millions more. And those increases in insurance premiums are occurring literally right now this month in October. People are getting their notices, so Democrats said at the time, when you passed that bill, it's going come due because when we get ready to do the budget for the year, we're going to ask that that be rolled back, and the Republicans didn't want to talk about it, wouldn't negotiate. So now –

DOKOUPIL: Senator –

WARREN: – that's where we are. Democrats are fighting to try to keep those health care costs down and back the Republican cuts.

DOKOUPIL: – but, Senator, Majority Leader John Thune of South Dakota says he is ready to negotiate around the subsidies, but they're not going to negotiate with the government in a shutdown mode. Why not reopen and go to the table to make a deal?

WARREN: So, I don't understand that. We're ready to negotiate. We have had now three months. We've been begging the Republicans to come to the table and negotiate. You know how many negotiations there have been? Zero. And the Republicans are saying they won't negotiate when there's not a shutdown. They won't negotiate when there is a shutdown. So far, they won't negotiate at all. We are only fighting not to expand the money that's spent on health care, just to roll back the cuts, so that what health care coverage people had last June they will

still have in October, November, December, and going forward. That's all that Democrats are asking for and the Republicans won't even sit down with us.

DOKOUPIL: But, senator, you're saying they will sit down now and you have some Democrats, I'm thinking about Senator Masto of Nevada saying by – by withholding and shutting down in this moment, you're giving more power to the Trump administration. You're not taking power away, you're giving it. Why do you disagree with her?

WARREN: Look, let's understand that Donald Trump is going to do whatever he wants to do, and Russ Vought, the author of Project 2025 is in there trying to make as many painful cuts as he can. That could be stopped if the Republicans in the House and Senate would just say no more of this. Donald Trump has already illegally fired tens of thousands of federal employees and now we have a President of the United States who is saying that what he wants to do is impose as much pain as possible on some of his fellow Americans just so that he can win a political battle. He's cutting infrastructure spending in places where the money has already been approved because it's important to build those tunnels and build those bridges, but Donald Trump says he doesn't care. He just wants to impose pain on Americans because he thinks that Democrats actually care –

DOKOUPIL: Yeah

WARREN: – and Democrats will be forced to back down.

DOKOUPIL: Senator –

WARREN: Look, we're fighting for people's health care. That's what this is all about.

DOKOUPIL: – so, senator, you know, Republicans say what you're really fighting for is taxpayer dollars for, as they put it, illegal aliens. I know that's not strictly true but there is a provision –

WARREN: Oh, excuse me not strictly true.

DOKOUPIL: It's not directly true, but –

WARREN: It is a flat-out lie. It is a flat-out lie.

DOKOUPIL: – the way that they frame it –

WARREN: There is nothing in Medicaid, nothing in Medicare, that permits one undocumented immigrant to get one dollar of assistance. None.

DOKOUPIL: – Senator –

WARREN: Zero.

DOKOUPIL: – if you let me finish the question –

WARREN: Of course. I'm sorry.

DOKOUPIL: – sorry, in the Democratic counter offer the proposal for funding, there is a restoration of Medicaid benefits for certain noncitizens that had been taken away in the Big, Beautiful Bill as Republicans put it.

WARREN: No!

DOKOUPIL: Republicans don't think those people should be getting health care on the taxpayer dime. I'm not asking on the merits. Politically, putting that in there, exposes you to this talking point, this lie as you put it. Why put it in there? Why is it worth it?

WARREN: No. What's happened is that what we're saying is that whenever hospitals give care, what is going to be the level of reimbursement? And the Republicans said it's going to be a low level. The Democrats said we just want go back to the level it was before because you're going to bankrupt hospitals. You're going to put rural hospitals out of business. The Republicans and the Democrats' plan, nothing changes the number of undocumented immigrants who still get care if they show up bleeding and unconscious at an emergency room. There is absolutely zero difference. The difference is whether or not hospitals who, under laws that date back to Ronald Reagan, may provide emergency care to anyone who's unconscious, will actually get reimbursed at a very low level that will put the hospital ultimately out of business potentially or at a higher level. The Republicans –

DOKOUPIL: Yeah.

WARREN: – there is no change, no change in the number of undocumented migrants who get any help under what the Democrats want.

DOKOUPIL: Senator –

WARREN: Look, what we're looking for is help for people –

DOKOUPIL: – yeah –

WARREN: – who are going to get pushed out of nursing homes –

DOKOUPIL: – senator –

WARREN: – help for people who are at home and relying on home health aides.

DOKOUPIL: – senator –

WARREN: That's what this fight is about.

DOKOUPIL: – senator, I appreciate your expansion on that issue and I appreciate the conversation. I hope a compromise is reached soon. Senator Elizabeth Warren, thank you.

WARREN: Thank you.

DOKOUPIL: In our next hour, House Speaker Mike Johnson will join us to talk all about the shutdown, some of the same topics we just covered.