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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOST).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 5, 2025.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE BOST to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Avery M. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2025, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

IMPEACHMENT MOVEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, with a to-whom-it-may-concern message. To whom it may concern: Ethnic cleansing in Gaza is not a joke, especially when it emanates from the President of the United States, the most powerful person in the world, when he has the ability to perfect what he says.

Ethnic cleansing in Gaza is no joke, and the Prime Minister of Israel should be ashamed, knowing the history of his people to stand there and allow such things to be said. Ethnic cleansing has been a crime against humanity.

I stand here today in the well to denounce what was said, to denounce what the President said, to denounce the complicity of the Prime Minister of Israel, and to remind people that Dr. King was right: Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Injustice in Gaza is a threat to justice in the United States of America.

I rise to announce that the movement to impeach the President has begun. I rise to announce that I will bring Articles of Impeachment against the President for dastardly deeds proposed and dastardly deeds done.

I also rise to say that the impeachment movement is going to be a grass-up movement, not a top-down. The people have got to move forward. The people have to demand it, and when the people demand it, it will be done.

I did it before. I laid the foundation for impeachment, and it was done. Nobody knows more about it than I, and I know that it is time for us to lay the foundation again.

On some issues, it is better to stand alone than not stand at all. On this issue, I stand alone, but I stand for justice.

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

CONGRATULATING DAVID PRICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my constituent, Mr. David Price of Fishersville, Virginia, who was named the grand champion of the 2024 Virginia Truck Driving Championship.

David has been a professional truck driver for 33 years. He has been employed with FedEx Freight for the last 18. He has logged 3.3 million miles without an accident, making him the perfect candidate to enter the competition.

The contest opened on day one with a written exam and concluded the following day with competitive scoring on a pre-trip inspection and driving course skills test.

David demonstrated his knowledge and expertise in all areas to take home the Virginia Straight Truck title. He also captured the best course score and best pre-trip inspection honors to qualify him for his fourth National Truck Driving Championship.

Truck drivers are the backbone of our economy, delivering essential goods across the United States, but beyond the loads they carry, they carry an enormous responsibility, ensuring the safety of everyone and the commitment to sharing the road. David's grand champion status is a testament to his discipline, focus, and care for his fellow drivers.

HALTING THE FENTANYL CRISIS AND PROTECTING AMERICAN LIVES

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, the communities throughout the Sixth District of Virginia and across this entire Nation turned into border communities under the last administration.

This was the direct result of the failed leadership of President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas, who allowed deadly fentanyl to pour through our open borders for 4 years.

In 2023, over 107,000 Americans tragically died from drug overdoses. Of those, 75,000 were due to synthetic opioids, primarily illicit fentanyl. Fentanyl has become the number one

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cause of death for adults aged 18 to 49. Even in my home State of Virginia, drug cartels were caught smuggling rainbow-colored fentanyl, specifically intended to target our children. Enough is enough.

That is why this week the House will vote on the HALT Fentanyl Act to address this crisis head on. Introduced by my colleague, Representative GRIFFITH, the HALT Fentanyl Act will increase penalties for fentanyl traffickers, support research into the devastating mental health effects of fentanyl, and equip law enforcement with the authority and resources needed to keep the deadly drug off our streets.

Unlike the previous administration, House Republicans are stepping up to protect the American people. We are committed to fighting back against the fentanyl crisis, securing our borders, and saving lives. We must pass this important legislation to protect innocent lives and ensure the safety of our families and our communities.

CONGRATULATING DALE MEYERHOEFFER

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend a resident of Verona, Virginia, who cares passionately about preserving the lands and cultures that epitomize our American heritage.

On December 11, 2024, in a ceremony in Washington, D.C., it was announced that Dale Meyerhoeffer received the National Park Service 2023 Director's Award for Excellence in Natural Resource Management.

Mr. Meyerhoeffer is a biological technician whose undaunted efforts to save Shenandoah National Park's remaining eastern hemlock trees preserved an ecologically important resource for the park.

After the death of 95 percent of the park's hemlocks from an invasive insect, Meyerhoeffer, with the help from volunteers and park staff, used insecticide treatment to protect more than 30,000 hemlocks.

To reduce the park's reliance on pesticide treatments, Meyerhoeffer worked with researchers from Virginia Tech to procure and release host-specific, predatory beetles and flies in hopes of controlling the invasive insect.

This effort culminated in major success for Shenandoah National Park and the Sixth District of Virginia. We thank him for his persistence and contribution to our great Nation.

RECOGNIZING THE RESTORATION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Restoration Community Development Corporation in Luray, Virginia, and its selfless founder, Pastor Audre King. Pastor King grew up in Page County and has made a difference in the community since he moved back 8 years ago.

Pastor King founded Living Legacy, a community nonprofit that serves as an umbrella organization, focused on underprivileged youth. Its most recent initiative is the Restoration Community Development Corporation, which aims to restore houses and give unhoused mothers and their children a place to live.

A house in the heart of Luray was rehabilitated in December and is now home to 4 moms and 11 children who are grateful to live together as a family. The moms attend church service and life skills classes and are offered recovery sessions as needed.

They also pay a portion of the upkeep and save for the future. Pastor King hopes to finish a second house for fathers by the end of February and eventually hopes to expand across the county.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Restoration Community Development Corporation and Pastor King for their exceptional work in the Sixth District of Virginia.

HONORING ARCHITECT FRIEDRICH ST. FLORIAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and remember architect Friedrich St. Florian.

He was a visionary architect whose profound design of the National World War II Memorial on our National Mall has left an indelible, enduring mark honoring our Nation's history along that historic Mall of democracy—our collective memory.

Friedrich's architecture does more than commemorate. It invites reflection, on that area of the Mall, on the sacrifices of the greatest and most unselfish generation this Nation has ever seen, ensuring that their valor, unity, and sacrifice are honored for all time.

Friedrich was born amidst the throes of conflict in Graz, Austria. Friedrich's early experiences of war profoundly shaped his values and vision. His architectural design of the World War II Memorial was not merely a professional task. It stands as his personal tribute to freedom and to democracy and its cost.

He was deeply informed by his own moment of liberation at the end of World War II. How fortunate as an American he could connect that experience to our own. The memorial represents the 20th century's most valued achievement: The victory of liberty over tyranny.

As an Austrian by birth and an American by choice, Friedrich brought grace, dignity, and artistry along with his deeply held belief in the cost of liberty.

The memorial and its design stands as a testament to his commitment to honor the sacrifices of those who fought to save liberty for our generation and those to follow.

As we reflect on his enormous legacy, let us visit the National World War II Memorial as nearly 100 million Americans have done already. Let us share the stories of those who served and what they fought for and against, and ensure that their sacrifices continue to inspire future generations.

Friedrich St. Florian's work remains a symbol of our gratitude, a beacon of hope for peace where nearly, as I mentioned, visitors from near and far have come. As the designers intended, this memorial sits between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial and was designed as a plaza where people can come and reflect on the awesome history of our great country.

I thank Friedrich and his family and all those who assisted him for his monumental gift from the 20th century to our Nation going forward.

He will be dearly missed, but through his outstanding work with every detail, even the type of stone that was used, he will never ever be forgotten.

ARIZONA FIREFIGHTERS ASSIST IN CALIFORNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CISCOMANI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the bravery of and share my sincere appreciation to all the firefighters in my district and across Arizona who went above and beyond the call of duty to help our neighbors in southern California during the recent devastating fires.

In particular, I thank all of the firefighters from the Tucson Fire Department, the Northwest Fire Department, the Golder Ranch Fire District, and the Fry Fire District, who took time away from their families and communities to be deployed to California to help.

In this time of crisis, while others run away, our firefighters run toward danger, braving smoke and fire to protect life and property. Their selfless dedication, courage, and commitment to service embody the very best of our communities and reminds us of the unity that binds us all as Americans.

These brave men and women put themselves in harm's way, working tirelessly in grueling conditions to contain the flames and provide relief to those affected.

I thank the firefighters who answer the call. Their heroism does not go unnoticed. Their willingness to put themselves at risk for the safety of others is a testament to their extraordinary character.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents and a grateful Nation, I extend my deepest gratitude. We honor their service today and always.

CELEBRATING PINAL COUNTY'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a remarkable milestone in my district's history: the 150th anniversary of Pinal County, which happens to be on February 1.

Since its establishment in 1875, Pinal County has grown from its rich roots in mining and agriculture into a thriving community shaped by the hard work, resilience, and spirit of its people.

Mr. Speaker, as we reflect on this historic occasion, let us give thanks to the men and women, past and present, who built Pinal County into such a wonderful place to live, work, explore, and visit.

Representing the incredible people of Pinal County in Congress has truly been the honor of a lifetime, and I am so honored to continue serving all of them.

Whether it is working with mayors to revitalize historic streets in Eloy, improving operations at the Oracle Fire District, advocating for the expansion of I–10, working to help students and educators in Casa Grande achieve their American Dream, or spending time in the great communities in Saddlebrooke, I will never stop fighting to make Pinal County the best place it can be.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my constituents in Pinal County for being part of an incredible journey. The best is yet to come. Here is to another 150 years.

□ 1015

CAUTIONING FEDERAL WORKERS AGAINST TAKING BUYOUTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to urge Federal workers in Pennsylvania and across the Nation to exercise extreme caution as they consider the bogus buyout plan that the White House is pressuring them to accept.

In a memo to Federal workers last week, Trump's Office of Personnel Management notified Federal workers across the country that they had just over a week, until tomorrow, February 6, to voluntarily quit their jobs in exchange for keeping pay and benefits for 8 months. The memo threatened that if they refused the offer, their jobs might no longer exist.

Tens of thousands of Federal workers in the Philadelphia region received that email and were rightly concerned. The workers impacted by the memo include those who care for our veterans, protect our ports and airports, fight corruption and drug traffickers, and make sure that our food is safe to eat, that our air is clean, and that our water is safe to drink.

The OPM memo is one in a series of directives by the Trump White House aimed at gutting the Federal Government and the critical services it provides to Americans in order to justify massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations. We have already seen illegal firings of hundreds of career civil servants and unconstitutional attempts to shutter entire agencies.

Union leaders immediately began raising the alarm that the buyout offer could be a scam. Congress has not authorized or funded these radical cuts to the government workforce and services, and employees could be left without the pay, benefits, and protections to which they are entitled by law.

The proposed workforce reductions would make it impossible for the Federal Government to deliver the services that Congress has authorized and Americans deserve. They would, however, make it easier for large corporations to take advantage of consumers and employees and to pollute the environment.

The unions have filed suit to protect their employees, and yesterday, 12 State attorneys general, including those in New Jersey and Delaware, issued a warning to Federal employees across the country that the buyout offer was misleading and should be viewed with caution.

Amidst the concern about the legality and impact of this unauthorized buyout, our colleagues from across the aisle, at both the State and Federal levels, have gone missing in action. Republicans control both the House and Senate in Washington, and we would welcome their help to stand up for the Constitution, for our constituents, and for Federal workers.

We will continue to raise the alarm and do everything possible to protect Americans and our Constitution from the worst abuses of this administration and its billionaire buddies because construction workers and contractors in our area know that the Trump corporation never kept its promises with respect to pay and meeting its obligations.

Mr. Speaker, the whole world knows that Twitter became a dumpster fire after Elon Musk tried to impact the exact types of reductions that we are seeing here, so I am issuing this warning to our constituents across the Delaware Valley.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF NUCLEAR POWER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak a little bit about the amazing asset we have available to us in this country of nuclear power and nuclear generation. We are not taking advantage of that technology as well as we should for how efficient it is and the multiplier effect it has.

Right now, in this country, we do have 93 commercial nuclear reactors, and they generate approximately 20 percent of the Nation's electricity. We are indeed a very large producer of nuclear power in the world scheme of things, but we have some very good partners around the world, such as France, Japan, and some of the other Western countries that are really good at it, as well.

Within the U.S., we have reactors in 28 different States. Illinois leads with 11 reactors. Pennsylvania has nine. California has one. It used to have two. We are lucky we have the one, as they just had a recent 5-year extension on the life of what is called Diablo Canyon. Its usable life is 20, 30, or maybe 40 more years or beyond that with retrofitting.

I hope we can hang on to that because that alone represents in my home State, California, 9 percent of the grid with just one plant. Can we imagine knocking that out and removing 9 percent off the grid? It provides power 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. We don't have to wait for the wind to blow. We don't have to wait for the Sun to come up or the clouds to part. It is reliable electricity. Indeed, it has a capacity factor of about 92 percent, which indicates how reliable it is and how efficient it is.

It is also used extensively in our Navy, providing amazing performance for our aircraft carriers and especially our submarines. The old style of submarines used to have to surface to recharge batteries and run diesel at that point. Our nuclear submarines can stay underwater for as long as they strategically need to.

That is a great asset for carriers, as well, because those are very large craft, and the amount of fuel they would need otherwise, except for this really small ball of energy that is within that nuclear reactor, propels those for years and years at a time. It is amazing how much power comes from that concentrated area.

When we talk about nuclear power plants and this conversation about carbon dioxide, the plants we have in this country avoid the production of about 476 million metric tons of carbon dioxide. I am not going to be the guy that stands here and complains about carbon dioxide. I think it is an essential building block. For those who are, why aren't we doing more nuclear if carbon is a big concern? Why aren't we doing more in that department to make carbon-free power, which is nuclear as well as hydroelectric power?

We have a fair amount of that in northern California, in my district, and other Western States, as well, except for the fact they tore down four hydroelectric dams just during this past year because of, ostensibly, a fish issue. We have lost that source of CO_2-free power.

Moving toward the use of uranium, that amazing metal that can generate so much power, we need to do all we can here in Congress to help fund and incentivize more nuclear power for this country because it is going to be a very important part of our grid.

We are right on the cusp of the ability to expand that technology. Some of my colleagues are doing some very good work on that. The United States should move forward on that and take advantage of that, as well as develop the uranium supplies that we need for nuclear generation as well as the amazing uses that there are in medical technology.

Why aren't we producing more of it in this country where we have reserves and can find more reserves? We have that ability to be self-sufficient on energy, and nuclear power can play a big role in that in the coming years if we in Congress will help expedite that process.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission can look for ways to expedite getting more permits, getting more online, as well as approving new technologies, which are out there, that are even more efficient.

With the concern about the nuclear waste, there are ways that are out there that are being developed that could be so much better for how we would store waste or even reuse it. Why are we not recycling those fuel rods in this country? Why do we have arbitrary laws against the ability to recycle the rods where we are able to reduce the amount of that material by an additional 90 percent and put it back to work for us?

Mr. Speaker, it is because of hangups with the idea of what side effects it might have. It is not a problem. It would be very good.

SUPPORTING MILITARY FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. VINDMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bipartisan bill, the Support Military Families Act, that upholds our commitment to both our Federal workforce and the families of those who serve our country in uniform.

As a 25-year Army veteran, I know the professional sacrifice our military spouses make for the Nation. My wife, Cindy, has had a wonderful career alongside mine, but it was a challenge to make it work with what the Army required of me.

Last week, my office heard from a constituent who works remotely for the headquarters of a Federal agency in Washington, D.C. Her husband is an Active-Duty servicemember stationed in Virginia, and they cannot relocate. She has only three options to comply with President Trump's return-to-work executive order: Her husband can leave the military, she can drive 200 miles round trip to D.C. every day, or she can leave her job of more than 18 years.

That is a choice that no military family should have to make. That is why I am introducing this bipartisan bill, my first bill as a Member of Congress, to exempt military spouses from the in-person work mandate. I do so with my good friend, Representative ROBERT WITTMAN, who is a tremendous champion for our military and their families.

This commonsense and simple solution guarantees that those serving our country in uniform can continue their mission, that our Federal agencies retain experienced staff, and that military families remain together.

Supporting military families is not a partisan issue. It is an American issue. This isn't just one family's story. It is a reality for countless military spouses across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join in standing up for the military families who sacrifice so much for our country.

CONDITIONS FOR DISASTER AID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. FIGURES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FIGURES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay honor and respect to all those who paved the way and had a hand and responsibility for me standing here today as a Member of Congress, a place where I could not stand in this capacity when this building was constructed, both those historical figures as well as those who more presently were actively involved in supporting and praying for and campaigning for us to be here. That includes my wife, Dr. Kalisha Dessources Figures. I certainly would not be here without her support.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to say happy birthday to my mother, who I call Mama. She celebrated a birthday while we were not in session, and I both literally and figuratively would not be here without her. I thank her and love her, and I wish her a happy birthday.

Mr. Speaker, it could not be more fitting for me to be here and to discuss my mother because one of the lessons she repetitively ingrained in us as children was the concept of treating others the way we would want to be treated, treating others how we would like to be treated in the same or similar circumstance.

Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a predicament as it relates to wildfire aid to California, where too many colleagues and our President are not abiding by that baseline principle.

I am just a freshman here. There is the question of what I know about how things work here. I am still learning where the bathrooms are, as they say. I don't have the relationships. I don't understand the dynamics. I don't know how things move here yet.

Here is what I do know. I know about decency. I know about compassion. I know that when someone comes from a community like mine on the Gulf of Mexico, names like Camille, Frederic, Ivan, Danny, and Katrina mean a little something different to us. I know that I come from a community where the average individual median income is just south of $32,000.

People cannot afford to just rebuild their lives without disaster aid. I know when people come from where I come from, it is not a question of if we will be hit by disaster. It is a matter of when. It is not a matter of if our community will need Federal disaster aid. It is how much we will need and how fast we can get it there.

I stand here today in support of California because I know that by standing for California, I am standing for Alabama. By standing for Los Angeles, I am standing for cities like Mobile, Leroy, Jackson, Evergreen, Monroeville, Montgomery, Tuskegee, Eufaula, Phenix City, and Union Springs. I know enough, even as a freshman, to know that, one day, the shoe will be on the other foot.

□ 1030

I know that we will not always find ourselves in the dynamic as we are now where Republicans are in control of the House.

One day, Democrats will be in control, a Republican community will be in need of disaster aid, and not a single Republican now that is supporting applying restrictions and conditions onto the aid will then stand up and say that we should apply conditions to that aid.

It is not right, it is unnecessary, and quite frankly, it is un-American. It is not who we are. We pride ourselves on those cornerstones of the religion that most of us claim to abide by in this House. Those cornerstones are grace, mercy, and compassion.

We pride ourselves on being able to say that we live in a country where we have the backs of the people that call themselves Americans as well.

This is not like us. It simply is not.

California pays the most in Federal taxes of any State in this Union. They subsidize most of the States, or many of the States, rather, including the State of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and Alabama.

We need to be there for them. I know that today the L.A. that needs help stands for Los Angeles, but tomorrow that LA could be Louisiana or it could be lower Alabama, as some people call back home. It could be FLA as in Florida. We have to stand up for California now. We have to do better.

As a freshman, I don't know much, but I know what my mama taught me. I know this ain't it, and I know this is not what the mothers of my colleagues taught them.

We have to put aside the partisan nonsense and do right by the American people because one day your community will be in need as well.

HONORING SAMUEL LILLEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and the service of Samuel Lilley, a dedicated pilot and proud resident of Richmond Hill, Georgia, in the First Congressional District. His tragic passing in a midair collision near Washington, D.C., is a heartbreaking loss for his family, his community, and for our Nation.

Sam was a graduate of Richmond Hill High School where he was known for his strong work ethic, his leadership, and his kindness. He was driven. He was hardworking and always willing to

lend a hand to those in need. He had a bright future ahead of him filled with dreams and aspirations that he was determined to achieve.

Beyond his many accomplishments, Sam was a charismatic and intelligent young man who loved his fiance, Lydia Coles; flying; his family; and the Lord. His passing leaves an unimaginable void in the lives of those who have loved him, but his memory will forever remain in their hearts.

The Richmond Hill community has come together to mourn and honor his life, a testament to the impact he had on so many.

We extend our deepest condolences to his family, to his fiance, and to his loved ones. May they find comfort in the lasting memories of his life and his legacy.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 33 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DESJARLAIS) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Show us Your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us Your deliverance. For we find ourselves in times of turmoil and tension, disagreements and dissension. But if we can open our hearts to receive Your life-changing mercy and experience Your soul-penetrating grace, we will be redeemed from our own discord, restored to common purpose and mutual respect.

Let us listen that we will hear what You speak. When You pronounce health in our afflictions, may we receive it. When You promise peace to Your people, may we live it. When we walk to the right or to the left, may our ears hear Your word behind us, saying, ''This is the way. Walk in it.''

The Word of the Lord is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. The voice of the Lord is over the waters. The glory of God is heard in the thunder over many waters. Lord, pierce our soul and spirit, our joints and marrow, and discern our thoughts and the intentions of our hearts. Then may we in this place hear and heed Your Word.

It is on the foundation of this word we stand, and in the strength of Your name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. WHITESIDES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WHITESIDES led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HONORING THE LIFE OF REPRESENTATIVE MARTIN GRABER

(Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today with a heavy heart to honor the life and legacy of a dear friend, a true servant of our State, and an extraordinary public servant, Representative Martin Graber. His unexpected passing leaves a void that cannot be filled.

For all who knew him, Martin was more than a colleague. He was a friend, mentor, and dedicated leader. A proud veteran with 32 years of service in the Iowa National Guard and a distinguished representative of Iowa House District 100, Martin was a man of integrity, always putting the people of southeast Iowa first. His commitment to faith, community, and service will never be forgotten.

To his beloved wife, Coni, their daughters and granddaughters, his entire family, and the rodeo family, we extend our deepest condolences. Martin's genuine care and unwavering dedication to those he served left an indelible mark on all of us.

Mr. Speaker, may God bless his memory, and may we continue to honor his spirit of service as we move forward.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO LOCAL FOOD IN NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, Growing Places, an imaginative nonprofit based in Leominster, Massachusetts, is leading a new effort in our region to improve access to local fruits and vegetables. They have established a local food processing center that takes raw produce, items like old butternut squash, potatoes, apples, carrots, and cauliflower, and peels, chops, and packages it into an easy-to-consume form.

When I visited, we peeled and cubed local squash for schools and hospitals that could be roasted or easily turned into soup. This processing center helps farmers more easily take the nutritious food that they grow to market. It helps institutions purchase more local food because they often don't have the equipment or resources to prepare the raw produce onsite. It improves access to local produce for families at school, work, and home through their produce delivery program.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the incredible Ayn Yeagle and the entire Growing Places team for their work to improve our local food system, make us all healthier, and end hunger now.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize National School Counseling Week.

Since its establishment by the American School Counselor Association, National School Counseling Week has highlighted these professionals' essential role in shaping the future. From helping students navigate academic challenges to providing critical support for their mental well-being, school counselors are instrumental in ensuring that every child has the tools they need to thrive.

We all know that a student's success isn't just measured in grades or test scores. It is also reflected in their confidence, resilience, and ability to handle life's challenges. Additionally, school counselors provide critical information to students on all options available to them for their careers, including successful pathways through career and technical education.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the school counselors who dedicate their lives to this mission. They are a steady source of guidance for students who need it most. Because of their dedication, we are building stronger schools, healthier communities, and a brighter future for the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, let's continue to invest in our students' well-being and ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

PROTECTING AGAINST EXTREME GOVERNMENT OVERREACH

(Mr. WHITESIDES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WHITESIDES. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a minute to talk about the events of this week and to rise on behalf of law enforcement in this country.

I know that people across my district and across the country are deeply concerned about the personal data being exposed in an act of extreme government overreach. We are doing everything we can to put a stop to it. We are pursuing legislation that will stop it, and we will also work on legal avenues to prevent this and other unlawful executive actions taken by this administration.

I also want to take a moment to talk about the recent attacks against the FBI and brave law enforcement officials who defended our Capitol on January 6 from a violent insurrection.

In just the past 2 weeks, violent criminals were released from prison and have been making direct threats against public safety officers who helped put them away. These law enforcement officers have now been asked to step away from their actual jobs to take surveys and loyalty tests to the current President.

That is not how we should treat our law enforcement, our FBI, or anyone who has put their own safety at risk to protect all of us. We must all step up in this historic moment to be on the record for law enforcement.

ADDRESSING FENTANYL CRISIS

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, the issue of fentanyl is not getting any better in this country. We hear more and more stories about yet another big cache of it being found, enough to kill millions of Americans.

Thankfully, President Trump is doing what needs to be done to control our border and make sure that Mexico and Canada are stepping up to do their part.

What we have available to us is the HALT Fentanyl Act, critical legislation to keep fentanyl-related substances permanently classified as schedule I drugs so law enforcement has an extra tool to help stop this poison from flooding into our country.

Right now, fentanyl is the leading cause of deaths for Americans aged 18 to 45. I will say that again: The leading cause of deaths for Americans aged 18 to 45 is the fentanyl coming across our border. It is being disguised as prescription pills. One mistake or one touch can be fatal.

This crisis has been fueled by years of the Biden administration's open-border policies. They are made in Mexico with chemicals from China, and traffickers are bringing them across the border with little resistance, at least until now.

Mr. Speaker, if Congress does not act, the schedule I classification will expire, making it harder for law enforcement to crack down on traffickers and stop these deadly drugs. The House needs to pass this bill immediately to get it done.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF VERONICA LYNN HORN

(Ms. MCDONALD RIVET asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCDONALD RIVET. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life of Veronica Lynn Horn of Frankenmuth, Michigan.

Throughout her life, Veronica fought ferociously to make mid-Michigan a better place to work, start a business, and raise a family.

Veronica's leadership quite literally shaped communities like Saginaw County. She served in two congressional offices, worked for some of the biggest job creators in our district, was the president and CEO of the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce, and worked with countless nonprofits across the region.

As I entered the State senate, I was lucky to count Veronica and her husband, Ken, as allies in the fight for Saginaw County. Veronica would work with anyone, regardless of political affiliation, to find common ground and attack a problem together.

Mr. Speaker, may Veronica's memory serve as a shining example of commitment to faith, family, and community.

PROMOTING DEMOCRACY IN TUNISIA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Tunisia's inspiring Arab Spring revolution in 2011 made the country a symbol of courageous democratic patriots. Sadly, in 2021, Tunisia's dictator, Kais Saied, sabotaged the successful democracy.

Tunisia has been corrupted into a dictatorship enforced by rule of gun. The Constitution and elected parliament are suspended. In rigged elections last October, dictator Saied fabricated over 90 percent of the votes, jailed opponents and parliament members, including the former Prime Minister and parliament speaker who were illegally sentenced today, and coordinated with war criminal Putin, the Chinese Communist Party, and the terrorist regime in Tehran.

Aid to Tunisia should be suspended and sanctions imposed until democracy is restored. I urge support for the Tunisian Democracy Restoration Act.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more imminent 9/11 attacks, as warned by the FBI. Trump is reinstituting existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength and fighting fentanyl.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu to America. We appreciate his success for Middle East peace and prosperity, deterring a nuclear Iran.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION IS UNDERMINING FOUNDATION OF OUR COUNTRY

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a former prosecutor and a Republican political appointee in the Bush administration's Justice Department. I know the law. All I see is the President and Elon Musk's unelected cabal flagrantly breaking the law.

Last week, the Trump administration recklessly issued and then rescinded a memo freezing taxpayer funds lawfully appropriated by Congress to local agencies, nonprofits, and school districts. This week, Musk agents demanded access to the Bureau of the Fiscal Service, overriding laws and regulations and accessing the most sensitive personal information of every American.

Every promise to lower costs and put the working and middle class first was a lie. The reckless quest to sell out the American people and silence opposition jeopardizes our national security and undermines the very foundation of our country.

Mr. Speaker, Project 2025 is the playbook; fear is the weapon; and greed is the point.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

HONORING BREVARD COUNTY SHERIFF WAYNE IVEY

(Mr. HARIDOPOLOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and extend my gratitude to Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey and the dedicated men and women of the sheriff's department for their unwavering commitment to protecting our community.

Just last week, I had the opportunity to sit down with Sheriff Ivey and actually go on a ride-along and see the challenges they face each and every day. That day, deputies actually arrested a man who was found to be in possession of enough fentanyl to kill 20,000 people.

This dangerous reality that our law enforcement officers confront every day is due to the failures of the prior administration to secure our border. The deadly impact of fentanyl has devastated communities across America,

and strong action must be taken to end this crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Sheriff Ivey and the brave men and women of the Brevard County Sheriff's Office for this opportunity to see firsthand the challenges they face, and I will continue to stand with law enforcement as we fight to keep our communities safe.

□ 1215

HONORING KENNETH LEE PARKER

(Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Kenneth Lee Parker, the former mayor of Momeyer, North Carolina.

Kenneth was a dedicated public servant and a true pillar of the Momeyer community. For over 25 years, he selflessly served as mayor, dedicating his time as assistant fire chief and a volunteer EMT.

Kenneth's commitment to his community didn't stop there. For 52 years, he was actively involved in the Ruritan club where he and his wife, Colleen, provided delicious meals and he gracefully embodied its motto: ''fellowship, goodwill, and community service.''

We reflect on Kenneth's remarkable life and contributions, and I extend my prayers to his family and all those who were fortunate enough to have known him. His legacy of kindness and service will forever resonate in our hearts. May we all find inspiration in Kenneth's example and strive to make a difference as he did.

ELECTING A MEMBER TO A CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Republican Conference, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 107

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE: Mr. Moylan (to rank immediately after Mr. Rulli).

Mr. GRIFFITH (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ELECTING A MEMBER TO A CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 108

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Ms. Chu to rank immediately after Ms. Jayapal.

Mr. AGUILAR (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE STRATEGIC COMPETITION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment pursuant to section 4(a) of House Resolution 5, 119th Congress, and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Members to the Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party:

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Illinois
Ms. CASTOR, Florida
Mr. CARSON, Indiana
Mr. MOULTON, Massachusetts
Mr. KHANNA, California
Ms. SHERRILL, New Jersey
Ms. STEVENS, Michigan
Mr. TORRES, New York
Ms. BROWN, Ohio
Mr. STANTON, Arizona
Ms. TOKUDA, Hawaii

CONTINUATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SITUATION IN AND IN RELATION TO BURMA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 119–17)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the situation in and in relation to Burma declared in Executive Order 14014 of February 10, 2021, is to continue in effect beyond February 10, 2025.

The situation in and in relation to Burma, and in particular the February 1, 2021, coup—in which the military overthrew the democratically elected civilian government of Burma and unjustly arrested and detained government leaders, politicians, human rights defenders, journalists, and religious leaders, thereby rejecting the will of the people of Burma and undermining the country's democratic transition and rule of law—continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore , I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 14014 with respect to the situation in and in relation to Burma.

DONALD J. TRUMP,
THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 4, 2025.*

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 27, HALT ALL LETHAL TRAFFICKING OF FENTANYL ACT

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 93 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 93

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 27) to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce or their respective designees; (2) the further amendment printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question; and (3) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I further ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, last night the Rules Committee met and reported out a rule for one measure, H.R. 27, the HALT Fentanyl Act, under a structured rule.

The rule provides for 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce or their respective designees and provides for one motion to recommit.

As most Members know, unfortunately, we all know somebody who has been affected by the drug overdose epidemic plaguing our country.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2023, there were more than 107,000 overdose deaths that occurred in the United States. These staggering numbers are due in large part to the increased presence of fentanyl and fentanyl analogues or fentanyl-related substances, which are approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin. The lethal dose of fentanyl is just 2 milligrams, or about 4 grains of sand.

A loophole the cartels use and have tried to use to traffic illicit fentanyl into our country is by changing just one component of fentanyl's chemical structure in order to create a fentanyl analogue or a fentanyl-related substance. The cartels did this in an attempt to evade our criminal laws.

Right now, fentanyl analogues are considered schedule I substances but only because of a series of temporary scheduling orders, which is now set to expire on March 31, 2025.

Along with my colleague, Mr. LATTA from Ohio, we decided to introduce H.R. 27, the HALT Fentanyl Act.

The bill aims to curb overdose deaths by permanently scheduling fentanyl analogues or fentanyl-related substances as schedule I substances. This will strengthen law enforcement's ability to prosecute fentanyl traffickers and act as a deterrent.

The HALT Fentanyl Act also promotes research by improving the registration process to eligible individuals so that they can conduct studies on schedule I substances with appropriate safeguards.

In the Energy and Commerce Committee, we have heard testimony that there may be as many as 4,800 individual analogues or fentanyl-related substances. Our experts at the NIH, the FDA, and others have studied roughly 30 to 40 of those 4,800 analogues or fentanyl-related substances.

By encouraging research of schedule I substances like fentanyl analogues, we can better understand how these substances work and how we can prevent potentially harmful impacts in the future or even find a better use or a better opportunity than the current fentanyl that we use.

Because fentanyl has a proven medical use, it is considered a schedule II narcotic, as the Speaker knows, having practiced medicine for many years.

Illicit derivatives of fentanyl, also called fentanyl analogues, currently have not demonstrated a medical value.

Let me be clear. This bill will have no impact whatsoever on physicians' ability to administer fentanyl in medical settings.

The HALT Fentanyl Act deals specifically with fentanyl analogues or fentanyl-related substances, not medicinal fentanyl.

The Biden administration even released a statement when this bill passed through the House last Congress stating that they supported permanent scheduling and streamlined research for fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances.

We must address this bipartisan issue immediately and not allow this temporary extension to expire.

Once fentanyl analogues are permanently scheduled in schedule I, Congress will continue to build off this work to continue to address the illicit fentanyl crisis.

According to a 2021 GAO report, there was a 90 percent decrease in these fentanyl analogues coming into our country the year they were first placed into schedule I.

This bill is a critical step in combating the opioid crisis in our country because China and Mexico are heavily involved in this business. China is sending the precursors of fentanyl and fentanyl analogues to the cartels in Mexico, who are then bringing it across our border.

By making these analogs permanently schedule I, it removes the incentive for the cartels to traffic these analogues or fentanyl-related substance drugs into our country. China even realized the risk of fentanyl analogues and permanently scheduled those analogues on their strictest schedule. Other countries have followed suit and done the same.

Last Congress, this bill cleared through the Energy and Commerce Committee on a bipartisan basis and then passed on the House floor with 74 Democrats voting in favor.

The bill has the support of many law enforcement agencies and other entities calling for the need to pass the bill as it is.

We must act quickly to make the scheduling order permanent before it expires again at the end of March.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the legislation at hand, the so-called HALT Fentanyl Act, all I can say is folks on the other side must be living on another freaking planet.

□ 1230

Mr. Speaker, Republicans want to come down here and lecture people about fentanyl. Let's talk about fentanyl.

President Donald J. Trump, during his very first week in office, pardoned a drug dealer who helped fentanyl pour into our country. Let me repeat that nice and slowly so it sinks in.

As one of his first acts in office, Donald J. Trump pardoned a drug dealer who was sentenced to life in Federal prison who let fentanyl into America.

I just have a simple question for my friends on the other side: Why? Why? Why isn't this guy still in jail?

Why would Donald Trump let out a drug dealer like this?

The guy is sentenced to life in Federal prison. I wish I had an answer. Maybe they can explain it to us. They like to talk so much about pardons, but they are silent on this one. We hear crickets from the other side. It makes you wonder, Mr. Speaker, what is going on here.

Let me read the ICE press release for when this guy was arrested.

Are you ready for this, Mr. Speaker?

ICE says that the guy Donald Trump pardoned helped ''thousands of drug dealers and other unlawful vendors distribute hundreds of kilograms of illegal drugs and other unlawful goods and services to more than 100,000 buyers and to launder hundreds of millions of dollars deriving from these unlawful transactions.''

It goes on to explain how he distributed narcotics that were linked to overdose deaths across the country.

People died as a result of this criminality.

This is a guy who made the cartels rich, who made it easier for China to mail fentanyl into our country. This is a guy who let the drugs pour into our communities, tearing families apart, getting people sick, exposing people to danger, and causing numerous deaths.

He was pardoned. He was pardoned by Donald Trump.

It takes a lot of nerve, Mr. Speaker, to let out the fentanyl guy and then come down here with a straight face and tell people that we are all about stopping drugs coming into America.

Let's not get started about the funding freeze that Trump is trying to put into place. Trump wants to block hundreds of billions of dollars in bipartisan

funding for law enforcement, including blocking money going after fentanyl. He wants to block State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program. Republicans are in court right now fighting to gut it all.

Why are they doing this?

The answer is very simple, actually. They are stealing. They are stealing taxpayer dollars. Republicans want to steal from you, the American people, to give Elon and Trump more tax breaks and more tax write-offs for their private jets, their mansions, islands, and yachts. It is corruption: good, old-fashioned, plain and simple corruption.

Then they will come down here to the floor and pretend to care about fentanyl while they pardon the drug dealers who profit off of people's pain and gut the programs that keep drugs off our streets.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? Let's talk about those tariffs, yes, the tariffs that Trump kept bragging about that he promised he was going to slap on our allies Canada and Mexico. If he was successful, they would have sent domestic costs on food, gas, and household goods spiraling out of control. Then, when people started paying attention, when we stood up for the workers and when the public fought back, Trump folded. He lost. He rescinded his funding freeze. He walked back his tariffs, and he got nothing in exchange.

Trump wants to give us this impression that he has power and strength. He really has none. He backed down on his funding freeze. He backed down on his tariffs. The courts are rejecting his executive orders because guess what, Mr. Speaker? He is not king, and we are fighting back.

I can promise you this, Mr. Speaker: We are going to fight back with every single ounce of strength we have to prevent this President and his billionaire sidekick from undermining the rule of law and stealing from the people we were elected to protect.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I understand there are all kinds of concerns on the other side of the aisle, but we are talking about the HALT Fentanyl Act.

I could stand here and talk about Burma. We heard today that the President has extended the emergency situation with Burma, that undemocratic country where they overthrew the democratically elected government and how Burma, also known as Myanmar, is the largest cultivator of opium products and the producer of heroin globally, second only to Afghanistan. That doesn't have anything to do with the HALT Fentanyl Act. The HALT Fentanyl Act is a good bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to my good friend from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY), who will talk about the bill some more.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support today of the rule which provides consideration of the HALT Fentanyl Act. For 4 long years, the American people suffered from an administration that time and again refused to take seriously the flood of deadly fentanyl-related substances and analogues flooding into our communities.

Fentanyl-related overdose has remained the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18 to 49 for much of the last several years. Millions of families have been torn apart, and our towns and our cities have suffered from the blight of crime and homelessness that has grown from this epidemic. Not one corner of our country has been left untouched by the fentanyl crisis. Urban, suburban, rural, rich, poor, old, and young lives have been torn apart, and families have been torn apart.

The previous administration could have addressed this tragedy head-on by securing our borders and protecting our communities, but time and again, they refused, and Democrats here in the House of Representatives supported that decision.

The HALT Fentanyl Act before us today permanently schedules fentanyl-related substances on schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act, a crucial step that will ensure that law enforcement and our communities are empowered to address this deadly scourge head-on.

To my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who spent years cheering an administration that allowed the flood of these substances to pour in from our southern border unchecked: Now is your time to support one important step in combating the epidemic that has taken too many lives and destroyed too many homes and communities.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the legislation under this rule today, Mr. Speaker, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, there has been no response from either of the gentlemen about why it was okay for Trump to pardon the guy who let the fentanyl into this country and who made hundreds of millions of dollars off of fentanyl. He was sentenced to life in prison, and he let him out.

You are okay with that, yet you are coming down here saying that you really care about fighting fentanyl in our country. There has been not a peep from the other side justifying what Trump did.

One of his first acts as President was to pardon this guy who received life in prison for his crime. He received life in prison.

Mr. Speaker, I urge we defeat the previous question. If we do, then I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 4531, the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act.

Mr. Speaker, the SUPPORT Act reauthorization would permanently place xylazine in schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act. However, unlike the bill before us today, it doesn't stop at scheduling.

The bill reauthorizes resources for residential substance use disorder treatment for pregnant and postpartum women. It provides resources for training and education related to fentanyl and other illicit substances for first responders, and it ensures that Medicaid beneficiaries have access to medication-assisted treatment.

Here is the best part, Mr. Speaker. This bill already passed last Congress with 386 votes. One hundred ninety Republicans voted for it, and it was included in the end-of-year spending package.

Guess what happened, Mr. Speaker?

Elon Musk tanked that deal for reasons that no one seems to be able to explain to me, and this good bill was never signed into law.

Mr. Speaker, passing this bill would mean, to quote the chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce who helped lead this bill in the last Congress, that this bill could help save lives by preventing overdoses and providing access to immediate and long-term care recovery services.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment into the RECORD, along with any extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) to introduce that proposal.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member MCGOVERN for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, if the previous question is defeated, Democrats plan to offer a vote on the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act.

The SUPPORT Act, which House Republicans unceremoniously abandoned after billionaire-in-chief Elon Musk tanked the end-of-year bipartisan package, would have reauthorized a wide range of prevention, treatment, and recovery programs that included a 2-year extension of scheduling for fentanyl-related substances.

This bipartisan approach, which focused not only on disrupting the drug supply but also investing in the full spectrum of prevention, treatment, and recovery, passed the House overwhelmingly by a vote of 386–37, as was made mention by Representative MCGOVERN, in the 118th Congress.

Passing this vital legislation would have helped continue our progress against the overdose epidemic which finally saw overdose deaths start to decline during the Biden administration

after skyrocketing during the first Trump administration.

It is indeed clear that Republicans just aren't serious about addressing this crisis. They are using cheap sound bites and photo ops to exploit parents' pain and to distract Americans while President Trump, Elon Musk, and their cronies rob us blind and dismantle the very programs that individuals rely on to get treatment and live a life of recovery for their situations.

With last week's Federal funding freeze, Trump and Musk immediately halted over some $8 billion in programs working to combat the opioid crisis, including: $6.5 billion for SAMHSA that would support naloxone distribution in our communities, drug-free community programs to keep kids off drugs, and medication-assisted treatment programs. It also authorized $1.5 billion for addiction research at the National Institutes of Health to help deliver the next generation of lifesaving treatments.

Unfortunately, that is not all.

As we speak, Republicans are cooking up plans to steal over $2.5 trillion from Medicaid, jeopardizing healthcare for 72 million people and decimating the single biggest payer for substance use care, just so that they can give more tax breaks to Elon Musk and his billionaire buddies.

Cutting lifesaving prevention and treatment services to the bone while trying to restart a failed 1980s war on drugs?

America should just say no.

In closing, I urge my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to defeat the previous question so that we can vote on a real plan to tackle this epidemic that continues to ravage our communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I keep thinking I am here to talk about the HALT Fentanyl Act, but they keep talking about all kinds of other things.

My colleagues have acknowledged that the HALT Fentanyl Act passed in the last Congress with a large majority, yet here we are using this as a vehicle to talk about everything else they think is going wrong in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I have a little bill here. It does some good. We ought to pass it. If my colleagues want to talk about lots of other stuff, they are entitled to. That is their right. However, I don't want the focus taken off the HALT Fentanyl Act. It is a good bill. It helps law enforcement. It helps slow down the flood across the southern border. That is what we are here about today.

I know if the motion on the previous question fails, then they are going to introduce a different bill. However, my understanding is their bill completely eliminates and doesn't have anything in their language about halting fentanyl.

This is something a large majority of Congress wants to get done. Let's get it done. Let's stop all the rhetoric. Let's stop trying to point fingers at us and everybody else for other things. Let's just do our job. I think that is what the American people want us to do.

In fact, I hear a lot of times from my constituents back home that they are tired of seeing these gigantic bills. It sounds like what my colleagues on the other side want is some more gigantic bills that people vote on. It is kind of like what the former Speaker said: We have to vote for it so we can find out what is in it.

I would rather vote on bills that I know what is in it. That is why I read all the bills if I plan to vote for it.

I helped write this bill. I am the lead sponsor of this bill. It is an easy bill to read. It is pretty straightforward in what it does, what it is supposed to do, and what we are trying to do. President Biden thought it was okay. He issued a statement in favor of it last term. This term President Trump says that he is in favor of it.

This is a bipartisan approach to solve a problem.

Does it solve all the world's problems, Mr. Speaker?

Of course it does not, but it solves a problem that our law enforcement has that helps the bad guys, the people making the precursors in China, the people in the cartels in Mexico flooding across our southern border with these harmful fentanyl-related substances and analogues. It makes it easier for our law enforcement people to focus on illegal fentanyl.

□ 1245

Mr. Speaker, fentanyl is legal for medicinal purposes, and it will be even after this bill.

There is something else that Democrats haven't mentioned. I mentioned it briefly, but I will talk about it a little bit further, Mr. Speaker. That is the component in this bill that allows for research on the 4,800 other related substances or analogues that we believe are out there. It is a rough number. Nobody knows until they get in and start experimenting, but we heard that testimony in the Energy and Commerce Committee.

There might be some benefit to some other analogue. There might be some benefit, but we don't want it out there on our streets or being used for medicinal reasons until we know for sure that it does something positive for society.

Right now, all the analogues that we have seen are either inert or just as bad as the illegal use of fentanyl, so this bill needs to be passed.

I understand the minority doesn't want to talk about this. My Democratic colleagues want to talk about everything else, but that is not why we are here today.

When I came to Congress, I pledged to read the bills. I pledged to talk about what it is we are talking about today and not talk about everything else in the world that I think we might be able to fix someday or that we might ought to do someday. There is a process for that.

As my friend Terry Kilgore used to tell me all the time, somebody would come up with an idea, and then they would want to put on some kind of an amendment or change the bill around when we had a nice, little, simple bill. Mr. Kilgore is a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, and he was my seatmate. He came up with a famous phrase when people wanted to rearrange the bill in a way that he didn't think was proper or put an amendment on it that would completely change the bill or, in this case, defeat the motion of the previous question in order to defeat the HALT Fentanyl Act and put forward some other bill. He would say: Well, you might have some points to make. I would say to the gentleman: Get your own bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, what would help end the illegal fentanyl problem here would be Donald Trump not pardoning a drug kingpin, essentially, who brought illegal fentanyl into our country and who was sentenced to life in prison in a Federal court. What would have been a strong signal would have been not to pardon somebody like that.

Mr. Speaker, I get why my friends don't want to talk about that. Republicans don't want to get on the bad side of the President because then Republican Members may get a primary or then Elon might send all kinds of money into their primary. I get all of that.

If we are serious here about dealing with fentanyl, we should at least all be able to say what the President did was wrong.

Maybe the gentleman wasn't listening to the debate on the previous question, but the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY) talked for 3 minutes about an alternative bill that would help deal with this problem.

This was a bill that got 386 votes in this House in the last Congress. The bill received 386 votes. It was in the final package that we were all going to vote on, by the way, that Republican leadership agreed with and our leadership agreed with and the Republicans and Democrats in the Senate agreed with. It was in that bill, but then Elon Musk sabotaged that bill.

Mr. Speaker, I get it. I have been here for a while. Before I was a Member, I worked here as a staffer for George McGovern, no relation, and for Congressman Joe Moakley. Let me tell you, Republicans today do not hold the same values as Republicans from back then.

Republicans used to be for backing the blue. Trump pardoned people who beat police officers. Right now, he is gutting the FBI, which the Republicans

used to believe was the citadel of law and order.

Republicans used to stand for cutting the deficit. Now, the majority is spending night and day planning to jam through a tax cut for the ultrarich without pay-fors, which will blow up the deficit by trillions of dollars. It is what my Republican colleagues did in 2017 for their billionaire tax cuts.

Republicans spent decades claiming my colleagues on the other side of the aisle were the champions of free trade. Just this past week, Trump and the Republican Party started a trade war with our neighbors, not to mention the majority spoke nonstop about inflation for the past 2 years but seem to be fine with slapping this tariff tax on their constituents that is going to make prices across the board in this country go sky high.

Is there any principle today's version of the Republican Party won't abandon? Is there anything Trump could do that Republicans wouldn't support or would even question?

It would be almost comical to see how much my Republican colleagues are willing to bend down and kiss the ring if we didn't currently find ourselves in multiple constitutional crises at the hands of Trump and his cronies.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that we can't even get Republicans to say that it was wrong for the President of the United States to pardon this individual who was serving life in prison for bringing fentanyl into our communities and killing our constituents, the fact that the majority can't even raise the question of whether it was the wrong thing to do, tells you everything you need to know.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is kind of interesting. I keep thinking we are talking about the HALT Fentanyl Act, and then I hear all this other stuff.

Earlier, one of my colleagues said that we were cooking up some kind of a plan to cut—I forget what the number was now—$2.5 trillion or $2.7 trillion out of Medicaid. I haven't heard of any such plan being cooked up. I think that is just hyperbole, but that is my opinion.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman keeps asking about a pardon or about somebody who was pardoned. Well, I don't know if he has noticed or not, but I am not the President of the United States. I don't have the power to pardon. I don't get the information put on my desk about various individual pardons.

I didn't make any comments about pardons by the previous President when many people were pardoned or were sitting on death row and had sentences commuted. That is not what we are here about today.

We can get down into that trap if we want to, but I am just telling you that we are here today to talk about a rule for a simple bill that the majority of this House supports. I believe it is an overwhelming majority. I don't know if my colleagues admitted it was exactly 74, but they admitted it was a big vote last year. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle admitted it was a part of a package that the minority wanted to see pass on the floor at the end of last year.

I thought we were here to talk about this. I recognize that it is a free-for-all on the floor, but I just hate to get into all those kinds of things and start talking about this or that and, whether crossing the line or not, somehow casting aspersions that Members over here don't have independent wills. We certainly do, and I think my colleagues might recognize that from some of the things I said last night when I was being questioned.

Do I support the President? Well, of course, I do. Do I agree with everything he does? No.

As the old saying goes, I don't agree with my wife all the time. She certainly doesn't agree with me most of the time.

The bottom line is that I think the President is moving us in the right direction. One of those right directions would be to pass the HALT Fentanyl Act. Another is closing down the border, shutting that border down.

If Democrats want to talk about drugs coming across our southern border and want to point to an individual who is thought to be primarily responsible for some of that, how about the hundreds and thousands of people who were used by the cartels to bring illicit substances, whether it be at ports of entry or other places, across our southern border?

The President is cracking down on that, too, but that is not what this bill is about. This bill is about making sure that when our law enforcement officers arrest somebody and their preliminary examination indicates that what they have is significant, or even a small amount but generally significant amounts of a fentanyl-related substance, that when they go to court, they don't have somebody arguing in court that, wait a minute, this is not the fentanyl on schedule II, that this is a fentanyl-related substance but it is a left-handed molecule instead of a right-handed molecule or a right-handed molecule instead of a left-handed molecule.

I can say that, as a former defense attorney, I loved those kinds of arguments. As a Congressman, it is our job to shut those arguments down. The HALT Fentanyl Act stops those arguments from being made in court, which are basically spurious attempts to help drug dealers.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues are not trying to help drug dealers. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle are just here to try to make some other points today. Let's talk about this bill and the good that this bill can do.

My Democratic colleagues brought up substituting this bill with the SUPPORT Act. I am a cosponsor of the SUPPORT Act, which is carried by the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, BRETT GUTHRIE. That bill has a very good chance of passing this body, so let's let that bill go through its process, and let's let this bill, the HALT Fentanyl Act, finish out this process, get across to the Senate, get signed into law by the President, and start doing good work.

The Speaker might be asking why we have to do this at this moment. The answer is that we have had a rolling series of temporary bills on making the fentanyl-related substances schedule I because we all recognize the danger that these present to the American public.

Let's make it permanent and give our scientists an opportunity to look at some of those other 4,800 analogues or fentanyl-related substances to see if there is anything there that might be beneficial to mankind, that might be a reversal of an overdose, that might be a better and less-addictive pain reliever. Let's let them do that research.

They can't do that research without the HALT Fentanyl Act, and the efforts of the defense attorneys for the cartels can't be crippled by constantly passing temporary bills because any day that it is not in effect is a day that lawyers will take advantage of.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the gentleman is new to the Rules Committee, and I think this may be his first time on the floor handling a rule.

I will remind the gentleman that this is the rule debate. We are not having general debate on the underlying bill. The rule debates are about the majority's agenda, what Republicans are bringing to the floor and what Republicans are not bringing to the floor.

The majority could have brought to the floor the bill that we want to bring to the floor, that we talked about in the previous question debate, that passed overwhelmingly in a bipartisan vote in the last Congress, and that my Republican friends allowed to get blown up at the last minute.

Basically, I am going to take my time during the rule debate to talk about the Republicans' unpopular, crummy agenda for the American people: raising prices on consumers and ignoring all the concerns that everyday people have.

We are also going to talk about the fact that, when it comes to fentanyl, one of Donald Trump's first acts was to pardon a criminal who brought fentanyl into this country and who was sentenced to life in Federal prison.

Mr. Speaker, I get it that the gentleman doesn't want to have an opinion

on that or voice an opinion on that, but, really, is it that hard? I don't know what is so difficult to condemn there.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of the agenda, I am looking at The New York Times: ''Trump Proposing Takeover of Gaza as U.S. Territory.'' Do Republicans' constituents want to have their sons or daughters sent to Gaza to be in the middle of that violence?

This is the guy who also now wants to invade Greenland. He wants to take over Panama. He wants to annex Canada. He wants to now occupy Gaza.

Mr. Speaker, we have 42 million people in this country who are hungry. Whatever happened to America First? Whatever happened to helping people in this country? Whatever happened to lowering prices?

Instead, we get this. This is like a warmonger here. I mean, come on.

Again, we had an agreement on a bipartisan bill that would address the underlying concerns that the gentleman raises here, yet it was blown up at the last minute.

Mr. Speaker, the rule debate is about the Republican agenda. It is about the crappy agenda of this majority in the House of Representatives, which is not fighting for regular people and not fighting for the people who I represent but instead is doing the bidding for billionaires like Elon Musk and others.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ), the distinguished member of the Rules Committee.

□ 1300

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, we are in a moment of constitutional crisis. These days will define what we stand for. They will define who we stand with.

Yet in this time of crisis, Republicans are rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. Republicans are using the precious floor time we are given to put forth watered-down fentanyl bills like the one in this rule. Let's remember that all of these bills require a Federal agency to enforce it.

Let me remind my Republican colleagues that their President granted Elon Musk the authority to dismantle our Federal agencies. Musk and his DOGE—I like to call it dodgy because they seem to dodge any kind of authority and accountability—are intent on destroying our Federal Government and the essential services it provides.

Mr. Speaker, I remind my colleagues to remember their power and remember their constitutional duty.

Musk didn't take an oath to protect the Constitution. We did. Voters sent us here to protect their interests. Congress alone has the power to fund our agencies. A billionaire who was not elected and has not probably even passed a security clearance cannot destroy our Federal agencies. We will not stand for it, and I hope you stand with us to protect our Federal agencies, including the FBI who would be the ones who would enforce and investigate and go after fentanyl trafficking.

My phones are ringing off the hook from constituents who are frightened and terrified and angry about what Musk is doing. They don't want billionaire tech titans to dismantle Federal agencies or gain access to their most private data.

We definitely can't address the fentanyl crisis, like the bill in today's rule claims to do, if Trump and Republicans get their way on the Federal funding freeze, if they get their way on a hiring freeze.

Now remember, this intention that we have seen from this administration, that we are not hearing them stand up against, would actually destroy the FBI. It would take away funds from addiction treatment, which would be essential to save lives. It would take away funds from interdiction technology, which is what we need to stop fentanyl from flowing in and killing our neighbors and my friends and my constituents. My constituents want us to fund effective border safety measures, not engage in the chaos and demonization we have seen from this administration.

I have also heard loud and clear from my communities in New Mexico about the chaos that Trump's orders have created. Trump is about chaos and Trump is about corruption.

Yesterday, I went to the Treasury Department to demand answers about Musk's power grab and information heist. They didn't let Members of Congress in that building, which belongs to the American people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from New Mexico.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. They didn't let us in that building because they don't want Americans to know what they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all my Republican colleagues: Would you let Elon Musk and his interns rummage through your savings account, your tax return, your children's personal data?

I just don't understand the point of putting bills like this on the floor if we are not going to have the courage to stand up to Elon Musk and his rip off of Congress' power.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote against the rule.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEWHOUSE). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, darn, I wish I had known 40 minutes ago we could talk about anything we wanted to, that this time was not really to talk about the rule present before us today or the underlying bill, but was to talk about whatever we wanted to, whatever is on our agenda, their agenda.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, this is why the American people don't have confidence in Congress, because they can't follow the bouncing ball. We are here to talk about the HALT Fentanyl Act, and we are talking about everything including the kitchen sink.

If I had only known that 40 minutes ago, I could have brought over all my CRAs that I am interested in getting passed, all my bills that I think are fascinating and interesting that I can't seem to get out of committee, at least not in the past. I could have talked about all kinds of things.

I understand that may not be the practice of the Rules Committee. I am new. The gentleman is absolutely right to remind me of that. I have no problem with that. I just didn't know that we could talk about whatever we wanted to when the subject of the day is: Are we going to pass a rule that ultimately we hope will be put in place for the debate and passage of the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Then I heard, amongst a number of things today that I thought were just kind of odd, that my bill, the HALT Fentanyl Act, had been watered down.

Well, that is news to me because the bill, with the exception of changing a couple of paragraph numbers, the lettering on the paragraphs to make sure we were alphabetically correct, is exactly the way I introduced it. I don't think that is a watering down. A watering down is when you take a bill that is 20 or 30 pages long and you make it into a 2-page bill and you have it do half of what it was supposed to.

What this bill was supposed to do, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what this bill does. It takes and makes a permanent schedule I classification for all of the roughly 4,800 fentanyl-related substances or analogues. It provides for research on those fentanyl-related substances or analogues at our research institutions with certain safeguards to make sure we can continue to do research so that maybe we can find a better path forward, something that may help with our drug addiction issues, something that may be a better, less addictive pain reliever.

We want that research done, but until we have the evidence that one of those 4,800 analogues or fentanyl-related substances actually does good, we need to make them schedule I. They need to be on there so that the cartels can't use this as some trick in the courtroom to get out of trouble, to get a proverbial get-out-of-jail-free card.

My colleagues want to talk about everything else coming down the road, including an individual—and I haven't reviewed his file—who they claim was involved in the drug trade and who was pardoned.

I haven't heard them talk about Lairon Graham of Buffalo, convicted of heading a drug conspiracy and selling fentanyl, crack cocaine, and heroin, who was pardoned by the previous President, Mr. Biden.

I haven't heard them talk about Valentino Shine, convicted of narcotic sales, along with sex trafficking and

distribution of crack cocaine, who was pardoned by the previous President.

Now, I personally don't think any of that is relevant to today's discussion, and I recognize that that is apparently the practice of the Rules Committee. I find it surprising. I think it is a sloppy practice, but if that is the practice, then next time I will be sure to bring my wish list with me and we can talk about everything except the bill we are supposed to be talking about.

It does make you wonder and think that everybody at home watching this, both of them, are confused because we are not talking about the bill that we are supposed to be talking about. I hope Congress some day gets around to talking about the bill that it is supposed to talk about, whether it is my bill or somebody else's bill.

Today, I will try to make my remarks as much as I can about passage of the rule for the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, does the gentleman really think that people dislike Congress because we are debating issues, because we are debating what is on their mind? No. I think people dislike Congress because politicians say one thing and do another.

They are on the floor today talking about the need to combat fentanyl and then are silent when the President of the United States pardons a criminal sentenced to life in prison for flooding our streets with fentanyl.

That is what people get frustrated with. People are frustrated that we had a deal on a bill at the end of last Congress that everybody signed off on. It was fine. At the last minute, Elon Musk comes in and blows it up, and now we can't bring the bill up again. That is what people are frustrated with.

My Republican friends like to talk about America First. Look at the front page of The New York Times today: ''Trump Proposing Takeover of Gaza as U.S. Territory.''

I have to tell you, people voted for lower egg prices, not for a Middle East Mar-a-Lago. People did not vote to send their sons and daughters into the tunnels of Gaza so that Jared Kushner and Donald Trump can build Trump Tower Gaza. That is not what they voted for.

People want to talk about issues. They want us to deal with issues that will impact everyday life and lower the cost of living. In the first weeks, we have seen nothing from this President or the Republican majority here to deal with that.

Don't tell me that people don't like Congress because we debate issues. I am sorry. We are debating your agenda, even though it is unpopular.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to include in the RECORD an article from the Associated Press titled: ''Elon Musk's DOGE commission gains access to sensitive Treasury payment systems.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

[From AP News, Feb. 1, 2025]

ELON MUSK'S DOGE COMMISSION GAINS ACCESS TO SENSITIVE TREASURY PAYMENT SYSTEMS: AP SOURCES

(By Fatima Hussein)

The Department of Government Efficiency, run by President Donald Trump's billionaire adviser and Tesla CEO Elon Musk, has gained access to sensitive Treasury data including Social Security and Medicare customer payment systems, according to two people familiar with the situation.

The move by DOGE, a Trump administration task force assigned to find ways to fire federal workers, cut programs and slash federal regulations, means it could have wide leeway to access important taxpayer data, among other things.

The New York Times first reported the news of the group's access of the massive federal payment system. The two people who spoke to The Associated Press spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

The highest-ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, Ron Wyden of Oregon, on Friday sent a letter to Trump's Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent expressing concern that ''officials associated with Musk may have intended to access these payment systems to illegally withhold payments to any number of programs.''

''To put it bluntly, these payment systems simply cannot fail, and any politically motivated meddling in them risks severe damage to our country and the economy,'' Wyden said.

The news also comes after Treasury's acting Deputy Secretary David Lebryk resigned from his position at Treasury after more than 30 years of service. The Washington Post on Friday reported that Lebryk resigned his position after Musk and his DOGE organization requested access to sensitive Treasury data.

''The Fiscal Service performs some of the most vital functions in government,'' Lebryk said in a letter to Treasury employees sent out Friday. ''Our work may be unknown to most of the public, but that doesn't mean it isn't exceptionally important. I am grateful for having been able to work alongside some of the nation's best and most talented operations staff.''

The letter did not mention a DOGE request to access Treasury payments.

Musk on Saturday responded to a post on his social media platform X about the departure of Lebryk: ''the @DOGE team discovered, among other things, that payment approval officers at Treasury were instructed always to approve payments, even to known fraudulent or terrorist groups. They literally never denied a payment in their entire career. Not even once.''

He did not provide proof of this claim.

DOGE was originally headed by Musk and former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, who jointly vowed to cut billions from the federal budget and usher in ''mass headcount reductions across the federal bureaucracy.''

Ramaswamy has since left DOGE as he mulls a run for governor of Ohio.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the RECORD an article from The New Republic titled: ''25-year-old Elon Musk Crony Has Total Control Over Treasury Payments.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

[From the New Republic, Feb. 4, 2025]

25-YEAR-OLD ELON MUSK CRONY HAS TOTAL CONTROL OVER TREASURY PAYMENTS

(By Hafiz Rashid)

One of Elon Musk's handpicked operatives for his fake ''Department of Government Efficiency'' has been given complete access to critical payment systems at the Department of the Treasury, despite being only 25 years old.

Marko Elez, whose total work experience consists of working for Musk's companies SpaceX and X (formerly Twitter), has administrator privileges on systems that are responsible for 95 percent of payments made by the U.S. government including Social Security checks, tax refunds, and virtually all contract payments, Wired reports. This contradicts earlier reports that Musk's henchmen only had ''read-only'' access to Treasury data.

Wired, citing two unnamed sources, reports that Elez has the ability to write code on the Payment Automation Manager and Secure Payment System at the Bureau of the Fiscal Service, which control government payments that amount to more than a fifth of the U.S. economy. Elez's level of access could allow him to bypass security measures and possibly cause irreversible damage to these systems. Talking Points Memo further reports that Elez has already used his power to significantly rewrite code for the payment systems.

''You could do anything with these privileges,'' one source with knowledge of the systems told Wired, adding that they couldn't see a reason that such access was necessary for hunting down fraud or assessing how payments are disbursed, as DOGE claims it is doing.

''Technically I don't see why this couldn't happen,'' a federal IT worker told the magazine Monday regarding whether a DOGE worker would get such a level of government access. ''If you would have asked me a week ago, I'd have told you that this kind of thing would never in a million years happen. But now, who the f*** knows.''

Musk and his cronies have already taken control of federal workers' private data by installing an illegal commercial server at the Office of Personnel Management, giving them access to databases containing federal employees' Social Security numbers, home addresses, medical histories, and other sensitive personal information. Senior government officials at OPM have even been locked out of employee databases.

Many, if not most, of Musk's associates that he's used in his government takeover are young and inexperienced young men between the ages of 19 and 26, like Elez. Whether the tech mogul or the people doing his bidding even have proper security clearances is not known, which would definitely make their efforts illegal, if they weren't already. But with Donald Trump taking over federal law enforcement and prosecutors threatening critics of DOGE, who, if anyone, will take action?

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to include in the RECORD an article from Wired titled: ''Federal Workers Sue to Disconnect DOGE Server.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

[From Wired, Feb. 4, 2025]

FEDERAL WORKERS SUE TO DISCONNECT DOGE SERVER

(By Dell Cameron)

Federal employees are seeking a temporary restraining order as part of a class action lawsuit accusing a group of Elon Musk's associates of allegedly operating an illegally connected server from the fifth floor of the US Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) headquarters in Washington, DC.

An attorney representing two federal workers—Jane Does 1 and 2—filed a motion this morning arguing that the server's continued operation not only violates federal law but is potentially exposing vast quantities of government staffers' personal information to hostile foreign adversaries through unencrypted email.

A copy of the motion, filed in the DC District Court by National Security Counselors, a Washington-area public-interest law firm, was obtained by WIRED exclusively in advance. WIRED previously reported that Musk had installed several lackeys in OPM's top offices, including individuals with ties to xAI, Neuralink, and other companies he owns.

The initial lawsuit, filed on January 27, cites reports that Musk's associates illegally connected a server to a government network for the purposes of harvesting information, including the names and email accounts of federal employees. The server was installed on the agency's premises, the complaint alleges, without OPM—the government's human resources department—conducting a mandatory privacy impact assessment required under federal law.

Under the 2002 E-Government Act, agencies are required to perform privacy assessments prior to making ''substantial changes to existing information technology'' when handling information ''in identifiable form.'' Notably, prior to the installation of the server, OPM did not have the technical capability to email the entire federal workforce from a single email account.

''[A]t some point after 20 January 2025, OPM allowed unknown individuals to simply bypass its existing systems and security protocols,'' Tuesday's motion claims, ''for the stated purpose of being able to communicate directly with those individuals without involving other agencies. In short, the sole purpose of these new systems was expediency.''

OPM did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

If the motion is granted, OPM would be forced to disconnect the server until the assessment is done. As a consequence, the Trump administration's plans to drastically reduce the size of the federal workforce would likely face delays. The email account linked to the server—HR@opm.gov—is currently being used to gather information from federal workers accepting buyouts under the admin's ''deferred resignation program,'' which is set to expire on February 6.

''Under the law, a temporary restraining order is an extraordinary remedy,'' notes National Security Counselors' executive director, Kel McClanahan. ''But this is an extraordinary situation.''

Before issuing a restraining order, courts apply what's known as the ''balance of equities'' doctrine, weighing the burdens and costs on both parties. In this case, however, McClanahan argues that the injunction would inflict ''no hardship'' on the government whatsoever. February 6 is an ''arbitrary deadline,'' he says, and the administration could simply continue to implement the resignation program ''through preexisting channels.''

''We can't wait for the normal course of litigation when all that information is just sitting there in some system nobody knows about with who knows what protections,'' McClanahan says. ''In a normal case, we might be able to at least count on the inspector general to do something, but Trump fired her, so all bets are off.''

The motion further questions whether OPM violated the Administrative Procedure Act, which prohibits federal agencies from taking actions ''not in accordance with the law.'' Under the APA, courts may ''compel agency action''—such as a private assessment—when it is ''unlawfully withheld.''

Employees at various agencies were reportedly notified last month to be on the lookout for messages originating from the HR@opm.gov account. McClanahan's complaint points to a January 23 email from acting Homeland Security secretary Benjamine Huffman instructing DHS employees that the HR@opm.gov account ''can be considered trusted.'' in the following days, emails were blasted out twice across the executive branch instructing federal workers to reply ''Yes'' in both cases.

The same account was later used to transmit the ''Fork in the Road'' missive promoting the Trump administration's legally dubious ''deferred resignation program,'' which claims to offer federal workers the opportunity to quit but continue receiving paychecks through September. Workers who wished to participate in the program were instructed to reply to the email with ''Resign.''

As WIRED has reported, even the new HR chief of DOGE, Musk's task force, was unable to answer basic questions about the offer.

The legal authority underlying the program is unclear, and federal employee union leaders are warning workers not to blindly assume they will actually get paid. In a floor speech last week, Senator Tim Kaine advised workers not to be fooled: ''There's no budget line item to pay people who are not showing up for work.'' Patty Murray, ranking Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, similarly warned Monday: ''There is no funding allocated to agencies to pay staff for this offer.''

McClanahan's lawsuit highlights the government's response to the OPM hack of 2015, which compromised personnel records on more than 22 million people, including some who'd undergone background checks to obtain security clearances. A congressional report authored by House Republicans following the breach pinned the incident on a ''breakdown in communications'' between OPM's chief information officer and its inspector general: ''The future effectiveness of the agency's information technology and security efforts,'' it says, ''will depend on a strong relationship between these two entities moving forward.''

OPM's inspector general, Krista Boyd, was fired by President Donald Trump in the midst of the ''Friday night purge'' on January 24—one day after the first HR@opm.gov email was sent.

''We are witnessing an unprecedented exfiltration and seizure of the most sensitive kinds of information by unelected, unvetted people with no experience, responsibility, or right to it,'' says Sean Vitka, policy director at the Demand Progress Education Fund, which is supporting the action. ''Millions of Americans and the collective interests of the United States desperately need emergency intervention from the courts. The constitutional crisis is already here.''

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the RECORD an opinion article from The Washington Post titled: ''Elon Musk has your Social Security number. It's as scary as it sounds.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 5, 2025]

[OPINION] ELON MUSK HAS YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER. IT'S AS SCARY AS IT SOUNDS

(By Natasha Sarin)

David A. Lebryk had a volatile end to his 36 years serving the public at the Treasury Department last week. On Monday, he was the acting treasury secretary. By the end of the week, he had unexpectedly retired.

I worked with Lebryk when I was on President Joe Biden's Treasury team, so I am not an unbiased observer. But leaders on both sides of the aisle have positive things to say about him. President Donald Trump's nominee to be deputy treasury secretary, Michael Faulkender, recalled working with Lebryk during the first Trump administration and finding him ''relaxed and under control'' and not a political actor.

It was those traits that made him a natural fit to serve as Treasury's fiscal assistant secretary and oversee what is essentially the federal government's accounts payable department. It is an immensely important job: The Bureau of the Fiscal Service cuts the checks that go to households and businesses and, in recent years, has been at the front of the various debt showdowns, because only they can ascertain the ''X'' date when the government will, absent congressional action, hit the debt limit.

But it's not a political job. It's mechanical, keeping track of the money coming in and going out. This means the bureau has access to incredibly sensitive information about everyone in the country—all of our Social Security numbers and bank account information—because they need it to get people their tax refunds and Social Security checks.

Late last week, Lebryk left the agency after a rift with members of the so-called Department of Government Efficiency, who demanded access to Treasury's payments system. Secretary Scott Bessent then gave them that access, ostensibly because the team, which lacks the experience or background to handle such sensitive information, would be able to sift through government payments to cut fraudulent, wasteful spending.

Let's get some facts straight. It is totally reasonable to be concerned about fraudulent or mistaken payments made by the federal government. The Government Accountability Office recently estimated that somewhere between 3 and 7 percent of what the government pays out each year is fraud. That's nowhere near Elon Musk's pledge to cut $2 trillion from the federal budget, but it is certainly not couch change.

Having access to Treasury's payments system isn't where Musk would go if he truly wants to make progress on waste, fraud and abuse. Here's why:

First, legally, it isn't the Bureau of the Fiscal Service's mandate to decide who is eligible for tax credits or which Social Security beneficiaries are worthy recipients of payments. The bureau does conduct a systemwide check against a ''do not pay'' list, to make sure it is not paying out to people who are perhaps deceased or members of known terrorist organizations.

But it is not their role to probe, for example, rampant fraud in the covid–19-era employee retention tax credit, and then decide which businesses look to be worthy recipients of the credit. That is a job for the Internal Revenue Service, which administers the program. The Bureau of the Fiscal Service just cuts the checks.

That's how it should be. The bureau has no way of identifying fraud across every program in the federal government. That's more

than $5 trillion of payments each year, and more than 1 billion individual payments.

Being able to tell a fraudulent payment from a valid one requires information about the programs and the households and businesses getting the funds, and all of that information sits in the agencies, not in the payments system. That's part of why I am disheartened to see the Trump administration and Musk push to ''delete'' the IRS or dismantle the Education Department. These changes will lead to more government fraud, not less.

There are likely many ways the systems at the Bureau of the Fiscal Service could be run more efficiently. I spent two years with colleagues at the IRS, in part, working on upgrading its IT infrastructure, which dates in meaningful ways to the 1950s. I learned that government IT is a labyrinth of complexity and often out of date relative to private sector advances. My ardent hope was that Musk would be able to bring his substantial private-sector expertise and recruit skilled professionals who can help make government work better.

In recent days, Bessent has tried to make the case to lawmakers that is what Musk and DOGE teams' access to the payments system will accomplish. He says they have been given something called ''read-only'' access to make recommendations about improving government operations without the ability to actually stop or redirect particular payments, though some reporting has questioned that claim.

Be wary. Just a week ago, it would have been unimaginable for DOGE—or any Trump political appointees—to have access to this sensitive data and fragile payments infrastructure. It is natural to worry about the potential threats to data privacy, cybersecurity and the stability of the federal government that are ahead. There is no legitimate reason for them to have this access.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, it is being reported that Elon Musk has sent his creepy minions to illegally install a private server that is stealing people's information. They are using it to skirt laws about sensitive and possibly even classified information, giving them access to people's Social Security numbers, home addresses, and more.

What is happening is a crime, plain and simple. It is a crime. It violates the Privacy Act of 1974, the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002, the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, as well as provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

Elon says it is a crime to expose who he has put in charge of the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I say to Elon that it is a crime to hide that from the American people. I, for one, am not going to stand by while he gets his grubby little billionaire hands all over our parents' and grandparents' Social Security checks. He better believe that he is going to be held accountable for all of this.

The truth is coming out. He is stealing from the American people, and we are not going to let him do it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I offer the gentleman from Massachusetts an opportunity for whatever comments he has remaining.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to close yet, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman brought up some pardons. A few minutes ago, I talked about how Trump pardoned a drug trafficker who let fentanyl pour into our country. Let's not forget he also pardoned over 1,000 people who beat cops and tried to kill them on January 6.

The last time I was on the floor, I went through some of the worst offenders he pardoned. Since then, we have learned even more about these convicted felons, these violent criminals, who are now roaming free in our communities thanks to Donald Trump and the Republicans.

Matthew Huttle is a man with 12 prior criminal convictions, including a shocking case where he pled guilty to brutally hitting his 3-year-old son, leaving bruises all over the child's backside and neck. After he was pardoned by Trump, Huttle went back to Indiana where he was killed during a violent confrontation with law enforcement. Huttle was a child abuser with a history of violence who put law enforcement in danger again after he was pardoned by Donald Trump.

Theodore Middendorf, accused of sexually assaulting a 7-year-old child, pled guilty to this horrific crime in 2024 and was sentenced to 19 years in prison, but that wasn't all. He also pled guilty to destroying government property using a flagpole as a weapon during the Capitol riot, and for that he was pardoned by Donald Trump.

□ 1315

Peter Schwartz is a man with 30 prior criminal convictions, including assaulting his wife, biting her and repeatedly punching her. The same man attacked police officers on January 6 with pepper spray. He is a repeat offender pardoned by Donald Trump.

Andrew Taake was arrested in 2016 for soliciting a minor online for sex, but his criminal history didn't stop there. He assaulted police officers with bear spray and a metal whip on January 6. He is another repeat offender pardoned by Donald Trump.

Kasey Hopkins has a criminal history so disturbing, it is hard to stomach. In 2002, he was convicted of forcible rape, where he choked his victim to the point of impairing her vision. This is the same man who has prior convictions for assaulting law enforcement and possessing controlled substances. He was here on January 6, and he was pardoned by Donald Trump.

David Daniel is facing charges for producing and possessing child pornography, disturbingly involving two young girls in his own family. Police officers found evidence of child sexual abuse while they searched his home in connection with his arrest for assaulting police officers on January 6. He may have his sexual charges thrown out thanks to the fact that he was pardoned by Donald Trump.

Because of Donald Trump and the Republicans, we have child sex predators, domestic abusers, and violent criminals unleashed back onto our streets. I have to ask, how many American parents are sleeping easier tonight knowing these criminals are out there walking free thanks to Donald Trump? This is stomach churning.

It doesn't even stop there. We also have January 6 perpetrators who have been rearrested—yes, rearrested—on new charges even after being pardoned.

Daniel Ball, a convicted felon because of his involvement in the Capitol insurrection, was pardoned by Donald Trump on January 20 only to be rearrested 2 days later on gun charges.

Now, Trump is going after the law enforcement officers who helped put these criminals away.

America, your President is purging the police of anyone not loyal to him. Think about that. Let that sink in because these are the actions of a fascist.

More than half a dozen senior FBI executives have been ordered to retire or be fired by Monday. The Acting Director of the FBI said that the list of names of those involved in the Capitol riot investigations could number in the thousands.

How many police officers will Trump fire? How does any of this make any of us more safe?

My colleagues need to wake up. I mean, purging the police of anyone who goes after criminals, we know how this ends. We know what the message this sends is. Trump is telling America that violence is fine as long as his people do it.

Republicans are releasing violent child predators, domestic abusers, and sexual offenders back into our communities and, at the same time, investigating and firing the real law enforcement officers, the heroes who are actually upholding the rule of law.

Guess what. I won't be complicit. They are about to run into a massive wall of resistance, and that wall is us.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair and also to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I have so much more I want to say, but this all really boils down to one question: Whose side are you on, Mr. Speaker? Whose side are you on?

Are you on the side of the American people or the billionaires who are stealing from them?

Are you on the side of law enforcement or the guy who pardoned the drug dealer who let in all the fentanyl?

Are you on the side of workers or the robber barons who want to fleece people out of their paychecks and rob them of their hard-earned benefits?

Are you on the side of the American taxpayers or Elon Musk, a nepo baby who sucks up government subsidies and uses tax money to enrich himself while spreading hate and lies on his broken website?

Democrats know what side we are on. We are on the side of the people. We are going to continue to show up, and we are going to continue to fight back.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everybody to vote ''no'' on this rule, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I just have to say that I am appalled. I understand they get the right to say whatever they want to during this time of debate on the rule for the HALT Fentanyl Act. I understand that, but they say you have to choose what side you are on, then bring up Elon Musk, and then say vote ''no.'' This bill has nothing to do with Elon Musk. This bill is about fentanyl-related substances and fentanyl analogues. It perplexes me, other than it is an attempt to confuse everybody on what this bill is about.

If they want to make all those statements, they can, but I would think they would be in favor of getting this bill done. If you are going to choose to say whose side you are on with this bill, you are making a choice. You are making a choice. We have an opportunity today, right here and now, to pass a rule and then tomorrow to pass a bill that will make a step forward in stopping the cartels, the Chinese precursors, and the folks who are doing the bad things in our country and in other countries from bringing their substances into this country and trying to use a gimmick, a chemical technique, saying that it is not really fentanyl, that it is a fentanyl analogue, and get around our laws.

That is what this bill is about. Every Member ought to be in favor of that. Why you wouldn't be in favor of at least bringing that bill to the floor and having a vote on it is beyond me. If we are choosing sides, I am going to choose to take a step forward. I am going to take a step forward to try to stop this scourge of fentanyl poisoning, fentanyl analogue poisoning, and fentanyl-related substances coming into our country. That is the side I am going to choose.

I understand they want to talk about all kinds of other things. I think it is a pretty darn good bill, and I think we should pass it.

Now, let me get to my script. I would like to reiterate the importance of the bill to permanently schedule fentanyl analogues as schedule I while still allowing for research into these substances.

This is one small step in fighting the opioid crisis our country faces. If we allow this temporary extension to expire in March—as it will if we take no action, if we choose the wrong side today and tomorrow—it will bring back the incentives for traffickers to bring these fentanyl analogues and fentanyl-related substances into our country.

I truly don't believe my colleagues on the other side want that. I understand they get fired up on the floor sometimes and say things that maybe later, in retrospect, they think maybe they shouldn't have gone that far.

If we are going to choose sides, I urge everybody to pass the rule and choose the side of stopping the fentanyl scourge in our country, the fentanyl analogue scourge in our country, and urge the passage of this rule and for final passage of the underlying bill.

The material previously referred to by Mr. MCGOVERN is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 93 OFFERED BY MR. MCGOVERN OF MASSACHUSETTS

Strike all after the resolved clause and insert the following:

That immediately upon adoption of this resolution, the House shall proceed to the consideration in the House of the bill consisting of the text of H.R. 4531 of the 118th Congress, as passed by the House, to reauthorize certain programs that provide for opioid use disorder prevention, recovery, and treatment, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 4531.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

EMERGENCY WILDFIRE FIGHTING TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 836) to require the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an evaluation with respect to the use of the container aerial firefighting system (CAFFS), and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 836

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act of 2025''.

SEC. 2. CONTAINER AERIAL FIREFIGHTING SYSTEM (CAFFS).

(a) EVALUATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly conduct an evaluation of the container aerial firefighting system to assess the use of such system to mitigate and suppress wildfires.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees a report that includes the results of the evaluation required under subsection (a).

(c) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate committees'' means—

(1) the Committees on Agriculture and Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 836, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of Congressman VALADAO's bill, the Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act of 2025. This timely legislation offers us a chance to equip land managers with another tool in their arsenal to combat the catastrophic wildfire crisis by testing a new and innovative method for wildfire suppression.

Last month, wildfires in southern California took the lives of at least 29 people and changed thousands of lives forever. These fires destroyed more than 16,000 structures and racked up untold fire suppression costs and economic damages.

This tragedy is a wake-up call for millions of Americans and demonstrates just how important it is to proactively address the wildfire crisis. Unfortunately, decades of inadequate forest management have created an unprecedented forest health crisis. Across our country, 1 billion acres are now at risk of wildland fire. In the absence of dramatic change, the future outlook remains bleak.

When it comes to fighting these out-of-control infernos, it is critical that we utilize all available technologies that could improve the cost efficiency and effectiveness of fire suppression. Wildland firefighters on the front lines of these disasters must have all the tools and methods available to fight fires and protect lives and property.

Aircraft and helicopters provide life-saving support to ground crews, often by delivering water or fire retardant. In order to drop water or fire retardant from a plane or helicopter, the aircraft must be designed or retrofitted for such purpose, which limits the number of aircraft available.

Representative VALADAO has worked with various stakeholders who have developed and improved container aerial firefighting systems that drop water or fire retardant from aircraft via disposable containers. This technology could decrease the response time to wildfires by increasing the number of aircraft available, which could, in turn, save lives and critical infrastructure.

This technology is not new and is used successfully in other parts of the world. However, U.S. wildland firefighting agencies have not recently studied the system.

H.R. 836 would require the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to evaluate the use of container aerial firefighting systems in response to wildfires. The evaluation will focus on effectiveness, cost, ease of delivery, and safety.

Directing our wildfire firefighting agencies to study new and emerging technologies is a win for the wildland firefighting crews and a win for those who live in vulnerable, fire-prone areas.

I applaud Congressman VALADAO for his leadership on this important topic. His legislation passed the House unanimously last year, and it has also passed the House twice with bipartisan support as part of the Fix Our Forests Act.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill and reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this legislation introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO).

In a few minutes, I will also have a lot to say about one of the bills that was abruptly and outrageously pulled from our agenda today, but right now, I am happy to support my friend's bill.

I point out that the text of this bill passed the House as part of Chair WESTERMAN's H.R. 471 less than 2 weeks ago. I recognize that this is the beginning of a new Congress. Things are pretty chaotic, and our friends across the aisle want to appear busy amidst all the unconstitutional chaos and illegal action that is flooding our in-boxes and our newspapers, and we are constantly on the defensive because our democracy is under attack by someone who doesn't want to be a President—he wants to be a king—and has no regard for Article I of the Constitution.

We have silence from our friends across the aisle about all of that, but I guess we have time today to move a bill that we have already passed and that nobody opposes. Congratulations for this particular head-scratcher.

□ 1330

It is a real missed opportunity since we could be using this time to talk about critical issues like the Federal wildland firefighting pay and benefits that are set to expire a few weeks from now.

I think there is bipartisan support to extend those, but I can't get my friends across the aisle to talk about that, let alone come together and move some legislation to get it done.

Of course, fixing firefighter pay wasn't in the recent Republican package. It is not on the agenda today either. I hope we get to it at some point, but we are not doing it today, and that is a shame.

We should also be talking about disaster relief for California, but that is not on the agenda today either. Since we are considering this bill for a second time, Groundhog Day on this bill, instead of all of the other priorities, I will say committee Democrats continue to support this bill.

There is no opposition to this bill. We are going to pass it again and again, maybe, if we run out of other things to do this in this Congress.

The legislation would require relevant Federal agencies to complete an updated evaluation of the Container Aerial Firefighting System to support wildland fire mitigation and suppression efforts across the country. The system involves using a box or a container for aerial drops of water or fire retardant.

Its proponents claim that the utilization of this technology could improve delivery time and make it easier for aircrafts to fight fires. That is fine. That is a good thing.

However, back in 2011, the Forest Service conducted a study and determined that this particular system did not meet existing standards and posed safety risks to our communities and forests. Since that initial report, there have been technological advancements.

This bill aims to take another look at a potentially useful tool while ensuring the Forest Service retains its authority to decide if the tool is ready to use or not. This is an important safeguard for wildland firefighters and the communities who are impacted by the wildfire crisis.

As we saw in the recent southern California fires, the climate crisis is clearly increasing the severity and duration of wildfire season. Evaluating new technology that can help keep communities safe needs to be a priority.

This bill is one of many examples of the potential for truly bipartisan collaboration on the issue of wildfires. I hope we can keep this work going. I hope we can extend it to actually be a permanent fix for the firefighter pay problem that we need to address.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes,'' and I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friends across the aisle for their overwhelming support of Representative VALADAO's bill. We should have that kind of support for a bill that is addressing a huge issue in our country with wildland fire and the dangers that it imposes.

Mr. Speaker, I believe you and Mr. VALADAO both serve on the Committee on Appropriations where Republicans brought an Interior appropriations bill to the floor with firefighter pay funding in that bill, and it was voted down by our friends across the aisle.

We do need to take care of our firefighters. When we get bills on the floor that increase pay for firefighters, I would hope we could get more bipartisan support on that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act of 2025, which would dramatically increase the number of airlift assets available for wildfire emergencies.

Containerized Aerial Firefighting Systems, or CAFFS, are airdrop-capable disposable containers for water or fire retardant, which can be dropped from much higher altitudes and with less visibility than current aerial firefighting operations.

Current operations depend on single-mission aircraft, but CAFFS can be used by any standard cargo plane. The use of CAFFS provides for more coverage for firefighters on the ground and allows teams to quickly respond to prevent smaller fires from raging out of control.

These systems are used by other countries, but the United States has not utilized them. We have the technology that we can deploy to stop or minimize the devastation these fires cause, and we should be using it.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chair WESTERMAN and his staff at the Committee on Natural Resources for their work on this important bill to combat and contain wildfires in a quicker and more efficient way.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly didn't think I was engaging in personalities by talking about a President that wants to be a king. I thought I was just acknowledging the reality of what is happening in this country.

I was also referring to these 19-year-olds in hoodies that have been given read-write access to our most sensitive, personal data who are inside the Treasury Department's payment system right now rummaging through our private information doing who knows what.

We can't even get answers because our friends across the aisle don't want to talk about it. They want to rerun all these bills that we have already passed and that are, frankly, not opposed, and this is a waste of our time here on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' again on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Again, I would remind Members to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 836 is a good, commonsense piece of legislation that has passed the House three times on a bipartisan basis.

I commend Representative VALADAO for his proven leadership on bipartisan solutions that meaningfully improve forest health and reduce wildfires. If we could get the Senate to act on some of these bills, we wouldn't have to pass them so many times.

I appreciate Representative VALADAO being so persistent and continuing to work on his good legislation. I encourage adoption of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 836.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONVEYANCE OF PLEASANT VALLEY RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE TO GILA COUNTY, ARIZONA

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 837) to require the Secretary of Agriculture to convey the Pleasant Valley Ranger District Administrative Site to Gila County, Arizona.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 837

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONVEYANCE OF PLEASANT VALLEY RANGER DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SITE TO GILA COUNTY, ARIZONA.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COUNTY.—The term ''County'' means Gila County, Arizona.

(2) MAP.—The term ''map'' means the map entitled ''Pleasant Valley Admin Site Proposal'' and dated September 23, 2021.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

(b) CONVEYANCE REQUIRED.—Subject to this section, if the County submits to the Secretary a written request for conveyance of the property described in subsection (c) not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall convey to the County all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the property described in subsection (c).

(c) DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The property referred to in subsection (b) is the parcel of real property, including all land and improvements, generally depicted as ''Gila County Area'' on the map, consisting of approximately 232.9 acres of National Forest System land located in the Tonto National Forest in Arizona.

(2) MAP.—

(A) MINOR ERRORS.—The Secretary may correct minor errors in the map.

(B) AVAILABILITY.—A copy of the map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the Forest Service.

(3) SURVEY.—The exact acreage and legal description of the National Forest System land to be conveyed under subsection (b) shall be determined by a survey satisfactory to the Secretary.

(d) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The conveyance under subsection (b) shall be—

(1) subject to valid existing rights;

(2) made without consideration;

(3) made by quitclaim deed; and

(4) subject to such other terms and conditions as the Secretary considers to be appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

(e) COSTS OF CONVEYANCE.—As a condition of the conveyance under subsection (b), the County shall pay all costs associated with the conveyance, including the cost of—

(1) a survey, if necessary, under subsection (c)(3);

(2) any environmental analysis or resource survey required under Federal law; and

(3) any analysis required to comply with division A of subtitle III of title 54, United States Code (commonly referred to as the ''National Historic Preservation Act'').

(f) ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS.—Notwithstanding section 120(h)(3)(A) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9620(h)(3)(A)), the Secretary shall not be required to provide any covenant or warranty for the land and improvements conveyed to the County under subsection (b).

(g) USE OF LAND.—The land conveyed to the county under subsection (b) shall be used by the County only for the purposes of serving and supporting veterans of the Armed Forces.

(h) REVERSION.—If any land conveyed under subsection (b) is used in a manner that is inconsistent with the requirements of subsection (g), all right, title, and interest in and to the land shall revert to the United States, at the discretion of the Secretary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 837, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 837, which is led by my friend from Arizona, Representative CRANE.

This is a good bill that would transfer land from the Forest Service to create a retreat facility in Gila County, Arizona, for veterans and their families. Over 5,000 veterans call Gila County home, and there are over 500,000 veterans in all of Arizona.

Creating this facility will help the brave men and women who have served our country find healing, reconnect with nature, and ease the transition back to civilian life.

Nearly 60 percent of the land in Gila County is Federally owned, which creates significant limitations on available land for commendable efforts like the veterans' retreat center. The proposed location of this new center is a Forest Service site that is scheduled to be torn down.

This 232-acre site includes 17 buildings, 2 residences, 2 barracks, a historic ranger house and barn, and helipads.

Gila County plans to remodel and renovate many of the buildings to provide an excellent experience for veterans and their families. Repurposing the site is a win-win, as it will be a great resource for Arizona's veterans while freeing the Forest Service from maintaining property it no longer needs.

I commend Representative CRANE for his leadership on this effort on behalf of his constituents. As a veteran himself, I know he understands how important this center will be for his community. His diligent work with Gila County and the Forest Service has led to this important effort, which will make a meaningful difference in the lives of Arizona's veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation. My Democratic colleagues and I agree that it is a good idea to authorize the conveyance of the Pleasant Valley Ranger District Administrative Site to Gila County in Arizona.

However, I do want to talk about the broader context for this bill because it

was supposed to be considered today alongside a Democratic-led bill, the National Museum of Play Recognition Act. It is about as innocuous as it gets.

This is a bill that has a Republican co-lead. It would merely confer the title of ''national'' to this museum in Rochester, New York, which is a unique institution dedicated to the exploration of how play serves to promote learning, creativity, discovery, and cultural history.

The bill wouldn't provide Federal funding or any other benefits that my friends across the aisle could object to. I am talking about conferring an honorary title on a children's museum. It has areas for kids to play and imagine that they are in Sesame Street or the Berenstain Bears books.

Unfortunately, House Republicans have pulled the bill from today's agenda at the last minute because we are told that many Republicans think the museum is too woke and too DEI. That is right. That is the explanation we have been given for why the deal is off and the Democratic bill can't be considered today.

I don't know the names of who made this decision or what specific complaints are behind it, but I am guessing that some of my Republican colleagues don't like the fact that the museum currently has a small temporary exhibit called Black Doll Designers that lets visitors ''learn about the pivotal role that Black designers have played in diversifying toy aisles.''

In September, the museum also posted on Instagram about Hispanic Ballerina Barbie and how the My First Barbie line of dolls ''come in various ethnicities and styles, encouraging inclusivity and diversity. . . . ''

That doesn't strike me as controversial or offensive in any way, but is that why we can't have a vote on this bill here today? Some unidentified Republicans are triggered by that, by Hispanic Ballerina Barbie, or are our Republican friends just taking their orders from the far-right website Breitbart, which posted yesterday, attacking this museum for its content and for offering what it called diversity and inclusion internships. I guess those are dirty words these days.

That is how it works these days. Shortly after the Breitbart post went up, this bill disappeared from the agenda. It was pulled. That is how it works these days. Breitbart posts something. Congress reacts. Elon Musk tweets. Republicans in Congress walk away from a bipartisan budget deal.

Mr. Speaker, this is disgusting. Are my colleagues now puppets on a string, something that maybe should be an exhibit in the play museum that we are talking about here? It sure would seem so.

There is nothing more I can say. I believe this is disgusting. I will save my comments about the remaining bill on today's agenda for later, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE), the lead sponsor of this bill about a veterans' retreat center.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of my bill, which passed the House last Congress and was the first piece of legislation I introduced in my first term.

It is a testament to veterans in Arizona. Specifically, my bill would enable Gila County, Arizona, to operate a veterans' center on 232 acres in Young, Arizona.

As a former Navy Seal, I know the importance of providing this resource cannot be understated. This legislation will serve our State and its heroes well.

The veterans' center would protect and maintain the rich history of the property while providing family housing, meeting and activity spaces, resource rooms, veteran ceremonial grounds, and outdoor recreation.

It would be the first of its kind in northern Arizona, providing resources and support to primarily rural veterans and their families.

Furthermore, this legislation is an exemplary model of efficient land management. Out West, the Federal Government retains vast amounts of land, limiting States' ability to maintain, conserve, recreate, and responsibly produce on lands within their own State.

□ 1345

Mr. Speaker, anytime Congress can vote on legislation that returns power to the States is a good thing.

In this case, veterans of northern Arizona will get a space to heal and reconnect with their families after putting their lives on the line for the peace and freedom of all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR), who helped lay the foundation for this effort, as well as Senator KELLY, who is leading this bill in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that we can get this bill across the finish line, and I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I will close by saying I support this legislation. As we have already heard, this is a property that is adjacent to the rural town of Young, Arizona, surrounded by the Gila National Forest and formerly a Forest Service office building and administrative site that is no longer used by the agency.

This conveyance will provide Gila County with the opportunity to do something productive and important with the property. It will establish a veterans retreat and community center. That is a worthy goal. It will support and uplift our deserving community of veterans in that location, and the partnership made possible by this bill would provide some new life to deteriorating buildings, barns, barracks, and existing wastewater systems.

This is a bill that passed the House last Congress. It is unfortunate that the Senate didn't take it up. Hopefully, this time around, they will, and we can help fulfill Gila County's goal in creating what they have described as ''the ultimate experience for veterans and their families.'' We support all of that.

If this bill does become law, I hope our Federal Government will be sufficiently staffed to carry it out. With furloughs, firings, and attempts at encouraging early retirement, including a whole bunch of lawless attempts that I wish my friends across the aisle were a little more concerned about, we are already seeing basic government functions at risk.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues across the aisle to tell their friends in the White House to look before they leap and to stop dismantling the offices that serve our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I applaud Representative CRANE for his leadership in this effort. Representative CRANE honorably and bravely served our Nation, and now, he is providing exemplary service to his constituents by championing this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 837.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1618

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LALOTA) at 4 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 93; and

Adoption of House Resolution 93, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant

to clause 9 of rule XX, the remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 27, HALT ALL LETHAL TRAFFICKING OF FENTANYL ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 93) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 27) to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 212, nays 208, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 30]

YEAS—212

Aderholt
Alford
Allen
Amodei (NV)
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Baird
Balderson
Barr
Barrett
Baumgartner
Bean (FL)
Begich
Bentz
Bergman
Bice
Biggs (AZ)
Biggs (SC)
Bilirakis
Boebert
Bost
Brecheen
Bresnahan
Buchanan
Burchett
Burlison
Calvert
Cammack
Carey
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cline
Cloud
Clyde
Cole
Collins
Comer
Crane
Crank
Crawford
Crenshaw
Davidson
De La Cruz
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donalds
Downing
Dunn (FL)
Edwards
Ellzey
Emmer
Estes
Evans (CO)
Ezell
Fallon
Fedorchak
Feenstra
Finstad
Fischbach
Fitzgerald
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flood
Fong
Foxx
Franklin, Scott
Fry
Fulcher
Garbarino
Gill (TX)
Gimenez
Goldman (TX)
Gonzales, Tony
Gooden
Gosar
Graves
Green (TN)
Greene (GA)
Griffith
Grothman
Guest
Guthrie
Hageman
Hamadeh (AZ)
Haridopolos
Harrigan
Harris (MD)
Harris (NC)
Harshbarger
Hern (OK)
Higgins (LA)
Hill (AR)
Houchin
Hudson
Huizenga
Hunt
Hurd (CO)
Issa
Jack
Jackson (TX)
James
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (SD)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Joyce (PA)
Kean
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy (UT)
Kiggans (VA)
Kiley (CA)
Kim
Knott
Kustoff
LaHood
LaLota
LaMalfa
Langworthy
Latta
Lawler
Lee (FL)
Letlow
Loudermilk
Lucas
Luttrell
Mace
Mackenzie
Malliotakis
Maloy
Mann
Massie
Mast
McCaul
McClain
McClintock
McCormick
McDowell
McGuire
Messmer
Meuser
Miller (IL)
Miller (OH)
Miller (WV)
Mills
Moolenaar
Moore (AL)
Moore (NC)
Moore (UT)
Moore (WV)
Moran
Murphy
Nehls
Newhouse
Norman
Nunn (IA)
Obernolte
Ogles
Onder
Owens
Palmer
Perry
Pfluger
Reschenthaler
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rose
Rouzer
Roy
Rulli
Rutherford
Salazar
Scalise
Schmidt
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Self
Sessions
Shreve
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smucker
Stauber
Stefanik
Steil
Steube
Strong
Stutzman
Taylor
Thompson (PA)
Tiffany
Timmons
Turner (OH)
Valadao
Van Drew
Van Duyne
Van Orden
Wagner
Walberg
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Westerman
Wied
Williams (TX)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yakym
Zinke

NAYS—208

Adams
Aguilar
Amo
Ansari
Auchincloss
Balint
Barragán
Beatty
Bell
Bera
Beyer
Bishop
Bonamici
Boyle (PA)
Brown
Brownley
Budzinski
Bynum
Carbajal
Carson
Carter (LA)
Casar
Case
Casten
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Cherfilus-McCormick
Chu
Cisneros
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conaway
Connolly
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Craig
Crockett
Crow
Cuellar
Davids (KS)
Davis (IL)
Davis (NC)
Dean (PA)
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Deluzio
Dexter
Dingell
Doggett
Elfreth
Escobar
Espaillat
Evans (PA)
Fields
Figures
Fletcher
Foster
Foushee
Frankel, Lois
Friedman
Frost
Garamendi
Garcia (CA)
García (IL)
Garcia (TX)
Gillen
Golden (ME)
Goldman (NY)
Gomez
Gonzalez, V.
Goodlander
Gottheimer
Gray
Green, Al (TX)
Harder (CA)
Hayes
Himes
Horsford
Houlahan
Hoyer
Hoyle (OR)
Huffman
Ivey
Jackson (IL)
Jacobs
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (TX)
Kamlager-Dove
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy (NY)
Khanna
Krishnamoorthi
Landsman
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latimer
Lee (NV)
Lee (PA)
Levin
Liccardo
Lieu
Lofgren
Lynch
Magaziner
Mannion
Matsui
McBath
McBride
McClain Delaney
McClellan
McCollum
McDonald Rivet
McGarvey
McGovern
McIver
Meeks
Menendez
Meng
Mfume
Min
Moore (WI)
Morelle
Morrison
Moskowitz
Moulton
Mrvan
Nadler
Neal
Neguse
Norcross
Ocasio-Cortez
Olszewski
Omar
Pallone
Panetta
Pappas
Pelosi
Perez
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Pou
Pressley
Quigley
Ramirez
Randall
Raskin
Riley (NY)
Rivas
Ross
Ruiz
Ryan
Salinas
Sánchez
Scanlon
Schakowsky
Schneider
Scholten
Schrier
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Sewell
Sherman
Sherrill
Simon
Smith (WA)
Sorensen
Soto
Stansbury
Stanton
Stevens
Strickland
Subramanyam
Suozzi
Swalwell
Sykes
Takano
Thanedar
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tlaib
Tokuda
Tonko
Torres (CA)
Torres (NY)
Trahan
Tran
Turner (TX)
Underwood
Vargas
Vasquez
Veasey
Velázquez
Vindman
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson Coleman
Whitesides
Williams (GA)

NOT VOTING—13

Ciscomani
DeSaulnier
Grijalva
Hinson
Jayapal
Leger Fernandez
Luna
Miller-Meeks
Mullin
Pettersen
Spartz
Tenney
Wilson (FL)

□ 1649

Mr. COSTA changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. SIMPSON changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mrs. HINSON. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 30.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 215, noes 208, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 31]

AYES—215

Aderholt
Alford
Allen
Amodei (NV)
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Baird
Balderson
Barr
Barrett
Bean (FL)
Begich
Bentz
Bergman
Bice
Biggs (AZ)
Biggs (SC)
Bilirakis
Boebert
Bost
Brecheen
Bresnahan
Buchanan
Burchett
Calvert
Cammack
Carey
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Ciscomani
Cline
Cloud
Clyde
Cole
Collins
Comer
Crane
Crank
Crawford
Crenshaw
Davidson
De La Cruz
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donalds
Downing
Dunn (FL)
Edwards
Ellzey
Emmer
Estes
Evans (CO)
Ezell
Fallon
Fedorchak
Feenstra
Finstad
Fischbach
Fitzgerald
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flood
Fong
Foxx
Franklin, Scott
Fry
Fulcher
Garbarino
Gill (TX)
Gimenez
Goldman (TX)
Gonzales, Tony
Gooden
Gosar
Graves
Green (TN)
Greene (GA)
Griffith
Grothman
Guest
Guthrie
Hageman
Hamadeh (AZ)
Haridopolos
Harrigan
Harris (MD)
Harris (NC)
Harshbarger
Hern (OK)
Higgins (LA)
Hill (AR)
Hinson
Houchin
Hudson
Huizenga
Hunt
Hurd (CO)
Issa
Jack
Jackson (TX)
James
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (SD)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Joyce (PA)
Kean
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy (UT)
Kiggans (VA)
Kiley (CA)
Kim
Knott
Kustoff
LaHood
LaLota
LaMalfa
Langworthy
Latta
Lawler
Lee (FL)
Letlow
Loudermilk
Lucas
Luna
Luttrell
Mace
Mackenzie
Malliotakis
Maloy
Mann
Massie
Mast
McCaul
McClain
McClintock
McCormick
McDowell
McGuire
Messmer
Meuser
Miller (IL)
Miller (OH)
Miller (WV)
Miller-Meeks
Mills
Moolenaar
Moore (AL)
Moore (NC)
Moore (UT)
Moore (WV)
Moran
Murphy
Nehls
Newhouse
Norman
Nunn (IA)
Obernolte
Ogles
Onder
Owens
Palmer
Perry
Pfluger
Reschenthaler
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rose
Rouzer
Roy
Rulli
Rutherford
Salazar
Scalise
Schmidt
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Self
Sessions
Shreve
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smucker
Stauber
Stefanik
Steil
Steube
Strong
Stutzman
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Tiffany
Timmons
Turner (OH)
Valadao
Van Drew
Van Duyne
Van Orden
Wagner
Walberg
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Westerman
Wied
Williams (TX)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yakym
Zinke

NOES—208

Adams	Garcia (TX)	Olszewski
Aguilar	Gillen	Omar
Amo	Golden (ME)	Pallone
Ansari	Goldman (NY)	Panetta
Auchincloss	Gomez	Pappas
Balint	Gonzalez, V.	Pelosi
Barragán	Goodlander	Perez
Beatty	Gottheimer	Peters
Bell	Gray	Pingree
Bera	Green, Al (TX)	Pocan
Beyer	Harder (CA)	Pou
Bishop	Hayes	Pressley
Bonamici	Himes	Quigley
Boyle (PA)	Horsford	Ramirez
Brown	Houlahan	Randall
Brownley	Hoyer	Raskin
Budzinski	Hoyle (OR)	Riley (NY)
Bynum	Huffman	Rivas
Carbajal	Ivey	Ross
Carson	Jackson (IL)	Ruiz
Carter (LA)	Jacobs	Ryan
Casar	Jeffries	Salinas
Case	Johnson (GA)	Sánchez
Casten	Johnson (TX)	Scanlon
Castor (FL)	Kamlager-Dove	Schakowsky
Castro (TX)	Kaptur	Schneider
Cherfilus-McCormick	Keating	Scholten
	Kelly (IL)	Schrier
Chu	Kennedy (NY)	Scott (VA)
Cisneros	Khanna	Scott, David
Clark (MA)	Krishnamoorthi	Sewell
Clarke (NY)	Landsman	Sherman
Cleaver	Larsen (WA)	Sherrill
Clyburn	Larson (CT)	Simon
Cohen	Latimer	Smith (WA)
Conaway	Lee (NV)	Sorensen
Connolly	Lee (PA)	Soto
Correa	Levin	Stansbury
Costa	Liccardo	Stanton
Courtney	Lieu	Stevens
Craig	Lofgren	Strickland
Crockett	Lynch	Subramanyam
Crow	Magaziner	Suozzi
Cuellar	Mannion	Swalwell
Davids (KS)	Matsui	Sykes
Davis (IL)	McBath	Takano
Davis (NC)	McBride	Thanedar
Dean (PA)	McClain Delaney	Thompson (CA)
DeGette	McClellan	Thompson (MS)
DeLauro	McCollum	Titus
DelBene	McDonald Rivet	Tlaib
Deluzio	McGarvey	Tokuda
Dexter	McGovern	Tonko
Dingell	McIver	Torres (CA)
Doggett	Meeks	Torres (NY)
Elfreth	Menendez	Trahan
Escobar	Meng	Tran
Espaillat	Mfume	Turner (TX)
Evans (PA)	Min	Underwood
Fields	Moore (WI)	Vargas
Figures	Morelle	Vasquez
Fletcher	Morrison	Veasey
Foster	Moskowitz	Velázquez
Foushee	Moulton	Vindman
Frankel, Lois	Mrvan	Wasserman Schultz
Friedman	Nadler	
Frost	Neal	Waters
Garamendi	Neguse	Watson Coleman
Garcia (CA)	Norcross	Whitesides
García (IL)	Ocasio-Cortez	Williams (GA)

NOT VOTING—10

Baumgartner	Jayapal	Spartz
Burlison	Leger Fernandez	Wilson (FL)
DeSaulnier	Mullin	
Grijalva	Pettersen	

□ 1657

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted AYE on Roll Call No. 31.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was unable to vote today, as I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 30, on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 93, and NO on Roll Call No. 31, H. Res. 93, the Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 27, the HALT Fentanyl Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I recently gave birth and am unable to travel to DC to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 30 and NO on Roll Call No. 31.

REMEMBERING CAPITOL POLICE RECRUIT OFFICER CHRISTOPHER KATZ

(Mr. STEIL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, on this past Saturday, February 1, 2025, United States Capitol Police Recruit Officer Christopher Katz was tragically killed in a car accident in Glynn County, Georgia. Five other Capitol Police recruits were seriously injured in the crash, as well.

Chris was an ambitious young man who had dreams of serving his country and his community. He had several career options in law enforcement but chose the United States Capitol Police due to their rich history and dedicated service to the United States.

He had tremendous respect for the critical role in protecting the Nation's elected officials and the institutions of democracy. Chris' family and friends remember him for his unwavering dedication to service and his love of life.

He was a young man with a bright future taken far too soon, but he will be forever remembered for his passion, kindness, and commitment to making a difference. We are thankful for his service.

Every single day members of the Capitol Police put themselves in the line of danger to protect this great institution and those of us who work and visit here. Our prayers and sympathies are with the United States Capitol Police community, these officers, and their families.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself, Ranking Member JOE MORELLE, and the House of Representatives, I ask that the United States House of Representatives observe a moment of silence.

HONORING KEVIN JONES

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Kevin Jones, who retired as Brunswick police chief after an exceptional 30-year career in law enforcement.

His dedication to service has had a lasting impact on the community. Chief Jones served as Brunswick's police chief since February of 2019, focusing on modernizing policing practices, enhancing officer training, and improving public safety efforts.

His leadership emphasized transparency, accountability, and community trust, earning respect from citizens and city officials alike. Under his guidance, Brunswick experienced a significant reduction in crime, a revitalization of neighborhood watch programs, and improved police-community relations.

His dedication made Brunswick a safer place to live, strengthened ties between the community and law enforcement, and increased confidence in the department. Chief Jones announced his retirement in October of 2024, ensuring a smooth leadership transition for the department.

He has mentored many officers, ensuring the next generation of leaders is ready to step up. Chief Jones leaves behind a legacy of integrity, leadership, and service that will continue to inspire the community for many years to come.

FIGHTING FOR OUR FEDERAL WORKERS

(Ms. MCCLELLAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out on behalf of our beleaguered Federal workforce which is currently under attack by the Musk-Trump-Vance administration.

Trump's OMB nominee, Russell Vought, said: ''We want the bureaucrats to be traumatically affected. When they wake up in the morning, we want them to not want to go to work because they are increasingly viewed as the villains. . . . We want to put them in trauma.'' Well, Mr. Speaker, they are in trauma.

Literally, on my way to the floor to vote tonight, I received a text from a Federal employee who said simply: ''Help us!'' Who exactly is the Musk-Trump-Vance administration terrorizing: the people who make sure your food is safe to eat, your water is clean to drink, and the air is clean to breathe; the people who work tirelessly to keep pregnant women, asthmatic children, and people with cancer from dying; the people who make sure you fly safely; and the people protecting American lives here and around the globe through diplomacy, intelligence gathering, and fighting crime.

Mr. Speaker, I see the Federal workforce. I am doing everything I can to help them. I won't quit. They shouldn't quit either.

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MOORE of West Virginia). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

CELEBRATING ALAN KINDER'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

(Mr. CLYDE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CLYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate an extraordinary milestone: The 100th birthday of Alan Kinder, a man whose life embodies resilience, courage, and a passion for service.

Alan's story is one of bravery, from storming Omaha Beach during the second wave of D-Day to surviving the Battle of the Bulge. After his heroic service in defense of our Nation, he returned home to build a life filled with family, purpose, and more adventure.

Alan has been both a witness to history and a keeper of it, reminding us all of the sacrifices made for our precious freedom. Yet, it is his warmth and compassion that shines the brightest.

Both Alan's kindness and the stories of his remarkable service have left an indelible mark on every person lucky enough to know him. On behalf of the Ninth District, I wish Alan a happy 100th birthday and entire 100th birthday year. I thank him for his service, his stories, and his example.

HOLD THE LINE

(Ms. STANSBURY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak directly to the American people and to our Federal workers, not only across the country but especially in New Mexico.

I know that many are feeling frightened, uncertain, and under attack. I want them to know that Democrats have their back and are fighting back using every tool that we have. We are fighting back in the courts, the Congress, and in our communities. We are fighting back against an unqualified, unvetted billionaire who is stealing their data, taking their jobs, dismantling our Federal agencies, and freezing the funds that make our communities run.

Mr. Speaker, they have dedicated their careers to ensuring that this great Nation can serve our people. We say to them: Hold the line, because we have their backs.

REINSTATING OUR SERVICEMEMBERS

(Mr. GROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, it seems like every day there has been such good news coming out of the White House. It is easy to lose track of some of the executive orders coming from President Trump, but I would like to bring attention to one today.

Once this executive order is in effect, there is nothing Democrats will be able to do to stop it. That is the executive order reinstating servicemembers discharged under the military's COVID–19 vaccination mandate.

It is hard to believe that only 4 years ago we had a President who was demanding that all our brave servicemembers had to take an experimental vaccine, and if they didn't take it, they would be removed from the service.

President Trump has reinstated these folks. President Trump is a great man of compassion. He is a man who respects independent thought; unlike a lot of people who feel: One guy who went to college told me this, so I better do it.

I know a lot of other people who didn't get the vaccine. They did a very good job of researching the vaccine and had solid reasons for not getting it. I thank President Trump for reinstating all of our brave servicemen who were unfairly forced from the military.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

(Ms. TLAIB asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I know that Black History Month is a time to celebrate and recommit to the fight for justice and Black liberation in Michigan's 12th Congressional District and beyond.

I am proud that I was born and raised in the most beautiful, Blackest city in the country, the city of Detroit, where movements are born and where history is made every single day. Time and time again, we see efforts to erase our history.

Systemic racism continues to be codified into our laws and into our budgets. I know the current administration is now attempting to dismantle foundational civil rights protections, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and roll back our hard-won progress here in our country.

No matter how much they want to whitewash it, they cannot erase Black history. Black history is American history. There would be no United States of America without the contributions of our Black neighbors. Black lives matter, and Black history matters.

SUPPORT FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

(Mr. TURNER of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TURNER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stand in unwavering support of our Nation's Federal employees, many of whom live and work across the Texas 18th Congressional District.

As a proud member of the Congressional Labor Caucus, I am here to say loud and clear: America needs its Federal workforce, and we will not sit by while their jobs, their rights, and their livelihoods are under attack.

Federal employees ensure the safety and well-being of every American, and these efforts to reduce Federal workers will only bring them harm. Thousands of Federal workers in Texas' 18th Congressional District serve vital roles, including healthcare, transportation and safety, Social Security, and much more.

To every dedicated Federal employee, our message is clear. We have their back. We will fight in Congress to protect their rights, their jobs, and their ability to serve the American people. Their work does not go unrecognized.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to stand against this calculated attack on Federal workers and the values of public service.

□ 1715

PROTECTING FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, these are unprecedented and extraordinarily difficult times for our Federal employees. The Trump administration seems intent on dismantling much of the Federal Government in violation of the Constitution, Federal statutes, and Federal regulations.

The administration has relentlessly attacked Federal employees, subjecting them to chaos and fear. The administration has imposed a hiring freeze, offered deferred resignations, fired employees, put employees on leave, effectively reestablished schedule F, and ended telework and remote work.

The administration is not alone in attacking Federal employees. The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, on which I serve, has held two hearings this Congress, and both were designed to demoralize Federal employees.

As I said at the first hearing, Federal employees deserve praise for their expertise, dedication, and service, not derision.

Let's be clear. What is motivating these actions? They are designed to get experts to quit the workforce.

U.S. GOVERNMENT SERVES AMERICAN PEOPLE, NOT WEALTHY SHAREHOLDERS

(Mr. THANEDAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THANEDAR. Mr. Speaker, Elon Musk invested $277 million into Donald Trump's election. I guess that is the price to take over our Federal Government. Elon Musk is worth over $400 billion, meaning his contribution to Trump is the same as about $130 for an average American.

Mr. Musk, the government is not a private enterprise. It serves the American people, not the wealthy shareholders.

Thousands will die around the world because USAID won't deliver lifesaving

food and medicine. Millions will lose control of their personal information, such as Social Security numbers, banking information, Social Security checks, and Medicare benefits.

Elon Musk does not care about us because he does not have to and does not want to. Rest assured, Democrats care, I care, and we will use every tool at our disposal to get rid of this unelected, power-hungry, egocentric billionaire.

IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL WORKERS

(Mr. FROST asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise for every American whose life has been made better because of the work of Federal civil servants.

President Donald Trump and his power-crazed posse of billionaire bosses are firing our Federal workers. Our quality of life is degraded and diminished because of that.

They are moving to install their unqualified followers to do the dirty work of a hostile takeover of every facet of our lives, like Medicaid, the National Weather Service, and the Department of Education.

Their deferred resignation plan is a scam. Firefighters, nurses, TSA agents, park rangers, and foreign aid workers are refusing to go quietly in the face of an authoritarian. I commend them.

America is indeed at a fork in the road. Do we want a qualified, respected workforce serving us, or do we want an army of clueless yes-men working to serve the selfish?

I know what I want, what the American people want, and what the American people deserve. It is a government that works for them. I thank our Federal workforce and our civil servants.

SUPPORTING FEDERAL WORKERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. IVEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Labor Caucus comes today to oppose the Trump administration's unlawful and unconstitutional attacks on Federal workers.

Our Federal workforce has the experience and expertise that America needs. We must protect the public. The air that we breathe, the water we drink, the medicine we take, and the food that we eat hangs in the balance.

This fight is too important. We cannot allow the Trump administration to replace a competitive merit system with a political spoils system. That is why we will keep fighting in Congress and the courts. I have my colleagues with me today who have come to express their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. NORCROSS).

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the Labor Caucus, I am here today to speak on something I didn't think we would ever have to. We have to talk about the hard work of our Federal workforce, those workers who get up every day to go to work, the ones who keep our food safe, the water safe to drink, and the air safe to breathe.

Federal workers are nurses. They are doctors. They are in the VA, taking care of our vets each and every day. They are civilian DOD workers. That is right. They are working in the Pentagon and around the world to make sure that our military is ready to go. They are the ones who are processing Social Security checks for our seniors. They are the TSA agents, who we see every time we go to the airport.

Trump is making it hard, almost impossible, for them to do their jobs. He wants them to quit. They dedicated their lives for us. Who is the Federal workforce? They are you and me.

They say they have to come back to the office when it is more efficient for a person, agreed upon with management, to work from a different location.

I suggest, if we really want to know where Federal workers are, look at the offices where the Member is supposed to be showing up. Tell me how many times they go to the office. That is what we are dealing with.

Trump is revoking their union contracts, the contracts which they negotiated legally and tried to enforce. It is so important. Trump doesn't have the authority to change these agreements, but he is doing it. It is going to take our courts to turn this around.

America's civil service is a merit system. Trump signed another executive order to remove jobs from the nonpartisan civil service. Here we are, back again.

These civil servants wake up every day to help us. I am not seeing any of those civil servants flying their private airplanes like Mr. Musk and Mr. Trump. They are just regular people like us, trying to get by.

As we have this discussion with all the Labor Caucus, I want to take a minute to thank GLENN IVEY, who represents so many Federal workers back in his district, and STEPHEN LYNCH, who has been leading our fight at the Postal Service.

At the end of the day, we have to stick together. Right there, carved into the wood, it says, ''Union,'' and that is what we have to have.

God bless them. I thank every Federal worker for what they do.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman IVEY for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, this is so important, yet we should be ashamed of the way the Trump administration has been absolutely attacking our Federal workers, the people who go to work every single day to do important functions.

They don't have any ulterior motive. They are making sure our senior citizens get their medications and that we take care of our veterans who need help. These are the kinds of things they do. They are servants to all of our people. They are doing their best job, yet they are being criticized.

I thank them, and I pledge to all of our Federal workers that I will be here to praise them, to protect them, and to say that they have not only every right but every privilege of serving the American people as they have done day in and day out.

Mr. Speaker, I say hooray to the workers who do so much every single day. They don't ask for any special awards but do the work that the people of the United States need. We have to thank them every single day for their work and not denigrate them as the Trump administration has done.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to Representative SÁNCHEZ.

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank GLENN IVEY for his wonderful work.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our Nation's Federal workers. As a member of the Labor Caucus, I stand with the essential workers who provide critical services to the American public.

Make no mistake, we are seeing a direct attack on our democracy right now. Efforts to shut down Federal agencies are designed to erode our Nation's foundation. No one, not the President, not an unelected billionaire, has the right to singlehandedly dismantle Federal agencies created and funded by the Congress, yet that is exactly what is happening.

President Trump has surrendered control over to Elon Musk, allowing him to dismantle our institutions without any oversight. This is a blatant abuse of power, and it is happening on this Congress' watch.

They have attacked Federal workers, replacing skilled civil servants with political loyalists. They have targeted and smeared public employees who have served this country honorably, many for decades. They are even rejecting union contracts that were lawfully negotiated between the government and workers. This is union-busting, plain and simple.

As a former union member, I won't stand for that. These contracts are protected by law and cannot be changed

on a whim or, more likely, on a tantrum.

It gets worse. Elon Musk's DOGE has even infiltrated the Treasury Department. He and a bunch of twentysomethings now have access to the Federal payment system and the confidential data of almost every American.

Why on Earth do a bunch of kids who are not even legally old enough to rent a car need access to Americans' personal information and data? Why should they have their hands on our Social Security or Medicare payment or see whether we or a loved one has a disability or whether or not we received a tax refund?

This isn't just a violation of privacy. It is a breach of the trust of the American people who they put in government.

DOGE needs to be held accountable for its unlawful actions, and Democrats are and will continue to fight back. We are demanding hearings, investigations, and supporting lawsuits that seek to protect our constituents' very personal information.

We need the few Republicans in this body who care about the rule of law to join us in this fight. We need to defend Congress' constitutional authorities, the power of the purse, and oversight of the executive branch. We need Republicans to stand up for all Americans.

We want all Federal workers to please know that they are essential. America values them, needs them, and has their backs. When they are attacked, every American who depends on them is also attacked.

Mr. Speaker, I once again thank my colleague, Mr. GLENN IVEY, for yielding.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN).

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. IVEY for convening this Special Order hour and for his hard work on behalf of the Federal employees and all workers in his district. As a co-chair of the Congressional Labor Caucus, I am proud to stand with our essential workers who keep the government running every day.

Since day one of this administration, President Trump has relentlessly attacked Federal employees as he and Elon Musk seek to eliminate nonpartisan, career public servant jobs across the country. These attacks on Federal workers are straight out of the Project 2025 playbook.

Unelected billionaire Elon Musk has been bulldozing through the Federal workforce, demanding the firing of hundreds of thousands of employees whose only fireable offense is trying to serve the American people.

□ 1730

Federal workers are nurses and doctors at veterans hospitals. They process Social Security checks for seniors. They are TSA agents and air traffic controllers who keep us safe when we fly.

More than 85 percent of the Federal workforce operates outside of Washington, D.C. In my home State of Wisconsin, there are 18,000 Federal civilian employees, including over 5,800 Federal workers in my district alone.

In the last 2 days, my office has gotten over 1,000 constituent calls with people angry, hurt, and terrified that the services they use every day will vanish along with the workers who make these programs run. An attack on Federal workers is an attack on the services that Americans rely on every day.

Elon Musk and Trump will continue to put lives at risk as they seek to cut $4 trillion over the next 10 years to pay for tax cuts for Elon Musk, Donald Trump, and the wealthiest.

To all the selfless civil servants, our message is clear: America needs you, and we have your back. We are fighting in Congress to oppose Donald Trump and Elon Musk's baseless attacks on you and your important work. We urge you to stand strong.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ).

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank my incredible colleague GLENN IVEY for convening us here today and for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with our Nation's Federal workers, including the more than 22,000 who live and work in the great State of New Jersey.

Our Federal workforce is a vital cornerstone of our work to protect the most vulnerable amongst us, grow our economy, protect our national security, and to keep us safe.

In Newark, our air traffic controllers and TSA agents devote their careers to keeping our skies safe and getting us to where we need to go safely.

Social Security employees in the Hoboken field office assist our seniors and those with disabilities in receiving the benefits they have earned and depend on.

USCIS officials in Newark assist immigrant families with processing their visas, green cards, and applications for naturalization.

Our Nation runs because of Federal workers, and an attack on them is an attack on the services that Americans rely on every day.

Along with my Democratic colleagues, I want to make our message to Federal employees clear. We have your back, and we will not back down. We will continue to oppose this administration's baseless and lawless attempts to diminish the important work you do every day.

Our civil service is a merit system protected by the right to due process, and attempts to implement Schedule F, union bust, and undermine our collective bargaining process will be met with swift and unyielding resistance from me, the Congressional Labor Caucus, and my colleagues on this side of the aisle.

The decision to enter public service is an honorable one, and millions of Federal workers and retirees who have made that decision deserve our support.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MCCLAIN DELANEY).

Mrs. MCCLAIN DELANEY. Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Labor Caucus, I rise today to stand up against the administration's actions against our 2.2 million Federal workers, including 35,000 of them in the Sixth District of Maryland.

America's greatest asset is its people, and our dedicated civil servants are no exception.

I am so deeply troubled by the administration and Elon Musk's efforts and actions to access every Americans' data and to more importantly access the U.S. Treasury Department's Federal payment system, including U.S. taxpayers' confidential financial information to slash critical Federal programs and to threaten the termination of thousands of Federal workers.

I am even greater alarmed by the Trump administration's flagrant efforts to seek political retribution against Federal agents for past investigations, including investigating the violence that occurred on January 6.

Many Members feared for their lives that day, and insurrectionists violently assaulted officers tasked with protecting the people here in this building. Now, these agents are at risk for losing their livelihoods for following the law and doing their jobs.

All of this follows the Trump administration's OMB directive to illegally freeze congressionally approved Federal funding and its letter to more than 2 million Federal employees offering a buyout from service. I implore you, do not take that buyout. It is not to be trusted.

As the buyout letter says, we are truly at a fork in the road. Do we defend American workers and our institutions or gut the Federal agencies of the knowledge that fuels American innovation and strengthens our national security?

These attacks strike at the bedrock of our American values and represent an unprecedented power grab that undermines our democracy's checks and balances.

Many of these actions have not been authorized by Congress and rightfully belong under its purview.

While I have long believed in seeking common ground when governing, I must now stand my ground for the 35,000 government employees in my district and countless more across the country looking now for Congress to take action.

Yesterday, I joined a briefing with several colleagues from Virginia, Maryland, and other places along with members of AFGE, AFSCME, Democracy Forward, NTEU, IFPTE, NARFE,

NFFE, and AFL–CIO in conjunction to develop an action plan to better defend our workers at USAID, at DOL, at the Department of Education, at NOAA, and so many other agencies under imminent threat of mandated leave, termination, or closure.

In closing, from NIST to Fort Detrick to our National Fire Academy in the Sixth District, Federal workers in Maryland are counting on us, the people in this Chamber and in our communities, to stand up and speak up for them.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN).

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of our public servants as they face an unprecedented, illegal attack by the Trump administration.

Our Federal employees are part of every single community in America. They keep us safe. They sustain us, and they support us. Now, they are under attack.

Donald Trump and Elon Musk's attack on the Federal workforce is an illegal purge. Don't let anyone call it anything else. This is a purge. It is an unlawful attempt by a reality show wannabe king to install cronies and bootlickers.

Our public servants represent the best of us. They are selfless, determined, disciplined, and professional. They are everything that Donald Trump and his MAGA flunkies are not.

To our public servants I say this: Do not be afraid. Do not be intimidated. The law is on your side. We are still with you. A grateful Nation is still with you. You have dedicated your lives to the American people. You have made our country strong. Have faith that our country is strong enough to withstand the petty tantrums of a small, self-obsessed man who disgraces the very idea of public service with his every breath.

Now is the time for courage. I am grateful for your service. I believe in you.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LANDSMAN).

Mr. LANDSMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support our Federal workers. These are public servants who live and work all over the country. The vast majority of our Federal workers do not live in the Washington, D.C., area. It is a big misconception. People think, well, these are Federal workers. They are just here in D.C.

They are in our districts. Each one of us has probably tens of thousands of Federal employees in our congressional districts, meaning that we serve them. It just so happens that they serve us.

Trump and Elon Musk have been setting these fires all over the Federal Government. They have launched this reckless trade war with China. They tried to stop Federal funding from going into our communities. These are our tax dollars. Trump gave an unelected tech billionaire access to our Social Security data, to all of our data, to our Federal payment system, and empowered him to purge as many public servants from our Federal agencies as he possibly could.

One of those public servants is a constituent of mine in southwest Ohio. She lost her job. For 20 years, she worked at USAID leading the agency's famine early detection efforts. Her work ensured food reached children, families, and communities in crisis. She saved lives.

It is not just about food. Hunger fuels instability. When people are desperate, terrorism thrives. When the U.S. pulls back, it creates a vacuum for China to step in. This administration's actions are just cruel, and they are making our country and our world less safe.

Why are they purging our Federal workforce? They have got to find $4 trillion—$4 trillion that won't go to you or me or our communities. They are planning to use these dollars to pay for tax giveaways for the uberwealthy, for the Elon Musks of the world. They are stealing from our workers, our country, and our allies all so the uberwealthy can get wealthier. It has to be stopped. This Congress can stop it, but the majority has to step up.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CASTEN).

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, last week I spent an afternoon at the National Air Traffic Control Center in Aurora, Illinois. I had been invited to discuss some work our office has been doing to make sure these folks are not penalized for seeking mental health care. None of us could have anticipated that our visit would be after the crash of American flight 5342 in Washington, but it is safe to say that that office was shook. Then we started talking about mental health.

One employee said that their staff still remembers the arson attack on the facility back in 2014 and that they were nervous that recent budget cuts have limited their ability to maintain security levels at the facility.

Another employee asked how should they interpret announcements from the Trump White House that Federal employees were going to get laid off. Would they have a job? If they got laid off, who was going to do their work? How would they continue to support their families?

A female air traffic controller asked why Donald Trump immediately blamed the crash on DEI hiring practices. It wasn't lost on any of us that our air traffic controllers, like our society, are not exclusively straight, White men. She was wondering if she was about to get fired solely on account of her gender.

Now, let that all sink in. These are hardworking Federal employees who have dedicated their lives to keeping our skies safe. They are overworked, underpaid, and now they are wondering whether the President of the United States, his Republican enablers, and his IT goons are about to fire them, curtail their pay, and blame them for airline tragedies because of the way they look, who they love, and how they pray.

What possible good comes to the American people by having a bunch of stressed-out air traffic controllers?

The United States Government can't function without these nonpartisan civil servants: our air traffic controllers, our TSA agents, our VA hospital workers, and the people who make sure your Social Security payments get through.

Why would we want to break that? Maybe you want to break it because you are carrying out Russia's foreign policy. Maybe you want to break it because you are just a grifter who has figured out that you are going to short the stock market after you tank it. Maybe you are just a coward. Maybe you are an idiot. Maybe you think it is better to be proximate to power than to stand up for whatever is right. Whatever it is, it ain't patriotism, and it scares the dickens out of me that standing up for America in 2025 is a partisan endeavor.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for hosting this Special Order. I thank my colleague for his service.

In full disclosure, my colleague and I probably represent between us about 150,000 Federal employees. I rise not only for those Federal employees, who I care a lot about, as does Mr. IVEY, but I rise for the Federal employees throughout America. I rise not just for them. I rise because they serve America every day in critical places for veterans, for homeowners, for moms, for dads, for teachers, for doctors, and for nurses, all of whom rely on the Federal Government so that they can give services needed by the American people.

□ 1745

Why are we doing this?

I just said upstairs that I have been here for 44 years. This is an unprecedented move taken by the Trump administration and the Musk administration in the first 15 days. There has been no thought, no planning, and no consultation. It is a blitzkrieg on the American Government.

Mr. Speaker, let me just give you the words of Russell Vought who is going to be heading up, apparently, the OMB, the Office of Management and Budget.

This is what he said not so long ago:

''We want the bureaucrats to be traumatically affected. When they wake up in the morning, we want them to not want to go to work because they are increasingly viewed as the villains. We want their funding to be shut down. . . .''

He is referring to the EPA, but he has aimed his objective at all of the agencies of government.

Mr. Speaker, I rise not only on behalf of Federal workers, as I said, who every day perform the services we, the Congress representing the American people, have asked them to do. They didn't create any of these agencies, we did. They did not give them the objectives, we did. They are performing the services for the American people that the American people need and, yes, want.

The initial notice went out to 2 million people, approximately all of the civilian employees of the Federal service. I want everybody to think for just one second what if all 2 million of Americans' civil servants said: Okay, we are gone. Then having been promised to be paid for 7 months for doing no work, the government shut down. Business, commerce, education, healthcare, and public safety would all be shut down. That is not what the American people voted for.

Mr. Speaker, are the people who help feed our seniors and our children, who provide medical care to our veterans, who keep our communities clean and safe, who help Americans recover from disasters, and who defend our national security and provide countless other services to American people villains? Hell, no. They are heroes and absolutely essential for America to be great.

When you treat Federal workers as villains, then you turn the American people into victims. That is what this administration is doing.

They have offered Federal workers a buyout with a deadline just hours away without any consultation to determine the adverse or, frankly, positive impact of such an action. That is not what the American people expect us to do.

I, and the Members who speak here, hope all the Members of this House, will do what the Founding Fathers thought we should do: Be an independent branch of government to set policy and not allow the Federal workers or the Federal Government to be run over by somebody who likes firing people.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congressman for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. BROWN.)

Ms. BROWN. I thank Congressman IVEY for organizing this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of more than 9,000 Federal workers in my district and their dedicated colleagues across the country.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker. President Trump and unelected billionaire Elon Musk are waging an all-out assault on Federal workers. In just 2 weeks, they have engaged in unlawful union busting, budget freezes, and civil servant layoffs all designed to intimidate, weaken, and dismantle our Federal workforce.

This isn't just an attack on Federal employees. It is an attack on all of us. In northeast Ohio, Federal workers process Social Security checks for seniors. They are doctors and nurses caring for veterans. They are TSA agents and air traffic controllers who keep us safe when we fly. They are researchers developing new technologies at NASA Glenn. These are hardworking, honorable public servants who deserve our respect, not threats and not pink slips.

Let's be clear. This reckless effort to push Federal workers out isn't about rightsizing government; it is about gutting it. It is about dismantling the very services that millions of Americans depend on. This is part of a coordinated effort to erode trust in government because the President and his billionaire buddies want it to fail. They don't want experienced workers loyal to the country. They want political lackeys loyal to only one man. They push the lie that government is inherently wasteful and that Federal employees are part of some so-called deep state.

It is nonsense, and it is dangerous. Here is why they are really doing it: To strip away labor, consumer, and environmental protections. Most notably, it is to hand billionaires and their corporations massive tax breaks while sticking it to working Americans.

We have to ask: Is this a government of the people, by the people, and for the people? Or is it a government of the billionaires, by the billionaires, and for the billionaires?

Federal workers don't serve a President or his billionaire buddy. Let me say that again: Federal workers don't serve a President or his billionaire buddy. They serve the American people, and we stand with them.

Mr. IVEY. May I inquire how much time is remaining, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 27 minutes remaining.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE).

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our Nation's Federal workers.

As a member of the Labor Caucus, I am proud to stand with these public servants who have dedicated their careers to delivering for the American people.

This administration has relentlessly attacked these nonpartisan expert workers who make sure our food is safe to eat, our water is safe to drink, and our air is safe to breathe.

As a third-generation union member, I am particularly outraged by the obvious intimidation and union-busting tactics that this administration has used on these essential workers. However, these actions are not just an attack on Federal workers. They are an attack on the services that these hardworking people of my district and this country rely on every day.

Let's be clear. Firing Federal workers means delays in receiving Social Security checks and fewer law enforcement officers keeping our communities safe.

If the Department of Labor doesn't have sufficient personnel, it will be easier for employers to commit wage theft and workplace safety and rights violations.

Whom does that benefit?

It is not the American people and not working people. In my district, we know Federal workers are not lazy or ineffective. They are our friends, our family, and our neighbors who support us every day. They get up and they go to work to work for the people of this country and not for a political party.

Federal workers have had our backs, and I assure them that we have theirs.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I first thank Congressman IVEY for putting this together here today and for his leadership.

I rise today to stand in unwavering solidarity with the hardworking men and women of our Federal workforce.

As a member of the Labor Caucus, I am proud to support the public servants who dedicate their lives to keeping our country running, including the 8,500 Federal employees who call my district home.

These workers are not faceless bureaucrats. They are the backbone of our communities. They are our neighbors, and they are our friends. They process veterans' benefits, ensure Social Security checks go out on time, make Medicare payments to our seniors' physicians, ensure our air and water are clean, keep our Nation safe, and much, much more.

Yet, right now, they are under attack from a President who has outsourced his own power to a billionaire hell-bent on dismantling our government to serve his own greed.

The administration and so-called Department of Government Efficiency are purging career professionals, politicizing civil service, and handing over even more power to the ultrawealthy.

I have been hearing from constituents all week, and this is not what people in my community and across America want.

They do not want an unelected billionaire who, I might add, has made billions off taxpayer-funded contracts to actively weaken our government.

They do not want an unelected billionaire to create a system where the rules don't apply to him and democracy takes a back seat to his own profits.

They do not want an unelected billionaire to attack our Federal workers whose love for our country keeps our communities safe and our society functioning.

We will not stand by while they buck the rule of law to dismantle the very institutions that protect hardworking families, seniors, veterans, and our democracy.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker. This is an attack on Federal workers that will allow those at the highest levels of our government and their billionaire buddies to exploit the concerns of our

constituents, take power away from the people, and enrich themselves at the expense of hardworking families in America.

America's civil service is a pillar of our society, and we will defend it.

I say to the Federal workforce: Thank you for your service. We have your back. We will fight for your jobs, your dignity, and the services that millions of Americans rely on.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Vermont (Ms. BALINT).

Ms. BALINT. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to stand with our Federal workers and civil servants and to tell them that we will fight these illegal actions.

The Trump administration is treating our Federal workforce as if they are the enemy. These are regular Americans who work important jobs all over the country, not just in D.C., but in all of our districts.

In fact, 85 percent of the nonpartisan civil servants are spread around the country. Vermont is home to 8,000 of these Federal workers. They are part of the 2 million Federal workers who operate our national parks. They are scientists at the FDA. They work at hospitals, at NASA, and they protect our national security. In fact, 70 percent work on behalf of our national security and defense.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned that the illegal purge of our civil servants at the Department of Justice and at the FBI will lead to another 9/11 terrorist attack.

I ask Americans: Do we really want to put our Nation at risk so that billionaires can get a massive tax cut?

Follow the money. What this is about is firing our Federal workforce to fund tax cuts for billionaires. Don't be fooled by what is happening here. It is about the money. Follow the money.

Our Federal workers are civil servants because they are here to serve the people. They are hired on a nonpartisan basis because they keep our country running, and they keep us safe.

What is happening is an illegal takeover of our government. By locking them out of their jobs, firing them illegally, and bullying them out of a job, Trump and Musk are trying to create chaos and confusion. It will harm Americans, not just the people who are being fired illegally, but it will harm all of those Americans in our districts who seek services from these workers.

None of this is about making our government work better for Americans. It is a well-worn tactic used by authoritarians and dictators like Orban in Hungary and Bolsonaro in Brazil. They do it to destroy government services so that they create chaos and they create confusion, and then we turn against each other.

This administration is using chaos and cruelty to amass power and wealth, not for us and not for Americans, but only for them.

□ 1800

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding. I am here on behalf of the House Labor Caucus, and I thank the gentleman for convening us today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of our Nation's Federal workers, who are under a brutal and heartless assault by Elon Musk and his co-President, Donald Trump.

A week ago, they sent the now-infamous fork-in-the-road email to 2 million Federal employees, trying to trick them into a quick decision to retire immediately and receive 8 months of severance pay, which is false, while threatening that if they refused to retire, their jobs might be eliminated.

My brothers and sisters, don't fall for the okey doke. Don't retire. Stay on the job.

Federal workers have rights that protect their jobs. Federal workers should not be intimidated into retirement. This country needs them to continue their work. They are professional and highly skilled people, and we know they work long hours, often under difficult circumstances. They do so because they believe in the importance of public service.

We will not allow Elon Musk and Donald Trump to replace Federal workers with people who are willing to kiss Trump's ring rather than serve their country. Federal workers should stay the course and keep their eyes on the prize, and House Democrats have their backs.

I thank the Federal workers for their service.

Mr. Speaker, I point out that Elon Musk and President Trump are doing this with House and Senate Republicans letting it happen. Don't fall for the okey doke.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the actions coming out of the White House are shocking, alarming, and unconstitutional. We have seen an unelected billionaire attempt to lay off, fire, and purge Federal employees from across the executive branch. No agency or department is safe, not even the department taking care of veterans.

As the ranking member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I have been quick to warn employees at the VA not to fall for the recent attempt from Musk to buy out employees. I have warned VA employees and providers. Elon Musk thinks they are stupid and won't see through his deceptive and fraudulent buyout offer.

VA employees should ignore his email and send it to the trash bin. The Trump administration is playing a dangerous game with their livelihoods and veterans' lives.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has a mandate to ensure that veterans with visual, hearing, mobility, and cognitive impairments can still apply and receive care. The Trump administration put an end to that mission to reach out to veterans with visual, hearing, mobility, and cognitive impairments. He put an end to that mission in the fervor to get rid of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in Federal agencies.

Yes, diversity, equity, and inclusion include veterans with visual, hearing, mobility, and cognitive impairments. So far, 60 employees with the mission of reaching out to these very veterans with unique challenges, to encourage them to apply for VA benefits, have been put on leave. They have been put on leave. We are talking about veterans with visual, hearing, mobility, and cognitive impairments.

The Federal hiring freeze initiated on President Trump's first day in office has left approximately 700 open positions that cannot be filled. These are 700 opportunities to increase veterans' access to care that will instead stay unfilled.

What is even more shocking is that my Republican colleagues have stayed silent while veterans' care is being impacted by DOGE.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge my Republican colleagues who sit idly by to stand up to the richest man in the world. Stand up to this would-be autocrat. Stand up to this bloodless coup. Stand up for Federal workers and your constituents.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his words.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of our Nation's Federal workers. As a proud member of the Labor Caucus, I stand with these professionals who keep our government running. Their work is vital to the health, safety, and security of the American people.

Since taking office, President Trump has attacked Federal employees, seeking to replace nonpartisan civil servants with unqualified political loyalists. These workers ensure our food is safe, our air and water are clean, and our veterans are cared for. They process Social Security benefits, safeguard our airports, and protect our communities.

More than 85 percent of Federal workers serve outside of the National Capital region, meaning these attacks impact every single congressional district in our Nation, including mine in New Orleans and the River Parishes.

Firing Federal workers leads to delays in Social Security payments, longer VA wait times, and fewer law enforcement officers on the street. We cannot allow reckless policies to dismantle these vital services.

Trump's administration recently issued a deferred resignation offer, claiming employees could resign by February 6 and still receive pay benefits until September 30, 2025. There is no evidence that this is legal or even real.

Federal employees who accept this offer may face retaliation, unemployment, and no recourse. This is a calculated effort to weaken agencies and cut services. Simply put, it is a sham.

We must also oppose Schedule F, which would strip civil service protections, making employees at will and vulnerable to political purges. Our government should be staffed by professionals based on merit, not political loyalty. The American people deserve a government that works for them and not for some partisan politician.

Finally, Trump's union-busting tactics, including rejecting legally bargained contracts, cannot stand. The right to collective bargaining is a fundamental right, and these agreements must be honored.

To all Federal workers: America needs you. The Labor Caucus has your back, and we will fight for your rights, your jobs, your dignity, and your livelihood. Stand strong. We are with you. Don't fall for the okey doke. Know this: We stand with you, and we have your backs.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his words.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH).

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, 44,000 civil servants—hardworking, qualified, passionate public servants—call Maryland's Third Congressional District home. In the last week, thousands have reached out to my office. They were concerned, anxious, and wondering if their government actually values the work they do on behalf of the American people.

It is clear that, through the fork-in-the-road email that 2.2 million Federal employees received in attempts to expand Schedule F, President Trump and Elon Musk are trying to remove civil servants from the civil service.

Instead, they want to fill our Federal workforce and put lifesaving services for the American people in the hands of unqualified political cronies in a modern-day spoils system.

The irony, of course, is that the civil service was created to avoid this situation. The Congress recognized that cronyism and corruption did not serve the American people, and Congress did something in 1883 to create a merit-based civil service system.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents, as the proud daughter of two civil servants, and as a proud member of the Labor Caucus, I stand here appalled by this administration's changing of the rules on these workers.

Everyone in my district and every Federal worker in this Nation should know that House Democrats have their backs.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. MAGAZINER).

Mr. MAGAZINER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Mr. IVEY, for yielding, and I rise today as a proud vice chair of the Congressional Labor Caucus to stand with the hardworking men and women who keep our government running.

Federal workers show up every day to serve their neighbors and our country. These are the workers who make sure that Social Security checks go out to your parents and grandparents. These are the men and women who deliver our mail, no matter the weather, and the doctors and nurses at the VA who provide care to our Nation's bravest.

When Donald Trump and Elon Musk attack these public servants, it means fewer law enforcement officers working to keep us safe, slower disaster response for families hit by severe storms, and longer wait times for Social Security and Medicare.

Attacking these workers is exactly what Donald Trump and his co-president, Elon Musk, have set out to do. They are attacking air traffic controllers, postal workers, food inspectors, and people who keep us safe. Why? To find money to pay for tax cuts for billionaires.

That is right. Their goal here is to line the pockets of the wealthy off of the backs of working people and the services that all Americans rely on. These attacks on Federal workers are an attack on all working people across this country.

I want to tell the Federal workers in Rhode Island and across the United States that House Democrats stand with you. We see your dedication. We know the positive impact that you deliver every day. The best resistance is to keep showing up and to keep doing what you do best. This country runs because of you.

Here in Congress, we are going to fight to oppose Donald Trump and Elon Musk's baseless and cruel attacks against those who have devoted their lives to service.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. TOKUDA).

Ms. TOKUDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity and with much aloha for our Nation's Federal workers. As a member of the Labor Caucus, I am proud to stand with these essential employees who keep our government running every single day.

Federal workers care for our veterans, keep us safe when we travel, and make sure our seniors get the Social Security payments that they need to put food on the table and to survive.

Our Federal workers were also the ones who were first on the scene when fires ravaged Maui. They saved lives. They provided food and shelter and replaced documents. They gave our people hope.

Day in and day out, Federal workers are the unseen hands and hearts that guide our Nation through complex challenges and maintain the infrastructure and services that underpin daily life. They give our people hope and help.

When we attack Federal workers, we not only discredit their work, Mr. Speaker, but we cut off the very hands that are holding us up.

Since taking office, President Trump has made it his number one priority to undermine and dismantle our Federal workforce. Over the past 2 weeks, the Trump administration has been bullying Federal workers to resign while making a hollow promise of paying benefits through the end of the year. Now, President Trump is threatening mass layoffs to those who refuse to accept this bogus and deceptive offer.

We have 43,000 hardworking Federal employees in Hawaii. Many of these civil servants have contacted me to express their anger, frustration, and fear.

One constituent who spent his entire career with the Department of Health and Human Services said he had experienced several Presidential transitions but none as demeaning and demoralizing as this one. Once committed to a full career in public service, he now wakes up daily dreading the new abuses and attacks he and his colleagues will face.

Let us be clear: Federal workers are not the problem. They are part of the solution. They don't make decisions based on political whim. They don't serve a single master and his billionaire friends. They serve the people of this country.

The American people deserve a government that works for them, not against them.

To all the Federal employees in Hawaii and across this country: We see you. We hear you. We will fight to protect you. Thank you for your dedication and for your service. You are the quiet force that keeps our Nation strong. You have always had our backs. Now it is time we have yours.

□ 1815

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. DEXTER).

Ms. DEXTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congressman from Maryland for this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I rise as a proud member of the Congressional Labor Caucus in support of our Federal workers today.

I introduced new legislation earlier today to protect Federal workers who stand up against Elon Musk's grotesque seizure of critical government agencies.

My bill, the Stop Musk Act, would prevent retaliation against any Federal employee who resists illegal or unconstitutional efforts led by Elon Musk.

In the last week alone, Musk has seized control of the U.S. Department of the Treasury's payment system, exposing Oregonians' personal financial information; has shuttered the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, putting the lives of millions of

people at risk; and threatened the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, otherwise known as NOAA, undermining our work to combat the climate crisis.

This is just the beginning.

Under this legislation, Federal employees who resist, circumvent, or prevent Musk's illegal and unconstitutional takeover would be protected against retaliation for their efforts to fight back.

The world's richest man should not have the power to unilaterally dismantle the Federal Government and the critical services it provides Oregonians.

Federal employees are at the forefront of fighting Elon Musk's power grab, and we must protect them. All week, I, like all my colleagues, have been hearing from constituents who are demanding action.

Let me be clear: We will use every legislative, judicial, and public pressure tactic to stop Musk's takeover and protect our workers. This multifront battle will be fought in the courts, the Halls of Congress, and in the public sphere. We must stay loud. We must stand tight. We must press on.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, a few hours ago, I stood with members of unions, employees at the Department of Labor, and people walking down the street who saw what we were doing and wanted to join in and support the cause.

As I stood out there and spoke in favor of the efforts they were making to be heard, to protect their jobs and protect their ability to work for the American people, it reminded me of my father who had worked in that same building four decades ago until he was forced out during the Reagan administration.

To my colleagues who were there today, I thank them for joining. To the employees who were out there, I say this: I lived through what you are going through right now and I understand. For that reason, I recommit myself to working hard to protect your rights, to make sure that you don't get forced out of government, even though you haven't done anything wrong.

You have the experience and the expertise to do the work that the American people need, and we want to make sure that you have a chance to continue to do that.

I thank the Congressional Labor Caucus as well for standing up and making sure that we continue to fight here in Congress to protect their rights.

Lastly, I thank all of those people out there, whether they are union members or attorneys or employees, who are fighting every day to get their point across and make sure that we are heard by the Trump administration. Thank you for what you are doing. I urge you to continue to do the work that you are doing because it is making a difference.

The Trump administration has made many moves. Many of them have been, in my view, unlawful and unconstitutional, especially the ones that are impacting the employee rights that these government employees have earned over the decades, like my father who joined the Department of Labor after his service in the Air Force. They deserve to be treated fairly, with respect, and with recognition of the legal rights that they deserve to have.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President and to direct their remarks to the Chair.

ISSUES RELATING TO REBUILDING THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time and the opportunity to shed light on several subjects that we will cover here tonight. Indeed, there is much going on and much to be excited about, as well.

In my home State of California, we have several issues I will touch upon that have to deal with water, water supply, fire and forestry, and some rebuilding that will need to be done around our State.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN), my colleague and good friend, who is also here tonight. He has been a strong leader on immigration and, more specifically, controlling our border. He has also been sticking up for our families in this country and the values it is going to take to have strong families and maintain the founding values that will make our country strong. I appreciate his work and articulation on that.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, there has been so much in the news in the last 2 weeks, it is hard to know where to start.

I will cover a couple issues that the mainstream media has picked up on, though not done the best job uncovering, and one issue that made a huge difference in the lives of the most vulnerable of us that Donald Trump weighed in on not by doing something but by allowing an administrative rule to die.

The first great victory for Donald Trump, which hasn't been reported out there, concerns the effort by the Biden administration, which ran out of time, to get rid of what they call 14(c) certificates.

Everybody may be familiar with light manufacturing or packaging done in their district by people who are handicapped. Maybe they have spina bifida, maybe they have Down syndrome. In any event, for this reason, they are not able to be profitably employed for above minimum wage or minimum wage dollars.

Each State does it a little bit differently, but the States make an estimate of what that employee is worth, and maybe they are paid $5 an hour for, like I said, light manufacturing or packaging.

If you tour these facilities—and I think every Congressman ought to tour them at least once—it is one of the most enjoyable things you can do, because you will find the people who have been dealt a difficult lot on life so happy to see you, so happy to see what they are doing with you, so happy to make friends with the other employees there who have different abilities and other employees who are usually in a supervisory capacity.

These are also a godsend to the parents or guardians of these folks. Under normal circumstances, they have to worry when the guardians or parents die off what type of friends and what type of social life they will have, but because they frequently stay in these facilities or work in these facilities for 20 or 30 or 40 years, they develop lifelong friendships which are so important for these folks to have.

Now, had Donald Trump not won the election, it would have continued to work through the administrative rule process, and it is entirely possible that these sort of facilities would have been shut down by a Biden or Harris administration. They were working toward that. You might say, why would anybody take away the right for these people to have these jobs.

The reason is, they will say, because if we are paying somebody $5 an hour, we are taking advantage of them. We can't take advantage of them, so we would rather have them shut down.

How horrible is that? To the most vulnerable members of our society, Joe Biden was prepared to say, if you want to work here for $5 an hour, tough. We are going to close that facility, or we will leave the facility open, but you will no longer be able to work. You will no longer have the pride of being able to get a paycheck and spend it on clothes for yourself or gifts for your parents, what have you.

Mr. Speaker, I thank President Trump for not continuing with that administrative rule. At least, probably for the next 4 years, we know the jobs of these folks, which mean so much to them—more to them than I would say the average citizen in our society—I thank President Trump for allowing the most vulnerable members of our society to have the choice to continue to work for, in some cases, subminimum wage, but have the enjoyment of that independence.

I should point out that almost all the people I am talking about have some SSI payment in addition to that, so it

is not like they are expected to pay a mortgage with their $5-an-hour job. They get other governmental assistance, as well.

I know there are a lot of other things we have been grateful to President Trump for these last couple weeks, but keeping the 14(c) certificates is a tremendous victory for the most vulnerable of us. I don't think it would have happened if President Trump didn't get elected.

Now, the next thing to look at. We have heard people talk about Elon Musk and what he wants to do to USAID.

First of all, I will point out that the reason people are mad at Elon Musk, who can't do anything on his own—all he can do is advise the President. The reason they are mad at him is, horror of horrors, he thought there was a government program that wasn't necessary. That is not the way things work here.

Nobody believes that if Elon Musk had Donald Trump's ear and came out for more preschool, if he came out for more mental health funding, if he came out for expanded government daycare, the folks on the other side of this aisle would be praising Elon Musk for being a forward-looking person and for doing what people on that side of the aisle want to do, which is either expand old programs or come up with new government programs.

Quite frankly, as long as I have been here, I am sure there must be some government program that ended, but I can't think of any.

Elon Musk is under attack for actually suggesting a government program is unnecessary. I praise him for that. There is nothing wrong with him advising President Trump. I don't know if folks would feel better if they gave him a position and $100,000-a-year salary. I don't know, but it is refreshing that some of the most successful people in America can use their mind, their brains to advise President Trump on how to be a good President.

It is particularly good to have somebody outside this building who is not used to the swamp-type mentality of we never under any circumstances get rid of a program; the only question is whether we are going to expand it 2 percent or 8 percent. It is great to have a friend who can look at some programs and say, hey, maybe this program sounded good when we first created it in 1963 or whatever, but it hasn't worked up to snuff.

Of course, I agree with Elon Musk that some of the money spent on these programs is even a moral stain on the United States of America, particularly a moral stain because we are spending money in other countries.

When we talk about gender-affirming care, that is where they give puberty blockers to young children. I think it is horrific that we would give puberty blockers to a 12 or 13 year old in America, but America is supposed to be the light unto the world.

Can you imagine the United States weighing in and giving gender-affirming care to the poor little children in Guatemala?

□ 1830

I mean, how bad can we be? How embarrassing can we be? That is what we do with the incredible amount of wealth that this country has been given? We take our wealth and try to screw up—what I would say is ''screw up''—the poor little children in Guatemala?

I am glad Elon Musk came across this program, and upon people pointing out what is in the program, I am glad that Donald Trump, when he heard about it, full bore put his foot on the brake and said if the people running this program are spending the money that way, we have to stop spending money right away and look a little bit further into the program.

In any event, what I am going to do is, I am going to ask people on that side of the aisle to take an honest look at themselves. If Elon Musk announced that we needed more preschool, if Elon Musk announced we were going to need more mental health, with where the mental health professions are today in favor of these puberty blockers and that sort of thing, would they really be concerned that he is advising President Trump, or would they be praising him? Would The Washington Post and The New York Times be praising Elon Musk for being openminded and ignoring the hidebound conservative members of the Republican Party? Of course, they would be praising him.

The only reason they question whether or not he can advise President Trump is because they don't like, for almost the first time, the first time that I have been here, that we genuinely are seeing a government program begin to end, hopefully.

The third thing I will point out is that President Trump signed a bill today dealing with men in women's sports. It was a good bill. There are not a whole lot of men participating in women's sports around the country, but it is certainly a little weird that when one sets up a swimming tournament, a track meet, or something where it is very clear we have the men's event and the women's event, that under any circumstances we take a man and say, well, just because you feel like a woman today, we are going to pretend you are a woman. I think that is unusual enough.

I am going to hope—and President Trump has had executive orders on this topic, as well—that we are able to do something statutorily about getting rid of government funding for programs that do things like give surgeries on minors, give puberty blockers on minors. There is no shortage of intelligent people who will say this is damaging, not to mention there are a huge number of people with just plain common sense who realize that you don't try to engage in irrevocable medical procedures with 14- or 15-year-olds.

In fact, I would say it is medically inexcusable to engage in these procedures when people are 24- or 25-years-old. After all, in this country, you know, you can't buy a beer until you are 21 years old, can't buy a cigarette until you are 21 years old. I wouldn't think any medical professional with any morality—I realize they are making money on this—would harm these young people.

Now that we took care of the ridiculous idea that men should be able to pick whether they are men or women, depending upon, I guess, whether there is a track meet that day, I hope our leadership team begins to go after these so-called medical professionals who are doing irrevocable damage, either with drugs or surgeries, on people under 18.

Quite frankly, they ought to be barred for people under age 21. Quite frankly, the medical society ought to, on their own, make it clear that it is medical malpractice to do this sort of thing even on a 25- or 26-year-old because we all know very well that the way we feel about things when we are 20 or 24 or 25 is frequently very different from the way we feel about things when we are 30 years old.

I thank the gentleman from California for allowing me to address these issues. Remember, folks out there, if you have a ward or a child who worked for what used to be called a sheltered workshop, President Trump kept your ward or child employed the way they want to.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) on that, for sticking up for families, and in other conversations on sensible border policy, which is going to keep our country safe and strong and our employees of this country more likely to be employed. It is appreciated.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ONDER). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, picking up on a little bit of what Mr. GROTHMAN was saying here a moment ago, I would like to point out as well that I think a real national heroine, a young woman who has really stepped up, out of necessity, but also out of a strong desire to do the right thing and have the right thing, is Riley Gaines, a collegiate swimmer who swam so successfully and did much winning at the University of Kentucky.

She is the one who also had to face off in competition against a basically 6′4″ male and was denied opportunities, denied recognition, because of the unfairness and imbalance of girls and

women in their sports having to face boys and men in their sports as well as all the discomfort from shared changing areas and the unfairness of losing out on the ability to win competitions that might put them in a position to win medals that might ultimately win them a scholarship from high school into college or put them in a national competition or an international competition if you are at the collegiate level or at the Olympic level.

We saw some horrific things, in my view, in this last Olympics, where the young woman who was a female boxer, I believe she was from Italy, how humiliated she was when she had to face basically a male boxer with a clear physical advantage and just get the heck beat out of her in the process.

One of the saddest things I have seen in a long time was her collapsing on her knees just in tears at that Olympic event afterward because of the unfairness of it all and how hard she trained for years and years to be in that position only to have, in this case, the Olympic committee say that we will let anybody compete against the women in this case.

I know Riley Gaines personally and just find her to be a dynamic young woman who will stand up for the right things. She didn't ask for this position. She was a competitor and doing her thing. She was thrust into this position because she saw what needed to be done, what needed to be made right on this, and stuck up for other women and girls in their sports and in their other domains.

Riley has gotten a lot of good work done, including, today, the Presidential declaration that this would no longer go on in this country, especially things that the Federal Government might have involvement in or sanction. I congratulate President Trump for straightening things back out a little bit and putting some common sense back into that area.

Mr. Speaker, I also heard the debate here tonight on Federal workers and the opportunity that has been put in place here, if they seek and so choose—and there is the word ''choose,'' ''choice''—to take advantage of an opportunity if the job they are in is not meeting where they want to be, or you might see reduction in some of these government programs, in some of these government agencies.

It is a pretty generous exit of 8 months of pay and such to retire from that job or move on from that one and go seek other opportunities. We heard a lot of caterwauling about that tonight, about, I guess, the essentialness of every single government agency and every single worker.

Now, there are plenty of really good workers willing to work hard and do a good job in so many of our Federal agencies, but there are also quite a few who aren't as motivated. We see this battle over them returning to work, as is being mandated.

We saw President Biden, just before leaving office, trying to give out supergenerous contracts and extend the term of not having to be at the workplace based still upon, basically, the COVID era and getting used to that concept, to that way of doing things.

It is proper for people to show up to work. It is essential. Around here, we had proxy voting, and our committees were not meeting in person. Doggone it, it is essential in this place that we sit across from each other, that we sit next to each other and have these real debates in front of the American public to allow true public debate on the things that are going to affect over 300 million Americans through the decisions made here.

I am certainly glad we got rid of proxy voting here and got back to work doing things after the COVID era finally ended and a lot of manipulation that happened in that era. Still, we haven't completely recovered in our workforce and the attitudes, I think, of certain people who feel like they are entitled to just have the government send them checks, and the attitude of not having to show up to work.

We found that certain people can do a certain amount of work from home, but the battle here in town, where some really high percentage—I have heard a number as high as 92; I don't know if it is accurate or not—92 percent aren't showing up here. Some of these buildings are almost ghost towns from the workforce not coming in there. This needs to be looked at.

What is being looked at by the Department of Government Efficiency, DOGE, and Elon Musk is basically saying, hey, American taxpayers, we know you work hard for what you earn and what government takes from you.

These aren't contributions. We heard talk about these contributions. They aren't contributions. They are compelled payments of taxes here. You don't have a choice. They come start taking things away from you, auctioning off your home or your car or your farm or whatever, if you don't pay your taxes. It is not voluntary. It is not contributions, as these guys talk about. It is not an investment. They take it from you.

I think any taxpayer, any working person, has the right to demand that government is looking at things and is being efficient with what it is using.

The stones they are flipping over and what they are uncovering so far with USAID, and many other aspects I can't list here tonight, confirms what I think normal people know, that there is a lot of money being wasted in government by many entities.

Look at the situation in Ukraine. Now Zelenskyy is claiming that of about $177 billion that has been transferred over there, he thinks only $75 billion of it actually got to him or the causes they were working on over there in Ukraine. Where has $102 billion gone? Are these real numbers? Let's investigate. Let's find out.

That is what we need to do, respectfully, with tax dollars that are taken from people not voluntarily. Every aspect of government needs to have that accountability. It is okay to audit. It is okay to ask these questions. It is not against something or against a certain group of people. When we are talking about, in this case, the opportunity for employees to find other opportunities, then what would be wrong with that if they so choose and if agencies are going to be downsized?

Everybody is mad at Elon Musk now, at least on that side of the aisle. When he took over Twitter, now known as X, he cleared out about 85 percent of the employees there. A lot of them were just hanging on and going for the party there. He seems to be able to run that entity a lot more efficiently. That should be an example for government instead of the scourge that we are hearing that it is awful, terrible.

We appreciate those who do the things that we as Americans ask the government agencies to do, and they do them efficiently and with cheerfulness and remembering that the customers are the taxpayers, the people who come to the counter and say, hey, I need a permit to do this, or I need this or that service. These are the customers.

Getting a passport has been a problem. We have had horrific stories coming out of my own office during the height of COVID and such that you could hardly get anybody to process a passport for you, at least very timely.

□ 1845

In my home State of California, just a simple thing like a personalized license plate at the State level from the DMV takes 9 months now. It takes 9 months to get a personalized plate. Supposedly that is a revenue generator for the State.

We have got to really check and see what the attitudes of the people are who work and serve in government at any level, whether you are elected, whether you are hired, whether you are an agency head, what have you. These are good conversations to have, not the cattle rolling we are hearing about: Oh, my gosh, they might be displacing somebody. Well, maybe we need to have a little downsizing. I believe we do. That is what I have to say on that debate.

I am going to return back to issues going on in the West. I am privileged to chair the Western Caucus in the House here, and the important issues that it has addressed over the years, and a lot of that revolves around energy.

I will tell you what: The issue with energy in this country when we see skyrocketing prices of all types of fuel, that has been a major inflation driver. Really, two aspects of why we are suffering from inflation is government overspending beyond anywhere close to what revenue was and the trillions we have seen being spent by the government during the COVID era and beyond and the end of the Biden administration.

We are going to have to take some medicine on that and how about get

back to a concept of pre-COVID level of spending, maybe even adjusted for inflation, old inflation, not just massive inflation.

We have the right and the obligation to be looking at it this way. Inflation driven by massive government spending, eating up the pool of available currency and credit, as well as the cost of doing business driven by issues such as energy.

In farming, for example, on my own farm, a couple years ago we saw that our price on fertilizer tripled and our price of fuel doubled in that season. What does that mean for a farmer like me or any other farmer growing a crop?

They still have to be in the black at the end of the year. They still have to make profit. Those costs are going to be passed on somewhere, aren't they? It always comes back to the consumer. It always comes back to the taxpayer having to pay for these things. On one hand, government massive overspending here at the Federal level, and things that drive inflation, such as the cost of fuel and all of the things that are related. There is so much that depends on energy. Any type of production that depends on energy is going to have an impact on price. As an example, take diesel fuel, take a food product.

As a farmer, when you start out in the spring, you need fuel to start tilling the land and getting it ready for preparing the seedbed to plant that crop. Someone has to bring you the diesel to run your equipment. Soon after, someone delivers that fertilizer, likely with the diesel vehicle, someone delivers that seed.

At that point you planted, and you have irrigation of one type or another depending on your crop. In some cases, it is going to be fuel that is required to run the pumps or electricity to run wells, fuel for lift pumps. In some cases, you are fortunate, you have gravity-fed water much like we do in northern California. We do the storage of water.

What is our energy policy? I guarantee you, under President Trump it is going to improve. With that, we are going to see improved prices on energy. That will help us to tame inflation.

On the other side of the coin here with the work of Elon Musk and others on the Department of Government Efficiency, prices can go down if we are not doing so much massive spending and sucking up all the credit and all the currency out there by government action. It is a pretty good recipe.

Why don't we allow success to happen. The American people are clamoring for that as they have had their eyes opened on what is going on and where their tax dollars are going. I say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, you might just slow down a little bit and look and see what is really happening here and how people are feeling about that. How they are thinking about it. How they felt it for several years in their wallets with inflation and wondering: Why do I no longer have money left over to do some of the things I want?

At the same time, where there are these mandates coming down the pike in my home State of California and affecting things nationally here. You can't buy a gas-powered vehicle anymore or a diesel-powered pickup in just a few years because we want to ban them because of CO_2.

That is taking choices away from people. That is giving them unaffordable alternatives, especially the more they ban and the more they drive up the cost of fuel in my home State. They keep adding on new taxes for climate taxes or CO_2 taxes. They have auctions for the privilege of making CO_2. Where did that come from?

It is like they devised a new currency, CO_2. I can remind you—you have probably seen me on TV doing this several times—but let me remind you. The composition of our atmosphere is those main components. Right there in yellow, that is nitrogen, 78 percent.

Now, I ask people: How much CO_2 do you think there is in the atmosphere? Most folks, you know, are going about their lives and not worried about all this stuff. They guess somewhere between 20 and 50 percent.

Nitrogen is at 78. Here in the blue is oxygen at 21. That adds up to 99. Third place, here in the green, argon is .93 percent. We are already at 99.93 percent that is not CO_2. Look over here. Here are some other trace gases that have to do with water vapor. There is even krypton gas up in the atmosphere. That is .03.

You come down here to this little purple stripe right here. CO_2 is .04 percent. It is practically a rounding error when you look at it on this chart. You would think it is an existential crisis the way John Kerry and all the others are taking their private jets over to Davos and talking about how we need to change our life. That people with the Paris accord and the World Economic Forum and others all want to make sure the United States is paying a heavy price for this.

Meanwhile, China builds more and more coal-fired power plants and does what they wish. They are not part of the Paris accord. Again, a little reminder of CO_2 and what that is actually going to be costing us.

Let's get back to other forms of energy here. I am showing you a picture of the Shasta Dam. It is actually starting to fill up right now. We are getting massive rains in northern California. On the Shasta Dam, they are actually not dumping the water at a higher rate. That makes hydroelectric power.

You see, it actually comes from the bottom of the dam is where the hydropower plant is. That is a different form of spilling there that comes out of the spillway when they feel like they have an excess.

Hydroelectric power, if you want to play the CO_2 game for a moment, is CO_2-free power. It is available 24/7. As long as you have water behind the dam, you can generate that CO_2-free power. It is reliable. You don't have to wait for the sun to come up to heat your solar panels or the clouds to go away or the rain to go away or the wind to come up to blow your windmill.

What is happening in northern California? Recently they decided after many years to tear down—this is kind of related to that subject—four dams on the Klamath River. You see some of the Klamath system here that helps transfer water to agriculture and other needs and wildlife, as well.

They tore them down. They took down four dams that produce hydroelectric power. The CO_2-free power everybody thinks they want. They tore them down. Guess what is happening now? Because they are getting a lot of rain in the area, we are actually getting flooding in certain areas. We will get more flooding with even a greater amount of rain because we don't have the dams anymore as a tool. This is all ostensibly to help a fish population go up and down the Klamath River.

The flaw in that thinking is that the Klamath Lake is actually a system that is based on a very shallow, rather warm lake up here that feeds the rest of the system here that is not really the best for the salmon that they are talking about. We gloss over that because we want to tear the dams out and score a win.

They got their way. They scored them. The whole basin here is being affected. The whole river system is being affected by where there used to be water and now you are getting sloughing. The people that live along the area there, their properties are now worth a lot less all because of, I think, fraudulent environmental claims that really have never been proven.

What are some of the other effects of watching those dams be torn out? The initial happening was dead fish, essentially four fish. When they removed those dams, there was a great concentration of silt that had built up behind them over 50, 60, 100 years, depending on the age of which of the four dams. We had this massive till of this and a whole bunch of other wildlife up and down the river as that silt is now being pushed 170 miles or so out to the ocean.

The salmon live on a 3-year cycle. If the silt doesn't wash all the way out to the sea in that 3-year period, what does that mean long-term for salmon populations? Will they die off as all the different cycles of salmon will be gone? Here is a dead fish. You had dead deer getting trapped in the silt. All sorts of wildlife, turtles, you name it.

In the name of the environment, pinning their ears back and just going, they tore the dams out anyway, and they have their sights on more. One is called Lake Pillsbury in Mendocino County, which a lot of people rely on

for drinking water as well as agricultural water. It used to be a power generator in that area, as well. The utilities decided it is not worth the fight anymore, so they abandoned it. If they get their way, it will be torn out soon, too. It is just one losing combination after another, all in the name of the environment, and another loser for the people.

The tear out of the Klamath dams cost the people $450 million to remove those. Mr. Speaker, $250 million of it came from a State water bond. The rest of the bond is supposed to be actually building water supply, including the Sites Reservoir. I will talk to you about that in a little bit.

Another $200 million came from the rate-payers of PacifiCorp where they charge a surcharge to put money aside for the dam removal so the company can skate out of there without any real liability on the dams they own. That was the honey deal that was put together for that.

I will come back to this picture of the Shasta Dam here. When the water is not being run through the turbines at the bottom of the dam or like the one at Lake Oroville, then you miss out on the opportunity of generating low cost, highly reliable CO_2-free power.

The Shasta Dam isn't currently doing that right now, but Lake Oroville nearby, also in my district of northern California, is dumping water. I understand the Army Corps of Engineers has a goal of making sure there is enough storage to make up for massive amounts of rain. Indeed, we have gotten a lot of rain lately.

The Shasta Dam had a peak inflow of 120,000 cubic feet per second. I think it was yesterday. In Oroville, I think it peaked at about 107,000 cubic feet per second. Guess what? Both of those dams have still a massive amount of space behind them.

Oroville, I think it is 400,000 more acre-feet of space, maybe 450. The Shasta Dam is still about 500,000 acre-feet of space. This storm is going to end mostly, I think, tomorrow. At that point, they have already tailed off from those peaks I said in the hundred thousands. Each of them are down now about 50 to 60,000 CFS coming in. Those numbers continue to tail off as the rain stops.

We will have a situation where, yeah, we have got a good influx of water that is going to help fill the lakes. As I said, they are each still far from their goal of being full. If you recall, we went nearly zero for January on rain fall in northern California. We got some on the very last day. We are going to expect that we can count on filling these lakes in February or March.

April 1 is kind of the magic date where they relieve the flood control mandate on that. They allow the lakes to fill up more than their action level, which those numbers are being caught up to now and maybe have slightly exceeded their levels.

The thing is, they are quick to want to dump water. Yes, they are scared of this big storm right now, but it has just kind of brought it up to par. It is going to put us in a good position to be able to get the lakes full by the time May and June rolls around. There is nothing to say that they can't let water out a little at a time if it looks like it will get too full.

□ 1900

Mr. Speaker, but the haste, in my view, and it is my opinion, to let the water out—I think they want to bump Oroville up to 50,000. I think currently it is 33,000 CFS going out. They want to bump it up to 50,000, which isn't the greatest for people downriver at that level.

They could keep it at a steady 20,000 or 30,000 for a little while. Then, when the storm ends and they see the inflow has stopped, maybe they can take a timeout and forecast with the weather. We can watch the news and have a pretty good read on what the weather is going to be.

The Army Corps of Engineers is still using 50-year-old manuals from the seventies on how they want to plan the flood control aspects of the storage of these lakes. They say they are updating them. When will they be updated so we can use dynamic scoring, so to speak, on how weather is going to be predicted? Can we manage the lake in a way like, well, we don't see much weather happening in the next 2 weeks, so we don't need to let water out in February or March or what have you. Let's let it build up.

They are not allowing themselves to use that. They are still studying. They are still in the back room, studying and working on updating the manuals. They say we have 2 or 3 more years. Well, that is frustrating. Watch what happens when people don't get the water they need in the San Joaquin Valley to grow the amazing crops that we have in this State.

I showed this poster quite a bit in these floor talks of what California grows. When we don't have the water to do this stuff, you don't get this stuff from California. When we see that over 90 percent, even 100 percent, of some of these products are grown in California, are we going to import them from somewhere else? At what quality, price, and continuity? Can we have them come from the State because we actually do have the water supply in the north to supply the whole State?

Some of my northern California neighbors sometimes ask if I am going to send all the water south. They ask what is wrong with me. We have plenty of water if we would store it and if we would add to the Shasta Dam. We have the opportunity to raise Shasta Dam 18 feet, 600,000 more acre-feet of storage, and also the ability to not release water quite as quickly if they get to that point.

We see the water chugging down the Sacramento River without the releases. There is a lot of water coming in. We get that, but that is what these structures are for, to take that ebb and flow, so to speak, and to be that rubber band. That is what dams are good for. That is why they are seeing flooding on the Klamath in areas, because they took the dams out and lost the hydroelectric power in the process.

We talk about how much water is getting away from us that could be generating power and growing crops in northern and central California—indeed, the breadbasket I just showed you.

Here is a more updated poster I have now of what has been happening. The water year, they score it from October 1 until the following September 30. This is starting from October of '23, the water year, up to, so far, a little earlier in January when we had this information. It is about a year and a quarter of flow.

What makes me crazy is we are not taking advantage right now of the water that is flowing out of Lake Oroville or coming out south of Lake Shasta and flooding the delta. During this year-and-a-quarter period that is almost current right now, we have a number of 29 million acre-feet that came into the delta.

Lake Oroville and Lake Shasta combined hold 8 million acre-feet. San Luis Reservoir holds about 2 million acre-feet. Nearby, New Melones is about 2 million. I think Trinity Lake is 2.2 million. I think Folsom Lake is a number of 800,000, if I remember correctly. We fill all those lakes one time with this year and a quarter's worth of flow that comes into the delta. That is what comes in.

Certainly, we are using some of that water and moving it to other places because we are smart and can design things. We have the engineers for that. We had the vision for that when we built the Central Valley Project in the thirties and the State Water Project in the sixties.

Their vision did put away a lot of water. They had a vision for even more, but they quit building it because the population didn't demand it at that time in the thirties or the sixties or whatever. It can't be built now because of all the environmental nonsense.

How much did we save? Twenty-nine million went in. Twenty-two million went out to the Pacific Ocean and turned into saltwater.

Some people say we should build some desal plants along the coast. Yes, we could do that. Certain areas might be strategically smart.

Guess what happened? I think a project called Poseidon in Huntington Beach, one of the beach towns in southern California, fought over it for 20 years. They tried to meet every mandate, every hoop to jump through on what it would take to get a permit from the California Coastal Commission and others. They spent millions of dollars to build that desal plant down there. They jumped through every hoop

and answered every question. They were told after 20 years they were not going to be permitted. There we are on our desal.

Where do we want the water to come from for anybody, for any purpose? It could come from right here, this 22 million we are wasting. What is happening right now? The mass inflow is coming down the Sacramento River, Feather River, and all these other areas. I would like to see what these delta inflows are today. They are probably pretty amazing.

There are two sets of pumps at the south end of the delta, a Federal set and a State set. President Trump has seen to it through the Bureau of Reclamation that the Federal pumps are running pretty strong. Some are around 90 to 91 percent capacity. State pumps are running at a much lower level, somewhere around 20 or 25 percent. It oscillates between that.

Why don't they run it at 100 percent and take advantage of the opportunity to fill the San Luis Reservoir, which is only three-quarters full right now, put water in the aqueduct, or put even more into the areas that water could be pooling in the Central Valley and doing groundwater recharge?

I was just told today that we saw some groundwater recharge last year due to some of those positive efforts. That is a tough deal for those folks down there because they have had overdrafts due to agriculture and due to having their surface water taken away from them on these projects because it is going out to the ocean on a fish deal. They had to run their wells. Maybe they ran them too much. We have had subsidence where the land goes down. It depresses somewhat. We even see that on the canals going through there.

We could be doing recharge right now, and the Governor has moved in a direction of allowing more recharge. For some reason, they have to get a permit every year. I talked to his team about that. I asked why we don't have the permits ready to go every year so we don't have to wait and lose time on that. Maybe that will be a precedent going forward.

We have groundwater recharge, filling the aqueducts in the southern California reservoirs that aren't full. For example, this one, which was empty when the fire broke out in the Pacific Palisades, is the Santa Ynez Reservoir. My understanding of it is that, done correctly, the aqueducts could supply some of the higher lakes—I think Lake Cachuma. Someone could straighten me out if I am wrong on this. Through the domino effect, surface water, I believe, could make it here. I know they fill this with well water also, but the lake was empty because they had to fix the cover over it.

They emptied it last February and haven't gotten around to doing the repair or finishing the job. It sat empty, 117 million gallons of water, which is about 40 acre-feet, which would have helped keep the hydrants full instead of just a few hours as they are relying on three 1-million gallon tanks instead of 117 million. It lasted a few hours down there as they were valiantly trying to fight fires in the Palisades and other areas.

They could have had several days' worth of water had that been full. Was it bad planning? I don't know. Maybe it was bureaucracy. The crazy thing was the L.A. Fire Department didn't even know. They didn't have the knowledge that it was empty. Instead, there is a burned-out community because they didn't have everything they needed to be able to fight that fire the way they could.

Could they have beat it all? I am not sure. They had a lot of wind to beat. The firefighters fought valiantly, and people did what they could. Certainly, having that extra water supply could not have hurt.

I know I have seen plenty of that in my own northern California area, with communities just disappearing due to fire.

This falls more to forest management and land management. Down in southern California, they had a brush removal program in the areas adjacent and above those communities that burned. They suspended it. The brush is the fuel that allowed the fire, driven by high winds, to come all the way to the edge of town and burn through the town.

Maybe brush removal wouldn't be the be-all and end-all on that, but it sure would have helped. It would have given them more of a fighting chance. That is what it is. We are doing forest management, especially folks have seen around our cities, to thin the product, thin the trees and such to a point where a fire coming at a high speed from a distance hit that because the trees are thin enough and spread out enough that it hits the ground and slows down, so we have a chance to save whatever town it is.

We lost the town of Paradise partly because of that. We lost a town called Greenville in Plumas County. We lost another one next door called Canyondam above my hometown of Oroville, California. We lost the town of Berry Creek and other adjacent areas there due to fire after fire because of lack of management.

The one above Oroville, Berry Creek, had funding lined up to do some forest thinning around there. They had a grant. The local folks were going to do it. There was an 18-month process or longer to get the permits to do something. This is not something new, either. This isn't new under the Sun of thinning forests and managing them. They didn't get it done. Those areas burned. They burned out. These towns burned out.

I talked to a cattle rancher there about what that looked like for him. His family had been farming and ranching or grazing up in those forested areas for many generations and decades. Look it up on the Internet. Read his column. He is a man named David Daley, D-a-l-e-y. Look at his column. Look at the emotion. Look at what it meant to him on that. He wrote a really good column on that 2 or 3 years ago, on what that means. If we want to talk about a real human story on that and a real thing that affects the community, I ask my colleagues to look up David Daley. Search that and look at his column and the burned-out carcass of the cattle that he and his family run there, as well as all the other wildlife, the cougars, the raccoons, you name it. This happens to everybody.

The next effect of that after the fire is that when the rain does come, it is going to wash all this ash and all this mud down into the brooks, creeks, rivers, and streams and eventually into this area, Lake Oroville. Being a key part of the State Water Project, it supplies water to 20 million Californians.

It isn't just, well, the guys way up there in the sticks don't matter, whatever. No, that has an effect on pretty much the whole State that draws that water supply because we aren't doing a simple thing like something that is not new under the Sun of managing forests properly.

Well, they are going to clearcut everything. That is what they want to do. That is what the big timber and big lumber companies want. No, it isn't. That is nonsense.

Pay attention. Dig in on this. These folks that do it on their private land have an 80-year, 100-year plan of how they harvest, manage, and plant it back. That is what we need to have similarly on Federal lands or other government-owned lands, which I am reminded aren't government-owned. They are owned by the people. The government is supposed to be the steward of them. It is not be being the steward.

The Forest Service is way behind the eight ball. They have 193 million acres under their purview. If they are managing 2 million of that per year, that is only 1 percent, which means it will take 100 years to get over all of it. Hopefully, they are accelerating the process. That is what we are trying to cause them to do here.

When they count burned-out land sometimes as treated acres, we can burn everything, I guess, and check the box that says it is treated. That is nonsense. That is terrible for everybody. The asset that timber is doesn't always get accounted for, for its value. We talk about what the cost of the firefighting was or the cost of the buildings and towns that were burned out. Do we ever get to see what the value is of the actual timber itself?

What we have isn't working. It is not all that successful with the management of these forested lands, the management of the water supply, and the ability we have to do so much better. It doesn't cause environmental harm. We have excess water for much of the year going out the delta and other areas that could be captured and put to good people use.

People still need the food. They still need these products. We can grow them in California, or we can try to import them from South America or somewhere else and become dependent on a foreign food supply. That is a really great idea. Then, we don't have the employment of our people. We don't have employment of the lumberjacks in small towns I represent in northern California and others like it in other States.

So, we have unemployment. We have small communities that are boarded up. We have all the things that go with the social aspect of the people who don't have the self-worth that comes from good, honest work. What does that get into? We know what that gets into. It ends up being alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence, all the things that would be restored with a strong local economy, giving products that people need anyway.

They need wood and paper products. They need food products. They need electricity generated, whether it is by a hydroelectric power plant or any other manner of energy that can do it.

Uranium, why aren't we doing much more with nuclear power? It is CO_2-free, for all the CO_2 scorers out there, so why aren't we doing that?

□ 1915

Environmentalists sue and stop over everything. We have to reform the Endangered Species Act; NEPA; and on the California State level, CEQA, to work for us once again. These are laws that the Fed level passed 50 years ago or longer, and they have been manipulated and they have been weaponized by courts, by judges, and by environmental groups to turn into everything else, even something as nice as a national park.

I would like to point out that the folks in Marin County, these farmers and ranchers there on an area called the Point Reyes National Seashore park, those folks came in in the early sixties and demanded they were going to bully these people off their land by eminent domain, so they struck a deal. They said, well, we will sell the land to the National Park Service as long as we have the ability to lease it back in perpetuity. That was the deal that was struck. As long as it is the same family that is in the operation there, the deal was it was supposed to be in perpetuity. They struck that deal, and they thought they could live with that.

Well, not too many years later after the weaponization of environmental laws and what is known as NEPA, a permit process, that got weaponized by environmental groups to sue the heck out of these people every time they tried to get an extension of their grazing permit. They were trying to get them for 20 years, then they said, well, we have to settle for 5 or 2.

For doing some of the environmental mitigation that they would be demanded of with only a 2-year lease, it is pretty tough to say, well, I can't put half a million dollars into my sheds or my equipment or the drainage to control whatever might be coming off the dairy or the ranch, so they can't make the investment because they can't be assured they will be there long enough to do that. Basically they are screwed by the government and by environmental organizations. These are good, honorable people. They are very compatible with the land.

They say the tule elk are being affected by these cattle. The elk and the cattle get along beautifully together. There are many acres for them. They graze to a level that the land can sustain, and then they move them out. They move them to a different grazing area.

Grazing is a good thing, whether you are talking forested areas or as fire breaks or in this case at Point Reyes Seashore. These families have been disrespected and basically had a gun held to their head to sign an agreement only recently to say you are going to have to leave the land. These are good, hardworking people, and there doesn't seem to be much reward in California and some aspects of the Federal Government for being good, hardworking people, honest people, the ones that will pull over on the edge of the road and help you with your flat tire and make sure you are okay like that, you know?

What do they get? They get litigated to death. Some of them are very elderly now and they say that I just can't fight the fight anymore, I don't have enough money, I don't have enough will.

So what happens? The government wins. Extreme environmental organizations win. Somebody comes in and says they will save the day telling you, hey, we are going buy you out. You will get 15 months to be eased out of this. When all the employees are gone, and the cattle is gone, the dairies are going to go somewhere else.

It is hard enough to run a dairy in California anymore. They regulated that out of business. There are people who do not like dairy products. They don't like that. They don't like that it comes from animals.

You know, a lot of wrong people are in charge, and it has been pretty refreshing to see what the Trump administration has done to put things back in a direction here that rewards hard work, honesty, and the right way of doing things.

It can be kind of discouraging, very discouraging, and for the families, the farmers, the ranchers in this Point Reyes situation right now. My heart goes out to them. I hope we can find a solution for them because they shouldn't be getting kicked off that land. They, in good faith, when they were bullied off that land and had to sell to the parks or otherwise lose it to eminent domain, have now been bullied off by regulations, by NEPA, by endless lawsuits. That ain't right. That ain't America. They are still making a product that people want and people need. They would like to continue to do that as good stewards of the land.

Instead, they have designs, like, well, we are going to have more tourism on there. Is that as good? I would suggest it probably isn't as good for that land, but they power ahead. I hope maybe something can be done to rectify that and rectify a lot of other things that have affected rural America so much so.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CHAOS, CONFUSION, AND MANUFACTURED CRISES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I was listening to my colleague on the other side of the aisle as he was talking about how families want to be able to go to the grocery store and afford food for their kids; that they want to be able to put not just food on the table but put their kids in clothes and shoes and pay for their healthcare and for housing.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to share much of the frustration and anger of our constituents watching as the new administration has come in and done a whole host of things, announced a whole litany of actions but failed to deliver on the key promise of working to lower costs for American families. Costs are going up.

In fact, you may have seen the news today. Waffle House just announced that they are putting on a 50 cent surcharge per egg because the price of eggs have gone up so much. In fact, in my community in Highland Park, Illinois, a dozen eggs costs $5.

A generation ago, President Clinton ran on a campaign built on a very simple axiom: It is the economy, stupid. What was true in 1992 is just as true in 2024 in the last election and is true today. The American people want their Representatives working and focused on the economy. They want us to be trying to create quality, well-paying jobs, provide more opportunities for themselves and a better future for their children. They want us to lower costs and raise the standard of living for all Americans.

Beyond economic growth and opportunity, they want us to make sure that we are helping to keep our communities healthy and safe and that we are focused on a strong national security and a strong national defense.

That is the charge voters gave us here in Congress and gave to the new President. It is hard to believe that we are only 2 weeks into the second Trump administration and already the early onslaught of chaos, confusion, and manufactured crises has been stunning. It is easy to feel overwhelmed. In fact, folks at home are telling me how

they feel because this onslaught is nonstop, which I guess is the point of what the administration is trying to do.

We are going to focus tonight on a couple of issues. I am joined by a couple of my colleagues. We are a part of the New Democratic Coalition. The new Democrats are the moderate Democrats, 110 strong, who are focused on serving our people an economy that is lifting up their lives. We are focused on lowering costs. We are focused on making life better for all Americans.

Look at the last couple of weeks, just three things. I can't touch on everything, but I will touch on three specific things.

A little more than a week ago, the administration issued a memo threatening to freeze $3 trillion of spending across the board. It was confusing. It had no clarity of what specifically or how specifically anything would be frozen, who would be included, who would be excluded. Our phones started ringing off the hooks. Preschools providing early education to our children, giving them that head start to get ahead in life, were saying they might have to close. Programs like Meals on Wheels for seniors were struggling. Infrastructure projects such as in my district, a project that was decades in the making and received a $19 million grant from the Department of Transportation, was threatened. Healthcare providers didn't know what they were going to continue to do. First responders were concerned.

There was an extraordinary outcry from across the country. On Monday, the administration started backtracking. By Tuesday, they had pulled the memo back altogether.

There is chaos, confusion, and manufactured crises.

Just this past weekend, President Trump announced 25 percent tariffs on our two most important trading partners, Mexico and Canada, as well as 10 percent tariffs on China. This is across the board.

The Wall Street Journal issued an op-ed titled: ''The Dumbest Trade War in History.'' This is not a Democratic rag. This is The Wall Street Journal calling it the dumbest trade war in history. Evidently, the President got the message because within just a couple of days he paused the threat against our trading partners in Canada and Mexico.

For the past week, our phones have been ringing off the hooks again, this time talking about the fact that an individual who didn't receive a single vote, a billionaire who controls one of the largest social media platforms who would benefit from having access to data, classified, confidential personal data of Americans, was, in fact, given unfettered access to that confidential personal information of Americans. He was given access to their pay information, their Social Security numbers, healthcare information. All of this is now in the hands of Elon Musk, who no one in this country voted for. No one empowered him to try to control our government. A man who is positioned to reap billions of dollars off the personal information of the American people and gain his own personal power is now having access to that information. We need to make sure that this stops.

Those are just three examples of the chaos, crisis, and confusion sown by this administration in just 2 weeks. Yet none of this has focused on bringing down the cost of eggs or the cost of living for the American people.

That is why we are here tonight calling on this administration, calling on our colleagues in Congress to work together with the Democrats to focus on the economy, to make life easier for all American families, and to help families get ahead and lift their children up for a better future.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CARBAJAL).

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I am proud to stand here as vice chair of the New Democrat Coalition to make it clear that we are here, 5 weeks into this new Congress, fighting to end the chaos of this new administration and get us back to what the American people elected us to do: lowering costs, promoting safer communities, and actually governing.

The American people elected us to tackle the cost of living, not cut public education. The American people elected us to lower the price of groceries, not declare trade wars with allies that will raise those prices for Americans even further.

Mr. Speaker, the American people elected us to ensure their communities are protected, not give billionaires back doors into their personal data. I want the American people to see this, this room. This room is empty. The majority has gone home for the night. We have not even tackled one bill this whole week to deal with the high costs.

This is a coequal branch of government, but my colleagues seem content to give up our congressional power of the purse. Where is the so-called party of law and order? That party is willing to look the other way on enforcing the law, like the laws that protect funding approved by Congress into law.

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The self-proclaimed party of law and order is willing to let chaos reign, and thousands of Americans see the funding they rely on to get frozen, their benefits put on the chopping block, and even their jobs eliminated by an unelected billionaire.

My constituents are crying out for us to do something, and I want to ensure them that we are doing something. We are here even as they get ready to turn off the lights. We are working to craft legislation that will block rightwing activists and the use of our power in this Chamber to halt all the efforts to deny the law and promote chaos over order.

New Dems are the tip of the spear. We will fight ill-conceived tariffs and plots to raise taxes to pay for tax cuts for the richest people in our country. We will fight invasions of our privacy. Of course, we will fight to deliver what we hear every single day: Lower the costs of living, make our communities safer, and stop the chaos and gridlock.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank SALUD CARBAJAL from California. He touched on that critical thing. Republicans are literally trying to take money from hardworking families to pay for tax cuts for those who need it the least, for billionaires like Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg or for the President's family.

The President threatened to put tariffs on our trading partners, Canada and Mexico. That is a tax on American families. We are not going to let it stand. That is why the outcry is important, and that is why it is important we are here tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO).

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my dear friend from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, you may have heard this, but inflation was one of the biggest issues in this last election.

Let me take you a little way back here. We saw during the height of the pandemic that it caused global inflation. Supply chains broke down, production broke down, and every country felt it, even the U.S. Inflation at one point rose as high as 9 percent. Over many months and many years and through efforts to boost productions, improve supply chains, and improve our infrastructure to get back to normal, we saw it go down to as low as 2.4 percent in September of 2024. Groceries and housing specifically have been a challenge.

When President Trump took office, inflation was still under 3 percent. It was still under 3 percent. Hundreds of executive orders have been signed. Some divisive and some illegal, but few, if any, address lowering costs for the American people. Many may have even increased costs.

First, the tariffs caused chaos against our own allies. President Trump admitted that this may cause some pain for Americans. Don't we remember he ran on lowering costs?

Maybe that was just a joke to get elected, because now suddenly we are going to have to accept some pain because of tariffs that he is trying to impose on the American people. Tariffs equal inflation. Tariffs equal taxes on American consumers.

Regarding immigration, we had a workforce shortage for many years, and then over time through legal programs like temporary protected status and parole in other areas, booming States like Florida, and particularly central Florida, south Florida, and Tampa Bay, benefited by these legal programs.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at housing, of which there is a huge shortage, 34 percent of the industry relies on immigrant labor. That is after trying to

get every American we can to work to help build housing. Also with commercial real estate it is the same thing.

So what do we see? Food prices already are starting to creep back up. With housing prices it is the same deal. Eggs, gosh, remember: I can't afford eggs, bro.

That was like a huge deal during the election. We saw eggs down to about $2 only a couple of months ago. Now they are $7 and almost $8. Back in the day it was: Oh, it is President Biden. Now we have MAGA supporters going into intimate detail on the bird flu. That is funny. The last time that happened that wasn't the explanation at all. It was: Oh, Biden this and that. Now it is science and thoughtful answers to explain inflation that is happening under President Trump.

This was the craziest thing, Mr. Speaker. Apparently, it is dishonoring folks for us to even talk about how these policies will raise costs right up again that went down to as low as 2.4 percent a few months ago, still under 3 percent when President Trump was sworn in. However, it could get worse if the Trump tax scam 2.0 gets passed.

The Inflation Reduction Act allowed for a cap of $2,000 a year for prescription drug savings for all seniors under Medicare. Mr. Speaker, $3,500 was the cap last year. There was no cap before that, and most seniors were paying 3, 4, $5,000 or more in out-of-pocket expenses.

Now seniors won't pay more than $2,000 a year for their prescription drugs. However, if we see the majority take a sledgehammer to the IRA, then that savings goes away for seniors across the Nation just when they got it. That savings lowering costs for our seniors could go away.

Regarding the ObamaCare subsidies, oh, my gosh, have we not seen the majority learn, have Republicans not learned from now?

First of all, there is no plan, and there is no alternative. It has been over 10 years. By the way, since then, we have seen States like Florida have the largest ObamaCare exchange in the Nation. Mr. Speaker, 4.6 million Floridians from President Trump's home State, more than any other State in the Union, get their healthcare through the ACA exchange.

Do you know what happens if the ObamaCare subsidies go away, Mr. Speaker?

A family of four will see their healthcare increase by 8 to $10,000 a year. That is a lot of eggs. That is a lot of costs that people are going to have to shoulder. That will cripple families.

Do you know what is also going to happen, Mr. Speaker? We will have more people without health insurance, and then it is going to cost taxpayers in the emergency room. This is not how you make America healthy again, Mr. Speaker. It is how you make America sicker.

Why would anybody want to eliminate these healthcare savings? What could possibly be so important? Mr. Speaker, can you believe it is to cut taxes for billionaires? My constituents will see an $8,000 to $10,000 increase in their health insurance. Seniors across the Nation who have a $2,000 cap on prescription drugs—little old ladies who are trying to pay out of their pockets for prescription drugs, our seniors, our men and our women—are going to have to forgo those savings because the top 1 percent and the top 0.1 percent need more tax cuts.

Are they serious? Is this what people voted for? Heck no.

The last time we saw that happen, we saw this Chamber flip quicker than you could possibly imagine. It was sad. It didn't have to be that way.

The record is clear: President Trump inherited a strong economy from President Biden. I am going to repeat that. President Trump inherited a strong economy from President Biden: High growth, big job numbers, and inflation below 3 percent, 2.9 percent to be exact as of the end of January.

Here is a simple measure we will see over the next couple of months: Will costs go up or will they go down? Will grocery prices go up or will they go down? Will housing prices go up or will they go down?

Democrats stand ready to work in a bipartisan manner to keep our economy running strong. This is the second closest House in the history of the Nation. There are three votes separating Democrats from Republicans in this Chamber. Actually one vote right now because of the folks who had to go on to the Trump administration. So we can easily work together to resolve these things or my friends will go it alone in some big reconciliation package for billionaires and then we will see what happens in these very easily tracked measures.

Most of all, people will see it when they want to buy a home, when they want to go to the grocery store, and when they want to go on vacation down to Orlando, which we welcome everyone to come to, or when they want to buy a new car.

All these things Americans are going to be watching. We need to work together.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the great State of Virginia (Ms. MCCLELLAN), who is also a member of the leadership team for the New Democrat Coalition.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chair of the New Democrat Coalition, BRAD SCHNEIDER, for organizing this Special Order hour so that we can talk about the Trump-Vance-Musk administration's erratic and senseless attacks on the Federal Government, their Federal hiring freeze, their ill-conceived and shortsighted actions in the first 2 weeks, and how they are actually going to raise costs for the American people and not lower costs for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, you have heard about the tariffs that were on, then off, then paused, except against China. Before the tariffs were announced, I was meeting with local leaders across my district from the rural southern end to the urban northern end. My farmers were worried about the trade war that the tariffs would unleash and how it would decimate the largest industry in Virginia which is agriculture.

The seniors across the district were worried about the impact that rescinding efforts to reduce prescription drug costs would have on their healthcare bills. Other seniors were worried about how attacks on energy efficiency programs that they use to weatherize their homes and reduce their electric bills would lead to higher utility bills.

We have seen whole flocks of the chickens on poultry farms having to be put down which will impact the cost of eggs that so many people supposedly voted this election because of their worry about.

We have seen hardworking Federal employees whose jobs are at risk who fear whether or not they will receive their pension if they take this illegal offer to buy them out. If they read the fine print of the documents that just now are starting to be given to them, they will find that they just might.

I don't think any of that lowers costs. What it does is throw the American Government, which so many people rely on, into chaos and grinding it to a halt, and that was the point. However, what we are going to find is that that does not lower costs. It hurts the American people, and the New Democrat Coalition will fight it every step of the way.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, we heard in the last half hour or so people talking about the rising cost of eggs. They talked about the fact that there is a bird flu epidemic that is devastating our flocks. The Centers for Disease Control is being cut by the Trump administration at a time when we need their work more than ever to try to make sure that this horrible epidemic comes to an end and that costs come down for American families.

The thing is that Trump and the House Republicans are plotting cuts to a whole host of programs across our government, programs providing services to seniors and veterans with healthcare, programs feeding hungry families and their children and more. All of these cuts are simply to pay for tax cuts for their billionaire friends like Elon Musk and others.

The New Dems will continue fighting on behalf of the American people to cut inflation, to improve the lives of hardworking families, and to make our communities safer and our national security stronger.

If Trump's tax on American consumers with his tariffs goes through on Canada and Mexico, then American consumers are going to see a 25 percent increase on many essentials, as well as things like cars and appliances and just taking a trip to the grocery.

While Trump is waging war on Americans' savings and bank accounts, the

New Dems will continue to fight to lower inflation and cut costs for hard-working families. By giving Elon Musk and his minions unfettered access to American citizens' personal information, he is putting at risk Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid, Head Start, and so much other information. The New Dems will continue to work with our colleagues in the Democratic Caucus on legislation to prevent unlawful access to this information.

We are prepared to stand strong on behalf of the American people. We are prepared to stay focused on the economy and do everything we can to make peoples' lives easier, to make their future and their children's future better, and to preserve our dear country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 44 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, February 6, 2025, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC–291. A letter from the OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Commissary Credit and Debit Card User Fee [Docket ID: DoD-2019-OS-0131] (RIN: 0790-AK92) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–292. A letter from the Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, USD(A&S)(A)/DPCAP, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Update of Challenge Period for Validation of Asserted Restrictions on Technical Data and Computer Software (DFARS Case 2022-D016) [Docket: DARS-2022-0030] (RIN: 0750-AL67) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–293. A letter from the Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, USD(A&S)(A)/DPCAP, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement; Technical Amendments [Docket: DARS-2024-0001] received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–294. A letter from the Director, Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Financial Crimes Enforcement Network; Inflation Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC–295. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel, Division of Regulatory Services, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final regulations — Indian Education Discretionary Grant Programs; Professional Development Program [Docket ID ED-2024-OESE-0008] (RIN: 1810-AB70) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

EC–296. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel, Division of Regulatory Services, Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Income-Contingent Repayment Plan Options [Docket ID ED-2024-OPE-0135] (RIN: 1840-AD97) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

EC–297. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — International Traffic in Arms Regulations: U.S. Munitions List Targeted Revisions [Public Notice: 12441] (RIN: 1400-AF42) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC–298. A letter from the Director, GSA Regulatory Secretariat Division, Office of Governmentwide Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — GSAR Case 2024-G502, Update to OMB Approval Table (RIN: 3090-AK81) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

EC–299. A letter from the Biologist, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to the U.S. Navy Training and Testing Activities in the Hawaii-Southern California Training and Testing Study Area [Docket No.: 241220-0334] (RIN: 0648-BL72) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC–300. A letter from the Management Analyst, OS Federal Register Liaison, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's direct final rule — Joint Policies of the Departments of the Interior and of the Army Relative to Reservoir Project Lands [Docket No.: DOI-2024-0017; 256D0102DM, DS6CS00000, DLSN00000.000000, DX6CS25] (RIN: 1093-AA29) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC–301. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel, Division of Regulatory Services, Office of General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final regulations — Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties for Inflation (RIN: 1801-AA25) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–302. A letter from the Agency Representative, United States Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Setting and Adjusting Patent Fees During Fiscal Year 2025 [Docket No.: PTO-P-2022-0033] (RIN: 0651-AD64) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–303. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establish Anchorage Ground; Port Westward Anchorage; Columbia River, Oregon and Washington [USCG-2023-0749] (RIN: 1625-AA01) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–304. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Security Zone; Corpus Christi Ship Channel, Corpus Christi, TX [Docket Number USCG-2024-1002] (RIN: 1625-AA87)received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–305. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's Temporary final rule — Safety Zone, Lower Mississippi River, Natchez, MS [Docket Number: USCG-2024-1055] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–306. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Updated Document Submission Process for Compliance with Electronic Records Mandate [Docket No.: USCG-2023-0584] (RIN: 1625-AC93) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–307. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Special Local Regulation; San Diego Bay, San Diego, CA [Docket No.: USCG-2024-0877] (RIN: 1625-AA08) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–308. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Special Local Regulation; American River, Sacramento, CA [Docket Number: USCG-2024-0909] (RIN: 1625-AA08) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–309. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Santa Barbara Harbor, Santa Barbara, CA [Docket Number: USCG-2024-1004] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–310. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; San Pedro Bay, Los Angeles, CA [Docket Number: USCG-2024-1019] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–311. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Queensway Bay, Long Beach, CA [Docket

Number: USCG-2024-1025] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–312. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Security Zone; Corpus Christi Ship Channel, Corpus Christi, TX [Docket Number: USCG-2024-1078] (RIN: 1625-AA87) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–313. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone, Port Arthur Canal, Sabine, Pass, TX [Docket No.: USCG-2022-0988] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–314. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's Temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Cypress Passage overhead powerline demolition and removal, Atchafalaya River, LA [Docket Number: USCG-2024-1095] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–315. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Regulated Navigation Area; Port of Miami, Miami, FL [Docket Number: USCG-2024-0205] (RIN: 1625-AA11) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–316. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's Temporary final rule — Special Local Regulation; Lake Havasu, Lake Havasu City, AZ [Docket Number: USCG-2024-0869] (RIN: 1625-AA08) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–317. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Regulated Navigation Area; Cuyahoga River, Cleveland, OH [Docket Number: USCG-2024-0393] (RIN: 1625-AA11) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC–318. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Section, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Automatic Consent for Revocation of Section 831(b) Elections (Rev. Proc. 2025-13) received February 3, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. VINDMAN (for himself and Mr. WITTMAN):

H.R. 977. A bill to permit Federal employees who are spouses of members of the armed forces to engage in telework and remote work, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. STAUBER (for himself, Mr. FINSTAD, Mrs. FISCHBACH, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. TIFFANY, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. HUNT, Ms. MALOY, Ms. HAGEMAN, and Mr. GOSAR):

H.R. 978. A bill to rescind Public Land Order 7917, to reinstate mineral leases and permits in the Superior National Forest, to ensure timely review of Mine Plans of Operations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself and Mr. PALLONE):

H.R. 979. A bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in motor vehicles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Homeland Security, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:

H.R. 980. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to the provision of on-campus educational and vocational counseling by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:

H.R. 981. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processes to approve programs of education for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:

H.R. 982. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the amount of educational assistance paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to an eligible individual during the first year of a full-time program of apprenticeship or other on-job training; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:

H.R. 983. A bill to Amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disapprove courses of education offered by a public institution of higher learning that does not charge the in-State tuition rate to a veteran using certain educational assistance under title 10 of such Code, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:

H.R. 984. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide timely equitable relief to an individual who suffers a loss based on an administrative error by the Secretary, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. VAN ORDEN (for himself and Mr. CARBAJAL):

H.R. 985. A bill to amend the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 to reauthorize the dairy business innovation initiatives; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. BALINT:

H.R. 986. A bill to amend the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park Establishment Act to expand the boundary of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in the State of Vermont, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BARR (for himself, Mr. MEUSER, Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. CLYDE, and Mr. HARRIGAN):

H.R. 987. A bill to amend certain banking laws to prohibit certain financial service providers who deny fair access to financial services from using taxpayer funded discount window lending programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BOST (for himself, Mr. CISCOMANI, Mr. BALDERSON, and Mr. KEAN):

H.R. 988. A bill to amend title 36, United States Code, to move the place of incorporation and domicile of the National Woman's Relief Corps to Illinois, to move the principal office of such Corps to Murphysboro, Illinois, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. BROWN (for herself and Mr. RASKIN):

H.R. 989. A bill to codify Executive Order 11246 titled ''Equal Employment Opportunity''; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Ms. CHU (for herself and Mr. CAREY):

H.R. 990. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals to avoid a penalty for failure to pay income tax by timely paying 125 percent of the income tax liability for the prior year; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CLOUD (for himself, Mr. MEUSER, Mr. CASE, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. GOLDEN of Maine, Ms. PEREZ, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. MCCORMICK, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. HUIZENGA, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. OBERNOLTE, Mr. EDWARDS, and Mr. COLLINS):

H.R. 991. A bill to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to provide that any estimate prepared by the Congressional Budget Office or the Joint Committee on Taxation shall include costs relating to servicing the public debt, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CLOUD (for himself, Mr. BABIN, Mr. BIGGS of Arizona, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. DONALDS, Mr. DOWNING, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. EVANS of Colorado, Ms. FOXX, Mr. GOSAR, Ms. MACE, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. ROUZER, Ms. VAN DUYNE, Mr. SCHMIDT, and Mr. WEBSTER of Florida):

H.R. 992. A bill to prohibit the Department of Justice from bringing a civil action against a State under section 9 or 10 of the Act of March 3, 1899, for certain border security measures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CORREA (for himself and Mr. LUTTRELL):

H.R. 993. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a plan to identify, integrate, and deploy new, innovative, disruptive, or other emerging or advanced technologies to enhance, or address capability gaps in, border security operations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Ms. DEXTER:

H.R. 994. A bill to prohibit retaliation against any Federal employee who stops, or attempts to stop, unlawful or unconstitutional actions by Elon Musk against Federal

agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. DOGGETT (for himself, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. ANSARI, Ms. BALINT, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BISHOP, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWN, Ms. BROWNLEY, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Mr. CARSON, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. CASAR, Mr. CASE, Ms. CHU, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONAWAY, Ms. CROCKETT, Mr. CROW, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mrs. MCCLAIN DELANEY, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. DELUZIO, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. DEXTER, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. ESCOBAR, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ, Mr. FOSTER, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. FROST, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. GARCIA of California, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. GOLDEN of Maine, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. HORSFORD, Ms. HOYLE of Oregon, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. IVEY, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KENNEDY of New York, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. LANDSMAN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Mr. LIEU, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MAGAZINER, Mrs. MCBATH, Ms. MCBRIDE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGARVEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MENG, Mr. MFUME, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. MRVAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NEGUSE, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Ms. OMAR, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. PEREZ, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. RILEY of New York, Ms. ROSS, Mr. RYAN, Ms. SALINAS, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SOTO, Ms. STANSBURY, Ms. STEVENS, Mrs. SYKES, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THANEDAR, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. TITUS, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. TONKO, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mrs. TRAHAN, Mr. TURNER of Texas, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. WATERS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H.R. 995. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for current year inclusion of net CFC tested income, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. FEENSTRA (for himself, Mrs. BICE, and Ms. PEREZ):

H.R. 996. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to enhance the paid family and medical leave credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. FEENSTRA (for himself and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois):

H.R. 997. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to conform to the intent of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998, as set forth in the joint explanatory statement of the committee of conference accompanying Conference Report 105-599, that the National Taxpayer Advocate be able to hire and consult counsel as appropriate; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. FEENSTRA (for himself and Mr. SCHNEIDER):

H.R. 998. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require additional information on math and clerical error notices; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. FLETCHER (for herself, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. CRAIG, Ms. JACOBS, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. AMO, Ms. ANSARI, Mr. AUCHINCLOSS, Ms. BALINT, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BELL, Mr. BERA, Mr. BEYER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWN, Ms. BROWNLEY, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Ms. BYNUM, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CARSON, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. CASAR, Mr. CASE, Mr. CASTEN, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, Ms. CHU, Mr. CISNEROS, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CORREA, Mr. COSTA, Ms. CROCKETT, Mr. CROW, Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. DELUZIO, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. DEXTER, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. ELFRETH, Ms. ESCOBAR, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Mr. FOSTER, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Mr. FIGURES, Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. FRIEDMAN, Mr. FROST, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GARCIA of California, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Ms. GILLEN, Ms. PEREZ, Mr. GOLDEN of Maine, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. GOMEZ, Ms. GOODLANDER, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. HIMES, Mr. HORSFORD, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mr. HOYER, Ms. HOYLE of Oregon, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. IVEY, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. LANDSMAN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LATIMER, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Ms. LEE of Nevada, Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LICCARDO, Mr. LIEU, Mr. MAGAZINER, Mr. MANNION, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. MCBATH, Ms. MCBRIDE, Mrs. MCCLAIN DELANEY, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. MCDONALD RIVET, Mr. MCGARVEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. MCIVER, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MENG, Mr. MFUME, Mr. MIN, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. MORELLE, Ms. MORRISON, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. MRVAN, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NEAL, Mr. NEGUSE, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Mr. OLSZEWSKI, Ms. OMAR, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PANETTA, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. PETERS, Ms. PETTERSEN, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. POCAN, Ms. POU, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Ms. RANDALL, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. RIVAS, Ms. ROSS, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. RYAN, Ms. SALINAS, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Ms. SCHOLTEN, Ms. SCHRIER, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SHERRILL, Ms. SIMON, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SORENSEN, Mr. SOTO, Ms. STANSBURY, Mr. STANTON, Ms. STEVENS, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. SUBRAMANYAM, Mr. SWALWELL, Mrs. SYKES, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THANEDAR, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. TITUS, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. TONKO, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mrs. TRAHAN, Mr. TRAN, Mr. TURNER of Texas, Ms. UNDERWOOD, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. VASQUEZ, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. VINDMAN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. WATERS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. KENNEDY of New York, and Ms. LOFGREN):

H.R. 999. A bill to protect an individuals ability to access contraceptives and to engage in contraception and to protect a health care providers ability to provide contraceptives, contraception, and information related to contraception; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GREEN of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. GUEST, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. STRONG, Mr. EZELL, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mrs. BIGGS of South Carolina, Mr. EVANS of Colorado, Mr. MOOLENAAR, and Mr. GARBARINO):

H.R. 1000. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for education and training programs and resources of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on Education and Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. HAGEMAN:

H.R. 1001. A bill to provide for a memorandum of understanding to address the impacts of a certain record of decision on the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mrs. HAYES (for herself, Ms. NORTON, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. BEYER, Ms. STANSBURY, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. CASTEN, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. FROST, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MAGAZINER, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. DELUZIO, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. CARSON, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. GOMEZ, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. OLSZEWSKI, Ms. MCBRIDE, Ms. UNDERWOOD, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. MCIVER, Mr. MCGARVEY, and Ms. OMAR):

H.R. 1002. A bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and title 5, United States Code, to permit leave to care for a domestic partner, parent-in-law, or adult child, or another related individual, who has a serious health condition, and to allow employees to take, as additional leave, parental involvement and family wellness leave to participate in or attend their children's and grandchildren's educational and extracurricular activities or meet family care needs; to the Committee on Education and Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, and House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HERN of Oklahoma:

H.R. 1003. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the carbon oxide sequestration credit to ensure parity for different uses and utilizations of qualified carbon oxide; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HUDSON (for himself, Mr. NEGUSE, Mr. VAN ORDEN, Ms. MORRISON, Mr. LUTTRELL, and Mr. KHANNA):

H.R. 1004. A bill to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve benefits and services for surviving spouses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. JOYCE of Ohio (for himself and Mr. RULLI):

H.R. 1005. A bill to prohibit elementary and secondary schools from accepting funds from or entering into contracts with the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Mr. JOYCE of Ohio (for himself and Ms. MALLIOTAKIS):

H.R. 1006. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the excise tax on investment income of private colleges and universities; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LAWLER (for himself, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. MILLER of Ohio, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. VAN DREW, Mr. LALOTA, Mr. KUSTOFF, Mr. BALDERSON, Mr. BACON, Ms. FOXX, Ms. GILLEN, Mr. OWENS, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. KILEY of California, Mr. RYAN, Mr. KEAN, Mr. EDWARDS, Ms. BROWN, Mr. SCHMIDT, Mrs. BICE, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mrs. KIM, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Mr. ALFORD, Mr. MOORE of North Carolina, Mr. OBERNOLTE, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. STAUBER, Mr. CAREY, Mr. MANN, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. MESSMER, Mr. CISCOMANI, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas, Mr. FEENSTRA, Mrs. HINSON, Mr. JAMES, Mr. LANDSMAN, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. CRANK, Ms. MENG, Mr. ESTES, Mr. LANGWORTHY, Mr. PAPPAS, Ms. MALOY, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mr. WITTMAN, and Ms. STEVENS):

H.R. 1007. A bill to provide for the consideration of a definition of antisemitism set forth by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance for the enforcement of Federal antidiscrimination laws concerning education programs or activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LAWLER (for himself, Mr. GARBARINO, Mr. KENNEDY of New York, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Mr. MORELLE, Ms. MENG, Mr. RYAN, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. TONKO, Mr. TORRES of New York, and Mr. LATIMER):

H.R. 1008. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 298 Route 292 in Holmes, New York, as the ''Sheriff Adrian 'Butch' Anderson Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. LAWLER (for himself, Mr. GARBARINO, Mr. KENNEDY of New York, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Ms. MENG, Mr. MORELLE, Mr. RYAN, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. TONKO, Mr. TORRES of New York, and Mr. LATIMER):

H.R. 1009. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 86 Main Street in Haverstraw, New York, as the ''Paul Piperato Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ (for herself, Mr. NEWHOUSE, and Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas):

H.R. 1010. A bill to require Federal law enforcement agencies to report on cases of missing or murdered Indians, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Natural Resources, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. LETLOW:

H.R. 1011. A bill to amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 to remove barriers to agricultural producers in accessing funds to carry out emergency measures under the emergency conservation program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. ISSA, Mrs. KIM, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. LAWLER, and Mr. PETERS):

H.R. 1012. A bill to amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to prioritize the acceptance of high-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel from certain civilian nuclear power reactors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. LUCAS (for himself, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. FOSTER, and Mr. BARR):

H.R. 1013. A bill to amend the Federal securities laws to enhance 403(b) plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. LUTTRELL:

H.R. 1014. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Defense to include certain tests as part of the periodic health assessments provided to members of the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. MACE (for herself, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. DONALDS, and Ms. BOEBERT):

H.R. 1015. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for certain rules for housing or transportation based on gender and to provide for a limitation on gender-related medical treatment; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MACE (for herself, Mr. OGLES, Mr. RULLI, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mrs. HARSHBARGER, Mr. MOORE of Alabama, Mr. GILL of Texas, Ms. BOEBERT, and Mr. MOORE of West Virginia):

H.R. 1016. A bill to prohibit individuals from accessing or using single-sex facilities on Federal property other than those corresponding to their biological sex, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. MACE:

H.R. 1017. A bill to prohibit an entity from receiving Federal funds if such entity permits an individual to access or use a single-sex facility on the property of such entity that does not correspond to the biological sex of such person, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. MESSMER:

H.R. 1018. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require additional information in disclosures of foreign gifts and contracts from foreign sources; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS (for herself and Mrs. DINGELL):

H.R. 1019. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to ensure the reliability of address information provided under the Medicaid program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MOOLENAAR (for himself, Mr. BISHOP, Mr. HUIZENGA, and Mr. PANETTA):

H.R. 1020. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a refundable credit against tax for the purchase of communications signal boosters in areas with inadequate broadband internet access service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. NEGUSE (for himself and Mr. OBERNOLTE):

H.R. 1021. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to increase the minimum disaster loan amount for which the Small Business Administration may require collateral, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 1022. A bill to amend title 11, District of Columbia Official Code, to revise references in such title to individuals with intellectual disabilities; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. OWENS (for himself and Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina):

H.R. 1023. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require disclosure of certain foreign investments within endowments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Mr. PANETTA (for himself, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. BERA, Ms. TITUS, Mr. SUOZZI, Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia, Ms. TENNEY, and Ms. VAN DUYNE):

H.R. 1024. A bill to authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the products of Kazakhstan; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SELF (for himself, Mr. JACKSON of Texas, and Mr. MCCAUL):

H.R. 1025. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2600 Wesley Street in Greenville, Texas, as the ''Cooper Dawson Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. SMUCKER (for himself, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. CRENSHAW, and Ms. SCHRIER):

H.R. 1026. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals with direct primary care service arrangements to remain eligible individuals for purposes of health savings accounts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SORENSEN (for himself and Mr. CISCOMANI):

H.R. 1027. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require disclosures with respect to robocalls using artificial intelligence and to provide for enhanced penalties for certain violations involving artificial intelligence voice or text message impersonation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. STEUBE (for himself, Mr. CLYDE, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. HARIDOPOLOS, Ms. MACE, Mr. BURCHETT, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. OWENS, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Ms. HAGEMAN, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. EDWARDS, Ms. DE LA CRUZ, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. BABIN, Mr. DOWNING, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. KUSTOFF, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. BIGGS of Arizona, Mr. MESSMER, Mr. BOST, Mr. VAN ORDEN, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. TIMMONS, and Mr. GOSAR):

H.R. 1028. A bill to modify eligibility requirements for amateur sports governing organizations; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. STEUBE:

H.R. 1029. A bill to abolish the United States Agency for International Development; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Appropriations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. STRICKLAND:

H.R. 1030. A bill to develop a database of members of the Armed Forces who died in non-combat military plane crashes and to provide support to the families of such members, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. TENNEY (for herself and Mr. SUOZZI):

H.R. 1031. A bill to establish the Fort Ontario National Monument in the State of New York as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 1032. A bill to prohibit Federal spending on funding research in China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. TORRES of New York (for himself and Mr. LAWLER):

H.R. 1033. A bill to require the Secretary of Education to establish a program to provide for antisemitism monitors at institutions of higher education; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Mr. TURNER of Texas (for himself and Mr. LUTTRELL):

H.R. 1034. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a DHS Cybersecurity On-the-Job Training Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Ms. UNDERWOOD (for herself, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. CHU, Ms. MENG, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. MAGAZINER, Mr. BEYER, Ms. PRESSLEY, Ms. MCBRIDE, Mr. DELUZIO, Mr. KENNEDY of New York, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Ms. TITUS, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mrs. MCBATH, Mr. NADLER, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. GOMEZ, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. TOKUDA, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, Mr. CLEAVER, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. STANSBURY, Mr. CASAR, Mr. CASTEN, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. FROST, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. MCGARVEY, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. STRICKLAND, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. CARSON, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. ANSARI, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. THANEDAR, Mrs. HAYES, Ms. BROWN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Ms. OMAR):

H.R. 1035. A bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act to expand employees eligible for leave and employers subject to leave requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. VALADAO (for himself, Mr. TURNER of Ohio, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, and Mr. MAGAZINER):

H.R. 1036. A bill to provide for modifications to ending trafficking in government contracting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. VAN DUYNE (for herself, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. SELF, Mr. CLINE, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. VAN ORDEN, Mr. TIFFANY, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. PERRY, Mr. EDWARDS, and Mr. BIGGS of Arizona):

H.R. 1037. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to promptly comply with State requests for information regarding the citizenship status of an individual; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VASQUEZ (for himself and Mr. FITZPATRICK):

H.R. 1038. A bill to direct the Bureau of Labor Statistics to prepare and publish a Consumer Price Index for Rural Consumers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Ms. MALOY (for herself, Mr. OWENS, Ms. HAGEMAN, Mr. MOYLAN, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. KENNEDY of Utah, and Mr. MOORE of Utah):

H.J. Res. 36. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture relating to ''Law Enforcement; Criminal Prohibitions''; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. GRIFFITH:

H. Res. 107. A resolution electing a Member to a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. AGUILAR:

H. Res. 108. A resolution electing a Member to a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri (for himself and Mr. NEAL):

H. Res. 109. A resolution providing amounts for the expenses of the Committee on Ways and Means in the One Hundred Nineteenth Congress; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. HAMADEH of Arizona (for himself, Mr. OWENS, Mr. GILL of Texas, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. BURLISON, Mr. HARIDOPOLOS, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. GOODEN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. ISSA, and Mr. SCHMIDT):

H. Res. 110. A resolution prohibiting the distribution of Chinese Communist Party-controlled publications within House facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota (for himself, Mr. STEIL, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, and Mr. TORRES of New York):

H. Res. 111. A resolution expressing support for blockchain technology and digital assets; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, and Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PANETTA (for himself, Mr. BACON, Mr. NEGUSE, and Mr. BAIRD):

H. Res. 112. A resolution expressing support for the designation of February 5, 2025, as ''National Prosecutors Day''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

H. Res. 113. A resolution directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to transmit to the House of Representatives certain documents relating to Department of Homeland Security policies and activities related to the security of Department information and data and the recruitment and retention of its workforce; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

H. Res. 114. A resolution directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to transmit to the House of Representatives certain documents relating to Department of Homeland Security policies and activities related to domestic preparedness and collective response to terrorism and the Department's cybersecurity activities; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania (for himself, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. MORELLE, Mr. COSTA, Mr. MAGAZINER, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. BEAN of Florida, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. WITTMAN, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Ms. PEREZ, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. STEIL, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. OWENS, Mrs. MCBATH, Mr. FINSTAD, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, Mr. BALDERSON, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. SORENSEN, Mr. LAWLER, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. TONKO, Ms. CRAIG, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mrs. HINSON, Mr. FRY, Ms. SCANLON, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MRVAN, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. BOST, Mr. CISCOMANI, and Ms. LETLOW):

H. Res. 115. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of ''Career and Technical Education Month''; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN (for herself, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. SWALWELL, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. NEAL, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. BEYER, Mr. MULLIN, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. CROCKETT, Ms. NORTON, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. OLSZEWSKI, Mr. THANEDAR, Ms. SIMON, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. PETERS, Mr. COHEN, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. TURNER of Texas, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. TORRES of New York, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. CASTEN, Mr. CORREA, Mrs. MCIVER, Mr. MIN, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. CARSON, Mr. DELUZIO, Ms. SALINAS, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. POCAN, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Mr. IVEY, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. MCBRIDE, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mrs. TRAHAN, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. ANSARI, Ms. UNDERWOOD, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. MENG, Mr. LANDSMAN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. HOYLE of Oregon, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. SUBRAMANYAM, Mr. KEATING, Ms. BALINT, Mr. AMO, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. MAGAZINER, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KENNEDY of New York, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. TITUS, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. DEXTER, Mrs. MCCLAIN DELANEY, Ms. LEE of Nevada, Ms. POU, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. STANTON, Mr. HOYER, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. LIEU, Mr. MANNION, Mr. MFUME, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. ROSS, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Ms. STEVENS, Mr. GARCIA of California, Ms. OMAR, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. FIGURES, Ms. DELBENE, Ms.

ESCOBAR, Ms. GOODLANDER, and Mr. MRVAN):

H. Res. 116. A resolution condemning the pardons for individuals who were found guilty of assaulting Capitol Police Officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

ML-1. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, relative to House Concurrent Resolution Number 8, urging the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the United States Space Command; to the Committee on Armed Services.

ML-2. Also, a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, relative to House Concurrent Resolution Number 14, urging the United States Congress to enact the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2024; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. VINDMAN:

H.R. 977.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, ''[The Congress shall have Power . . .] To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. STAUBER:

H.R. 978.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 Clause 18

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 979.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:

H.R. 980.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 3

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:

H.R. 981.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Art. I, Sec 8, Clause 18

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:

H.R. 982.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 3

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:

H.R. 983.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 3

Article I, Section 8, clause 14

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:

H.R. 984.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 3

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:

H.R. 985.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Ms. BALINT:

H.R. 986.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 987.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BOST:

H.R. 988.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. BROWN:

H.R. 989.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section VIII

By Ms. CHU:

H.R. 990.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article 1

By Mr. CLOUD:

H.R. 991.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. CLOUD:

H.R. 992.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. CORREA:

H.R. 993.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. DEXTER:

H.R. 994.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. DOGGETT:

H.R. 995.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. FEENSTRA:

H.R. 996.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 1 (Taxing and Spending Clause)

By Mr. FEENSTRA:

H.R. 997.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 1 (Taxing and Spending Clause)

By Mr. FEENSTRA:

H.R. 998.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 1 (Taxing and Spending Clause)

By Mrs. FLETCHER:

H.R. 999.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. GREEN of Tennessee:

H.R. 1000.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article One, Section Eight, Clause One

By Ms. HAGEMAN:

H.R. 1001.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, clause 2 (Property Clause)

By Mrs. HAYES:

H.R. 1002.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. HERN of Oklahoma:

H.R. 1003.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. HUDSON:

H.R. 1004.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 1

By Mr. JOYCE of Ohio:

H.R. 1005.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. JOYCE of Ohio:

H.R. 1006.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. LAWLER:

H.R. 1007.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. LAWLER:

H.R. 1008.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 7

By Mr. LAWLER:

H.R. 1009.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 7

By Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ:

H.R. 1010.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18: ''[The Congress shall have the power . . .] To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Ms. LETLOW:

H.R. 1011.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. LEVIN:

H.R. 1012.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. LUCAS:

H.R. 1013.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. LUTTRELL:

H.R. 1014.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the power ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Ms. MACE:

H.R. 1015.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Ms. MACE:

H.R. 1016.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Ms. MACE:

H.R. 1017.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Mr. MESSMER:

H.R. 1018.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8.

By Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS:

H.R. 1019.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution. ''The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.''

By Mr. MOOLENAAR:

H.R. 1020.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1: The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

By Mr. NEGUSE:

H.R. 1021.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 1022.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 17 of section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.R. 1023.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution

By Mr. PANETTA:

H.R. 1024.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 Clause 3

By Mr. SELF:

H.R. 1025.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. SMUCKER:

H.R. 1026.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section VIII of Article I of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. SORENSEN:

H.R. 1027.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause of section 8 of article I of the Constitution

By Mr. STEUBE:

H.R. 1028.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8

By Mr. STEUBE:

H.R. 1029.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Ms. STRICKLAND:

H.R. 1030.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 1031.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article one

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 1032.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article one

By Mr. TORRES of New York:

H.R. 1033.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. TURNER of Texas:

H.R. 1034.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

By Ms. UNDERWOOD:

H.R. 1035.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. VALADAO:

H.R. 1036.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Ms. VAN DUYNE:

H.R. 1037.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Sec. 8

By Mr. VASQUEZ:

H.R. 1038.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United State Constitution, to provide for the general welfare and make all laws necessary and proper to carry out the powers of the Congress.

By Ms. MALOY:

H.J. Res. 36.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 22: Mr. MILLS.

H.R. 26: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. MCGUIRE, and Mr. BEGICH.

H.R. 27: Mr. KILEY of California, Mr. MCGUIRE, and Mr. BEGICH.

H.R. 35: Mr. MILLS.

H.R. 36: Mr. MOYLAN.

H.R. 38: Mr. MILLS.

H.R. 51: Ms. ELFRETH.

H.R. 54: Mr. MILLS.

H.R. 136: Mr. VAN DREW.

H.R. 139: Mr. MCCORMICK and Mr. RUTHERFORD.

H.R. 151: Mr. GILL of Texas and Mr. MILLS.

H.R. 162: Mr. TIFFANY.

H.R. 163: Mr. MILLS.

H.R. 175: Mr. SCHMIDT.

H.R. 205: Mr. DONALDS.

H.R. 224: Mr. NUNN of Iowa.

H.R. 236: Mr. HARRIGAN.

H.R. 247: Mr. SCHNEIDER.

H.R. 262: Mr. COLLINS.

H.R. 273: Mr. MOORE of North Carolina and Mr. RUTHERFORD.

H.R. 309: Mr. RUTHERFORD.

H.R. 323: Mr. MANNION, Ms. GILLEN, Mr. SUOZZI, and Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 329: Mr. OLSZEWSKI.

H.R. 345: Mr. FITZPATRICK and Mr. MULLIN.

H.R. 347: Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. MACE, Mr. MAGAZINER, and Mr. GARBARINO.

H.R. 369: Mr. EDWARDS.

H.R. 396: Mr. MCGARVEY, Ms. TLAIB, Mrs. RAMIREZ, and Mr. MANNION.

H.R. 397: Mr. TORRES of New York, Mr. MANNION, and Ms. CLARKE of New York.

H.R. 407: Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Ms. PLASKETT, and Ms. OMAR.

H.R. 425: Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS and Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia.

H.R. 429: Mr. HARDER of California.

H.R. 433: Ms. ANSARI, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. THANEDAR.

H.R. 445: Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas.

H.R. 452: Ms. VAN DUYNE, Mr. ESTES, Mr. NUNN of Iowa, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. DUNN of Florida, Mr. FLOOD, and Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas.

H.R. 465: Mr. GILL of Texas, Mr. BARR, and Mr. DOWNING.

H.R. 474: Mr. NEGUSE.

H.R. 475: Mr. SCHNEIDER.

H.R. 478: Mr. ROSE, Mr. MCDOWELL, and Mr. ALFORD.

H.R. 479: Mr. KENNEDY of Utah.

H.R. 492: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY and Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 500: Ms. MCDONALD RIVET.

H.R. 504: Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 507: Ms. MALLIOTAKIS.

H.R. 516: Mr. ALLEN, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. YAKYM, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. LAHOOD, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, Mr. NEHLS, and Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas.

H.R. 522: Mr. YAKYM.

H.R. 530: Mr. STANTON, Mr. SWALWELL, and Mr. VAN DREW.

H.R. 539: Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. BOST, Mr. DAVIDSON, and Mr. MASSIE.

H.R. 587: Mr. YAKYM.

H.R. 599: Mr. GILL of Texas.

H.R. 623: Mr. BOST.

H.R. 624: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 627: Mr. BIGGS of Arizona and Mr. HARRIS of Maryland.

H.R. 638: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 648: Mr. LUTTRELL, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. FITZGERALD, and Ms. TENNEY.

H.R. 649: Mr. WEBER of Texas and Mr. LUCAS.

H.R. 662: Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 668: Mr. VAN DREW.

H.R. 670: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois.

H.R. 682: Mr. RUTHERFORD.

H.R. 696: Mr. YAKYM.

H.R. 719: Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina.

H.R. 720: Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina.

H.R. 723: Mr. LOUDERMILK.

H.R. 724: Mr. CRANK.

H.R. 728: Mr. SMITH of Washington and Ms. SÁNCHEZ.

H.R. 736: Mrs. FISCHBACH.

H.R. 740: Mr. SCOTT Franklin of Florida.

H.R. 749: Mr. DONALDS and Mr. BOST.

H.R. 756: Mr. RUTHERFORD.

H.R. 759: Mr. LIEU.

H.R. 760: Ms. ROSS.

H.R. 764: Ms. DELBENE, Mr. TURNER of Texas, and Mr. GOLDMAN of New York.
H.R. 777: Mrs. DINGELL.
H.R. 786: Mr. CRENSHAW.
H.R. 801: Mr. LAWLER.
H.R. 830: Mr. CONNOLLY.
H.R. 833: Mr. KUSTOFF, Mr. FINSTAD, and Mr. MACKENZIE.
H.R. 842: Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia, Mr. TURNER of Texas, Mr. PFLUGER, Mr. MCGARVEY, Mr. CAREY, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. BISHOP, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. COHEN, Mr. BALDERSON, and Mr. WITTMAN.
H.R. 846: Mr. CASTEN.
H.R. 863: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 879: Mr. BARR, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. JACKSON of Texas.
H.R. 882: Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas.
H.R. 884: Mr. LAMALFA and Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas.
H.R. 925: Mr. JACKSON of Texas, Mr. MCDOWELL, and Mr. GOODEN.
H.R. 929: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 943: Mr. VAN ORDEN and Mr. YAKYM.
H.R. 944: Mr. CARSON, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, and Ms. OMAR.
H.R. 945: Mr. POCAN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. OMAR, Mr. VAN ORDEN, and Ms. JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 959: Mr. CARSON.
H.R. 964: Mr. CARSON and Mr. MFUME.
H.J. Res. 20: Mr. SCHMIDT.
H.J. Res. 31: Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas.
H. Res. 23: Ms. BROWN and Mrs. SYKES.
H. Res. 57: Mr. HARRIGAN.
H. Res. 61: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. STANSBURY, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mrs. DINGELL, and Mr. MULLIN.
H. Res. 70: Ms. HOYLE of Oregon, Mrs. MCBATH, Mr. SUBRAMANYAM, Mrs. TRAHAN, Ms. CRAIG, Ms. SALINAS, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. VINDMAN, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. PETERS, and Ms. OMAR.
H. Res. 94: Ms. OMAR, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. FRIEDMAN, Ms. PETTERSEN, Mr. TORRES of New York, Ms. DELBENE, and Ms. BROWNLEY.
H. Res. 100: Ms. OMAR.
H. Res. 106: Ms. OMAR.

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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, preserver, redeemer, and judge, strengthen our Senators for their work today. Lord, provide them with the wisdom needed to handle challenges and pressures. As You illuminate their path with the light of Your wisdom, infuse them with patience to persevere in their efforts to do Your will.

In the storms and strains of leadership, may they not deplete their faith by majoring in minors and minoring in majors. Instead, may they trust You in the face of perplexities.

Empower them to practice the Golden Rule of treating others the way they themselves desire to be treated.

And, Lord, bless the National Prayer Breakfast program tomorrow.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MULLIN). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Eric Turner, of Texas, to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF ERIC TURNER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, sometime today, we are confirming Scott Turner as the new Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. As a former NFL cornerback, developer, State and local official, and Executive Director of the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council, Mr. Turner understands the challenges facing American communities.

While the vast majority of housing and development issues are solved at the local and State level, I certainly understand how the Federal Government and the programs utilized by many Iowa individuals, families, and communities assist with making our cities the best place to live, work, and play.

I look forward to working with Scott Turner to advance Iowa's priorities and sound policies for our Nation.

Even though I did not meet with Scott Turner in my office, as I do with most nominees for the Cabinet, I stressed to him today the importance of responding to congressional letters and inquiries, and I will have an example on that in just a minute.

I want to explain that Congress has the constitutional duty to perform oversight over the executive branch and, as we learn in our high school government classes, what we call checks and balances. Congress not only passes laws and appropriates money, but we have a responsibility to make sure that those laws are faithfully executed by whoever is President of the United States. Oversight then allows us to hold bureaucrats accountable to the rule of law, and it helps keep the faith with taxpayers, because, if we have transparency in government, we have greater accountability of the government product or lack thereof.

Let me give you an example where congressional oversight has been much needed at Housing and Urban Development. Congress passed legislation that became effective July 2013 that requires Federal contracts to include anti-retaliation protections for contractor employees. This works to make sure that whistleblowers are protected.

However, over the last decade, the HUD inspector general found that thousands of HUD contractors lacked these whistleblower protections because the Agency failed to adequately update past contracts to include whistleblowers and whistleblower protections.

Last August, following up on my responsibility to investigate, I requested answers and records about these findings, but Housing and Urban Development, under the Biden administration, failed to fully respond and provide responsive records.

I fully expect Mr. Turner, as the new Secretary, to respond to all the congressional inquiries in a timely and responsible manner.

I look forward to working with this new Secretary to support long-term housing and revitalization policies to keep our communities, our States, and our Nation strong.

I yield the floor.

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

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, tomorrow, the Senate will be voting on the nomination of Russell Vought to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget. I could talk about the extensive experience, policy experience, that has helped prepare him for this position, but Mr. Vought has an even bigger qualification for this position, and that is the fact that he has already held it. That is right. Mr. Vought has already served as Director of the Office of Management and Budget in President Trump's first administration, and so there is no question that he will be able to hit the ground running.

As Director of OMB, Mr. Vought will have the chance to address two key economic issues: cutting burdensome government regulations and addressing excessive spending.

Government regulation has a direct effect not only on our economy but on Americans' pocketbooks. Regulations can drive up Americans' energy bills. They can drive up the cost of housing, of a new car, of appliances. The list goes on and on.

The history of the past 4 years under the Biden administration is a history of burdensome new regulations. Republicans are determined to alleviate that regulatory burden for the sake of economic growth and to improve the lives of hard-working Americans, and I know that Mr. Vought will make getting rid of burdensome regulations a priority.

I know that Mr. Vought is already also committed, I should say, to addressing our spending problems. Our country is currently on a dangerous spending track, with debt held by the public set to hit a staggering $52 trillion by 2035. That is not sustainable. Identifying ways to rein in our spending and to target government waste has to be a priority, and I am confident Mr. Vought will help lead that charge.

One of my top priorities for the Senate at the beginning of this year was processing President Trump's nominees. I am very pleased to say that Mr. Vought's confirmation will bring the total number of nominees confirmed since the inauguration to 13. That is roughly twice as fast as nominees were confirmed at the start of the two previous administrations.

The Senate will take up additional nominees next week, and we will maintain an aggressive pace to get the President's full team in place as soon as possible.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. President, while our focus in the Senate has been on nominees, we have managed to work in votes on a few pieces of legislation. Last week, the President signed one of those pieces of legislation into law.

The Laken Riley Act, which the President signed last Wednesday, is Congress's first installment in our work to combat illegal immigration. It is not, of course, a comprehensive bill, but it will ensure that illegal immigrants who steal, assault a law enforcement officer, or kill or seriously injure another person are detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement instead of being allowed back out on the street. Had such a law been in place last year, it is possible that Laken Riley would still be alive today, and I am thankful that we were finally able to pass this important legislation. The Laken Riley Act joins the work the Trump administration has been doing to keep dangerous illegal immigrants off our streets.

Since President Trump's inauguration, his border czar and Homeland Security team, now led by Secretary Noem, have been working around the clock to take murderers, rapists, gang members, and other dangerous criminals into custody in preparation for being deported. Reading lists of crimes these individuals committed is horrifying, and it is incredible that they have been allowed to remain in our country. I am grateful that we now have a President who is serious about protecting Americans from criminal aliens.

Republicans in Congress are working on legislation to support the President's efforts, and we will ensure that the President has the manpower and detention space needed to detain and deport individuals who threaten the safety of our streets.

It has been a busy few weeks here in the Senate. I am looking forward to more as we continue to confirm the President's nominees and deliver on an agenda for the American people.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, Leader JEFFRIES and I announced legislation to stop unlawful meddling by DOGE or other entities in the Treasury Department's payments system. Our bill will deny access to the payment system by anyone designated as a ''special government employee''—in other words, people who aren't required to disclose conflicts of interest.

Our bill will deny access to anyone with conflicts of interest or lack of appropriate clearance. Imagine where all the Federal funds are going out and someone has a conflict of interest and has access to those funds and can do something with them. That is a formula for waste; that is a formula that makes sure that money isn't spent wisely but is spent to accommodate the needs of a special few.

And our bill will ensure that Treasury payments can only be accessed by those with proper clearance. Everyone should agree that making the government more efficient and more effective is a good thing. But DOGE's scorched-earth policies are dangerous and unlawful. That is their approach.

History shows that when this kind of stuff is done in the dark of night with no guardrails by a limited group of people who don't really know the programs they are dealing with, it leads to bad results. If Treasury payments were ever intentionally or even accidentally halted or manipulated, it could paralyze the economy.

DOGE has said they want to cut $2 trillion, $2.5 trillion from the budget—well, that is going to be massive cuts done, again, by people who don't know the programs, don't know the whole extent of what the government is doing. Some of it might be wasteful. Get rid of it. But much of it is good and needed. One mistake and people's Social Security benefits could freeze. One mistake and disability payments to veterans, loans to small businesses could all be in danger.

If DOGE's meddling caused us to default, it could compromise the full faith and credit of the United States, and that would hurt everybody because interest rates would go up on everything—cars, homes, you name it.

The OMB funding freeze last week was disastrous enough, but a DOGE funding freeze would be far worse if guardrails are totally thrown out the window. And that seems to be what is happening. We don't know any guardrails. They sure haven't been made public.

We should talk about reform here in the open, in the Halls of Congress, in the public forums of the people's government. That is how it has been done by Democrat, Republican, liberal, conservative for centuries because we all know—the Founding Fathers knew, historians know—democracy doesn't work in the shadows—autocracy does, not democracy.

Democracy does not skirt the rule of law. The American people deserve to have a seat at the table when these important decisions are made. But so far, DOGE is operating entirely in the dark.

Our legislation would correct it. We are going to do anything and everything we can legislatively to try and get this done. And maybe, at some point, we will get some help from the other side of the aisle if they see how bad DOGE's actions are.

NOMINATION OF RUSSELL VOUGHT

OMB and Vought. If you want to understand the risks of letting DOGE take over the Treasury Department, all you have to do is look at what happened last week at OMB. OMB unilaterally froze trillions in potential spending, and it unleashed chaos. That is

why today, I will join every single Democrat in opposing the nomination of Russell Vought. All 47 Democrats are opposed to Vought's nomination, and we will take the floor early this afternoon and spend the whole night discussing how bad this nomination is, how badly it affects working families.

His confirmation would be a disaster for working families and a godsend to billionaires who don't pay their fair share in taxes. All they want, these billionaires: Cut any program. We don't care what they are; we don't care what the consequences are; we don't care how it hurts people as long as we, the ultrawealthy, can get a deeper tax break—even though they are doing very well right now.

So we will come to the floor and sound the alarm on Russell Vought through the night. We will expose his ultraright record as the chief architect of Project 2025. We will expose how he is turning Project 2025 into the White House agenda.

When Donald Trump was running for President and 2025 was made public, it was regarded so horrifically by the American people that Donald Trump had to say: I don't know anything about it. But right now, with Vought, who is one of the chief architects of Project 2025, as head of OMB, all of it, much of it—damaging and dangerous for the American people—will be implemented.

That is why Americans do not want Russell Vought, the author of 2025, to head such an all-powerful, all-encompassing Agency as OMB. We will hold firm in standing against Russell Vought because of all the ways he stands against the working people of America.

HEAD START

Mr. President, now on Head Start and the effect of the funding freeze—even a week after Donald Trump backed off his ill-designed funding freeze, the collateral damage still lingers for millions across the country. He was forced by public pressure, by Senate Democrats and by others, to back off on the funding freeze. But that doesn't mean the harm all went away. It is still being done.

And a painful example is the damage done to Head Start programs everywhere. Every single Head Start program was halted last week, despite White House claims they were exempt. And that is a fact. Just go ask your Head Start program in your State.

Does Donald Trump realize what Head Start does? It is childcare for kids, dental care for kids, adult education. Does he realize that most families in America are either single-parent families or families who have two parents but both are working? And if there is no Head Start, the families can get in a panic almost: Who is going to watch the kids? Do I have to take off from work? Will my boss dock me in pay? Will my boss fire me? How do I get good care for the kids if Head Start isn't working?

It is a nightmare for people throughout the middle class in America. That is why childcare is so important.

Why then?

With that kind of trauma people would face, that daily worry about how you find childcare if Head Start is gone, it is supremely cruel and it is going to make life more difficult, more expensive for working families.

Do you want to know where the idea to eliminate Head Start comes from? Russell Vought and Project 2025.

When we are talking about how bad 2025 is and they say we just want to get rid of waste—oh, no, they want to eliminate the whole thing. They explicitly want to eliminate the program all together. ''Who cares,'' they say, ''what it does to help kids and parents?''

That is another reason why Democrats will never, never support someone like Russell Vought to lead the OMB. We will all oppose him on the floor and speak about it, as I said, through the night.

Even in a week after the funding freeze supposedly ended, I am still getting calls from Head Start programs throughout New York. They are missing funds, suffering technical issues, or unable to operate at all. There is no one to answer the phone.

You are a Head Start program. You get money every 2 weeks. You have to pay the rent. You have to pay the workers and you call up and say: I haven't gotten my check. You say the freeze is over. There is no one at the other end of the line. No one to answer.

It is chaos—cruel chaos.

In Upstate New York, the Head Start program that serves Cattaraugus and Wyoming Counties—very conservative areas; Republican areas—they haven't received funding in over a week and have been forced to temporarily close. Two hundred kids have lost out on childcare from this one incident. Every single staffer has been laid off.

This is the handiwork, my fellow Americans, of Russell Vought and Project 2025. Put him in OMB, and you are going to see a lot more of this—a lot more damage to average working families. And this is not just happening in New York. It is happening across the country, in States like Washington, Michigan, Connecticut, Wisconsin. All of this chaos with Head Start is precisely what Russell Vought and Project 2025 want.

I am writing to HHS and demanding they take immediate action to fix the problems with Head Start. First, we need HHS to fix the payment system and get out the money that is now overdue, and we need them to do it now. Second, the Trump administration must stop the disruptions and fix every glitch preventing Head Start from accessing funding. And, third, we need HHS to stop leaving our childcare providers in the dark. They need to explain what went wrong and how they will fix it and how quickly they will fix it and when people will be getting the dollars they were promised to pay the rent, to pay the workers, to care for the kids.

NOMINATION OF KASHYAP PATEL

Finally, Mr. President, the FBI.

Yesterday, the FBI handed over to the Justice Department a list of thousands—thousands—of employees involved in the January 6 investigation. These actions have political retribution written all over them, and it will get worse if Kash Patel is named FBI Director.

The Senate should not rubberstamp a patently partisan nominee like Kash Patel to lead the FBI. I join the Senate Democrats on the Judiciary Committee. I am demanding a second hearing of Mr. Patel. He clearly withheld information from Senators about plans for political retribution of the FBI. These agents are now on the firing line, which wasn't known when he first had the hearing that that would happen, so he clearly withheld that information from Senators. Either Mr. Patel serves the interests of the American people or he serves the interests of Donald Trump, which, of course, all too often diverge.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

NOMINATION OF ERIC TURNER

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the Senate is soon going to vote on the confirmation of Scott Turner to be the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

He grew up in Texas and dreamed of a career playing in the National Football League. He achieved not just that dream but a great deal more. He used his platform as a player to help others achieve their own dreams. These leadership qualities are fundamental to who Scott is. They are going to serve him well as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Scott also has extensive experience in State government and the Federal Government. After playing in the NFL, he served his community in the Texas legislature. In 2019, he oversaw investments in opportunity zones under President Trump. In that role, he secured more than $50 billion in private investments for over 8,700 economically distressed communities. These investments helped to revitalize many forgotten communities.

Senator TIM SCOTT of South Carolina, who is now the chairman of the Banking Committee, created these opportunity zones in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Scott Turner was instrumental in their success. He is the right man to help restore opportunity now. He is going to put his experience and his leadership skills to work for the American people, and I strongly support his nomination.

BORDER SECURITY

On a separate matter, Mr. President, President Trump and Republicans were elected to secure the border. That is exactly what we are doing.

In his first few weeks in office, President Trump declared an emergency at

the southern border. He restored ''Remain in Mexico.'' He shut down the Biden amnesty act. President Trump signed an Executive order to defund sanctuary cities. He began deportation flights for criminal illegal immigrants. He signed the Laken Riley Act into law. He listed international drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations. He pledged to send 30,000 of the worst illegal immigrant criminals to Guantanamo Bay.

Here are just a few of the criminals who are now off of American streets:

In Seattle, Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested a Mexican national who was convicted—convicted—of raping a child. He is being deported.

In Philadelphia, ICE arrested a Mexican national who was convicted of possessing child pornography. He was also a drug dealer. He is being deported.

In Los Angeles, ICE arrested an MS–13 gang member who is wanted for murder in El Salvador. He is being deported.

In Houston, ICE arrested another gang member who is wanted for aggravated assault. He is being deported.

In Baltimore, ICE arrested a Cuban national for drug trafficking and weapons charges. He is being deported.

In Buffalo, NY, ICE arrested a Jordanian national with suspected terrorist ties to ISIS. He is being deported.

In San Diego, ICE arrested an Afghan national with terrorist ties. This individual had an existing removal order. He is now being deported.

In all, there were 7,330 arrests of illegal immigrant criminals by the end of President Trump's first week in office, and 97 percent of illegal immigrants who have been deported in the last 17 days were actually issued removal orders under President Joe Biden, but they were never removed. That is right—97 percent of those deported had been given removal orders under Biden. These are people who should have been removed, who were ordered by a judge to be removed; but yet Biden and the Democrats defied the law of the land and allowed each one of these illegal immigrant criminals to stay.

President Trump's bold actions are also discouraging future border crossings. On Monday, we saw the number of illegal crossings drop significantly once again into our Nation. This is a drastic reduction from the previous administration. The average number of illegal crossings in the final week of the Biden administration was between 1,200 and 1,400 each and every day. All in all, President Trump is off to a strong start, and there is more to come.

Congress still has important work to do. I spoke with Tom Homan at the White House last week, where we were for the signing of the Laken Riley Act. Tom, of course, is President Trump's border czar. His task is to secure the border and deport illegal immigrants. He previously ran Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He knows what it means to secure the border. Mr. Homan said simply to me: I need resources when it comes to securing the border. And I believe him. They do.

The best way to get these resources is for Congress to pass a targeted bill, a bill that backs up the President's bold Executive actions. The Senate is already moving quickly to get President Trump's personnel in place. We confirmed Kristi Noem to be Secretary of Homeland Security. We also confirmed Pete Hegseth to be Secretary of Defense. Congress must now ensure that they have the resources they need to continue the job.

A targeted reconciliation bill will give immigration officials the tools they need to secure the border. That means funding to finish the wall. It means more ICE and Border Patrol agents, more detention beds. That includes Guantanamo Bay. It means more technology—not just at the ports but also between the ports of entry—to stop the flood of illegal immigrants. It is essential that we have the manpower, the technology, and the wall to prevent illegal immigrants from coming into our country. All three are needed to fully secure the border.

President Trump has already acted decisively. A targeted reconciliation bill will be the rocket fuel for safety and for security. This is the golden opportunity to make America safer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to complete my remarks before the vote.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would like to continue along the theme that our majority whip has talked about, particularly the hand-wringing that we are seeing and fearmongering we are hearing from some of our Democratic colleagues over President Trump's promise to secure the border and the actions that he has taken already early in his administration to do exactly that, including enforcing our existing laws by repatriating, or deporting, people who have no legal right to be here in the first place.

So, instead of the fearmongering of mass deportations, you might just call this enforcing the law—something that is long overdue and that the Biden administration did not do—because the fearmongering is not based on reality. Our Democratic colleagues would have the American people believe that an elderly grandma down the street—a peaceful neighbor who would never hurt a fly and who poses no threat to anyone—will have ICE banging on her door tomorrow morning. Well, that is the picture that the left wants the American people to imagine when they hear the words ''mass deportation.''

Last December, in a Judiciary Committee hearing, then-Chairman DURBIN, the Senator from Illinois, went so far as to say the President's repatriation program would ''weaken our Armed Forces'' and ''devastate our economy.'' That is a lot of hyperbole there. If that is what enforcing our law means, it certainly sounds disturbing.

But the American people can see right through what our Democratic colleagues are trying to do here. They are trying to sow fear into the hearts of the American people that this President, whom a majority of the voters elected, is going to tear their communities and their families apart. But the image could not be farther from the truth. We know that the Biden administration's own policies and failure to enforce the law have been doing just that—tearing families and communities apart.

Start with the fentanyl epidemic in our country, which is among the leading causes of death—the leading cause of death—for young people between the ages of 18 and 45 and which took the lives of more than 70,000 people last year alone in this country. Then there are the 400,000 or more unaccompanied children who have been trafficked across our open borders, and tens of thousands of these children have simply been lost because of the Biden administration's carelessness.

The New York Times ran a couple of investigative stories, saying they tried to contact the sponsors for 85,000 of these unaccompanied children who had been placed with sponsors during the Biden administration. There was no answer and no follow-up because the Biden administration took the responsibility that it was no longer their job; it was the job of the child welfare agencies in the various States.

These tragedies are the result of the policies of the Biden administration, not the Trump administration, and it is one reason President Trump was elected decisively on November 5, but there is more to the story.

Untold misery and heartache have been caused by criminals who have entered our country illegally. By our best estimate, roughly 1.7 million ''got-aways'' came across the open borders during the Biden administration. These were people who, if they were here for, let's say, benign reasons, could have just turned themselves in to the Border Patrol and claimed asylum, knowing they would be released or would have been paroled by the Biden administration and given a work permit; but at least 1.7 million ''got-aways'' were evading law enforcement, frankly, because they were up to no good.

We have now learned what the toll of this invasion of criminality has caused. Last summer in Houston, TX, a 12-year-old girl named Jocelyn Nungaray disappeared on her way to the grocery store. She was found dead in a creek, having been strangled and killed by two men from Venezuela who had entered the country illegally. Both of these men had been apprehended by Customs and Border Protection months earlier, but they had been given a court date and then were released.

Last month, an illegal migrant from Mexico was caught with a blowtorch near the side of the Kenneth fire—one of the deadly fires that was ravaging Los Angeles. This is a man who was already on probation and had violated that probation.

If it is proven that he had started the fire, this would be a slap in the face to everyone whose world has been rocked by the devastation we have seen from these terrible fires out in California. If it turns out that he was one of the ones who started the fire, that would be another indictment of the policies of the Biden administration for the last 4 years.

Then 2 weeks ago, Boston ICE officials arrested multiple MS–13 gang members and criminals on a worldwide law enforcement ''wanted'' list for serious crimes. They arrested murder and rape suspects, including a member of the Haitian gang who had 18 convictions. These were the types of people that the Biden administration allowed loose in our country.

We know that ICE—Immigration and Customs Enforcement—has now arrested criminals who have committed sexual assault, domestic violence, and drug- and weapon-related crimes, but these are just a few examples of the hundreds of criminal arrests made just in the few short weeks since President Trump took office.

To the Democrats who would decry these arrests, would you want these criminals to be your neighbor? I am going to guess the answer is no.

With criminal illegal migrants running rampant throughout the country, it is no surprise that Americans voted overwhelmingly for a President who pledged to reverse the course from the reckless open border policies of the Biden administration.

We know last week President Trump signed the Laken Riley Act. I was honored to be present at the White House with our friend and colleague Senator KATIE BRITT to watch him sign this legislation into law.

Laken Riley, for whom this law was named, was a 22-year-old woman who went missing after going on a run. She was killed by a Venezuelan national who was also a gang member. He should have never been running loose in our country in the first place. It was President Biden's open border policies that led to this horrific murder of Laken Riley.

The Laken Riley Act will now, having been signed into law, require the Department of Homeland Security to detain noncitizens charged with or convicted of theft-related crimes or any crime that results in death or serious bodily injury. I introduced an amendment during the deliberations on the bill that would add assaulting a law enforcement officer to that list.

As we know here in the Senate, there is a 60-vote threshold to be able to close off debate and to actually move on to pass legislation. It ensures that we have bipartisan consensus. I am glad to say that the Laken Riley Act passed the Senate with bipartisan support. I appreciate the recognition that the status quo during the previous administration could no longer exist.

The Laken Riley Act is not an example of some extremism, but it is an issue that affects the day-to-day safety and livelihoods of regular Americans.

I think it is perfectly fair to say that the deportations or repatriations that the Trump administration has already begun are very much in the spirit of the Laken Riley Act.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem made clear over the weekend that the Trump administration's first priority will be to detain and deport what she called the ''worst of the worst''; that is, bad actors with warrants out for arrest for murder, rape, assault, and drug trafficking.

After the criminal aliens are deported, she said the next priority will be individuals under final orders of deportation; in other words, those who have exhausted all possible legal recourse to be able to stay in the United States, having lost their claim for asylum.

There are more than 1½ million—1½ million—immigrants who have exhausted their legal remedies in a court of law and are under final orders of deportation, but the Biden administration simply did nothing about it. So removing these individuals who have no legal right to remain in the United States and who have been given due process and have lost their case—deporting them is a commonsense next step and one that is long overdue.

So when the mainstream media and our Democratic colleagues engage in fearmongering about these so-called mass deportations, I hope people remember we are talking primarily about criminals, and we are talking about people who have no legal right to remain in the United States, having exhausted all of their legal remedies in order to do so. I hope we can all agree that these are not people who deserve to remain in America.

America naturalizes about 1 million people a year. I personally believe and I think Americans generally agree that legal immigration has been the secret sauce for America. It is what helped make us the great country we are today, prosperous and strong. But it is illegal immigration that has been a scourge and has created much heartache and misery and, frankly, makes us a laughing stock when we talk about the rule of law.

Removing and deporting en masse the criminals and gangs who have entered our country illegally over the last 4 years and faced no consequences means that Americans will have less to fear, and they will be safer in their communities and in their homes. They will no longer have to fear that one of their children will accidentally take a fentanyl-laced pill—make it less likely. We still have work to do there, obviously. They no longer will have to fear that their daughter will go on a run around her college campus or walk to the grocery store and never return home because she has been abducted and murdered by somebody who had no legal right to be here in the first place.

By ending President Biden's open border policies and deporting criminals and gang members and people under final orders of deportation, President Trump is making our Nation safe again. That is not something we should fear; it is something we should welcome.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON TURNER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Turner nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. 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 senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 35 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Banks	Graham	Mullin
Barrasso	Grassley	Murkowski
Blackburn	Hagerty	Paul
Boozman	Hawley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeven	Risch
Budd	Husted	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Justice	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sheehy
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Lummis	Tillis
Cruz	Marshall	Tuberville
Curtis	McConnell	Welch
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young
Fetterman	Moran	
Fischer	Moreno	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Hirono	Rosen
Bennet	Kaine	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schiff
Booker	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Coons	Luján	Slotkin
Cortez Masto	Markey	Smith
Duckworth	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murphy	Warner
Gallego	Murray	Warnock
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Warren
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden
Hickenlooper	Reed	

NOT VOTING—1

Alsobrooks

The nomination is confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from South Dakota.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call

with respect to the Vought nomination be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SCHUMER. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 13, Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, John Barrasso, Lindsey Graham, Tommy Tuberville, Jon Husted, Rick Scott of Florida, Katie Boyd Britt, Bernie Moreno, David McCormick, Ted Cruz, Tom Cotton, Markwayne Mullin, Ashley Moody, Mike Lee, Cynthia M. Lummis, Bill Hagerty.

QUORUM CALL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair now directs the clerk to call the roll to ascertain the presence of a quorum.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll, and the following Senators answered to their names:

[Quorum No. 3]

Banks	Grassley	Moreno
Barrasso	Hagerty	Mullin
Bennet	Hawley	Murray
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Paul
Blunt Rochester	Hickenlooper	Ricketts
Britt	Hirono	Risch
Budd	Husted	Rosen
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Sanders
Collins	Justice	Scott (FL)
Coons	Kaine	Slotkin
Cortez Masto	Kelly	Sullivan
Crapo	Kennedy	Thune
Daines	Kim	Tillis
Duckworth	King	Warner
Ernst	Klobuchar	Whitehouse
Fetterman	Lee	Wicker
Fischer	McConnell	Wyden
Gallego	McCormick	Young
Graham	Moody	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A quorum is present.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 36 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Banks	Britt	Collins
Barrasso	Budd	Cornyn
Blackburn	Capito	Cotton
Boozman	Cassidy	Cramer
Crapo	Justice	Ricketts
Cruz	Kennedy	Risch
Curtis	Lankford	Rounds
Daines	Lee	Schmitt
Ernst	Lummis	Scott (FL)
Fischer	Marshall	Scott (SC)
Graham	McConnell	Sheehy
Grassley	McCormick	Sullivan
Hagerty	Moody	Thune
Hawley	Moran	Tillis
Hoeven	Moreno	Tuberville
Husted	Mullin	Wicker
Hyde-Smith	Murkowski	Young
Johnson	Paul	

NAYS—47

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Baldwin	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Kaine	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schumer
Booker	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Luján	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gallego	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). On this vote, the yeas are 53; the nays are 47.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I yield 30 minutes of my postcloture debate time on the Vought nomination to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Duly noted.

The Senator from South Carolina.

CONFIRMATION OF ERIC TURNER

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's mission is to create strong, sustainable communities and support of affordable homes. Yet under President Biden and his administration, the Department failed to serve our Nation's most vulnerable.

Here is the truth: We are facing a homelessness crisis in America. The latest homelessness survey found an 18-percent increase in homelessness year over year, increasing the number of homelessness in our country to nearly 772,000 Americans not able to find a place to lay their heads. This is unacceptable.

On top of that, we are facing an affordability crisis in our country as well. During President Biden's tenure, mortgage rates ballooned 150 percent and rents 20 percent.

Over the last 4 years, far-left housing policies and burdensome regulations have put the American dream out of reach for millions and millions of hard-working, dedicated patriots throughout our Nation. It is no secret that HUD is in serious need of new leadership.

Fortunately, there is good news: Help is right over there, and it is on its way.

My good friend, Scott Turner, has a remarkable life story, a tremendous life story. Scott is a native Texan who has had an exceptional journey from professional athlete to public servant. Scott came from humble beginnings, but he never let those circumstances define who he is. Actually, Scott, in high school, I believe it was, worked at a barbecue shop. What I love about Scott is he has this affection for the truth. He told me himself—he conceded—that South Carolina barbecue is better than Texas. I am glad he has no microphone to say anything right now. I am just telling you that that is a man I can appreciate.

He went on and had a successful career in the NFL: nine seasons as a cornerback playing for the Denver Broncos, the San Diego Chargers, and, yes, the Washington Redskins. And I note that he did not play for America's team, the Dallas Cowboys. Nobody can be perfect.

After hanging up his cleats, Scott served two terms in the Texas State legislature and then went on to work in the Trump administration.

As the Executive Director of the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council, Scott helped implement the opportunity zones initiative I created, directing over $50 billion in private sector capital into hard-hit, typically majority minority communities, breathing hope and opportunity not only to the neighborhoods but into the lives of people who desperately, passionately were praying for hope, and with less than a 5-percent gentrification. That is what I call success.

His story and his perspective are essential tools that he will bring to the table to fight the increase of homelessness, to fight the 150-percent ballooning of our mortgages, and to fight back against the 20-percent increase in rents.

As HUD Secretary, Scott will make himself known. He will create access to quality, affordable housing as a top priority. He will work to reverse decades of failed housing policies, and make targeted reforms across all segments of the U.S. housing market.

It is time to make America's economy work for working-class Americans. It is time for a blue-collar comeback. And I am so thankful that we have a man prepared to put in 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, if necessary, so more people—not 772,000 Americans, but more Americans—will have a place to lay their heads because they are no longer homeless. More Americans will be able to afford a home because the interest rates will come down, the housing supply will increase. And we will thank God Almighty that we live in a land where opportunity is more available because the right person, at the right time, in the right place, says yes.

I am very thankful that Scott Turner is the Secretary of Housing and Urban

Development. But I am more thankful that we have a President making good decisions to put America back on the right track.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I would like to say I look forward to Texas and South Carolina running for No. 2 to be the best barbecue in the country, with Alabama being a clear No. 1.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. TUBERVILLE. I will yield.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. It sounded like you were suggesting that there was a place on the planet that has better barbecue than South Carolina. I know my ears mistook the words coming out of your mouth. I know you are a fine coach, Coach, but we both know we can't lie to the public.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. The Senator will yield.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Your neighbor to the southwest has been recognized as the No. 1 barbecue in the United States by many, many authorities, so I think we probably could leave it at that.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Will you yield?

Mr. TUBERVILLE. I will.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Thank you, Coach.

I will just simply say that although there are many, many people living in Alabama coming to the conclusion—it makes total sense to me. Alabama is a fine State. You guys produce national championships, and you know something about that. Of course, the home of barbecue, the beginning place of barbecue and sweet tea is South Carolina.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Yes, sir.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. That sounds like a challenge.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. We will have a taste test.

NATIONAL WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORTS DAY

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, November 5, 2024, that is the day that the American people sent shock waves to the swamp in DC when they overwhelmingly reelected Donald John Trump as President of these United States of America. And 77 million Americans didn't just deliver a mandate for President Trump, they also wanted his ''America First'' agenda.

I come to the floor today to remind my Senate Republican colleagues that a critical part of the ''America First'' agenda includes prioritizing the safety of our women and girls in sports and protecting their privacy in bathrooms and locker rooms.

I am here to call for a vote on my legislation, S. 9, the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act, that would save title IX and save women's sports.

Today is National Girls and Women in Sports Day. That is today. To celebrate, President Trump will sign an Executive order this afternoon in the White House ending Democrats' intentional destruction of title IX and saving women's sports. I am very thankful for his leadership on this.

President Trump's Executive order will make sure women's sports are protected for at least the next 4 years. But, unfortunately, Executive orders can be reversed.

Congress needs to act on this to make sure the next Democrat administration, whenever it is, can't take the same steps to destroy title IX that the Biden administration took.

For the past 4 years, the Biden administration waged an all-out assault on gender. Since the beginning of time, people have agreed that sex is assigned at birth and determined by God. But under the Biden administration, you had people claiming that men can get pregnant. Here on this floor, I heard that. Pure insanity.

But it didn't stop there. They weren't content to just erase gender norms that have been accepted for thousands and thousands of years. No, they wanted to allow transgender men to participate against women and girls in sports.

This has been happening in schools all across the country. Young women have been forced to compete against men and even share locker rooms and showers. On top of that, your taxpayer dollars are paying for this nonsense.

Over the past several years under the Joe Biden administration, 900 women's medals have gone to men—900. That is absolutely wrong.

This one is personal for me. My first coaching job was in women's basketball years ago. Title IX was just starting to be implemented when I took that first job. I saw firsthand the immediate difference it made.

Before title IX, at a lot of schools, college women's athletics didn't really exist. Back then, there were more than 10 times as many male athletes in college as female athletes. After title IX, that quickly changed. For the first time, the young women I coached had equal access to facilities, resources, and competition.

I saw these hard-working young women go on to earn college scholarships, start careers, and become leaders of our country. I still keep in touch with many of these young women today, and I am deeply proud of them.

Looking back on it now, I wonder if they would have had the same opportunities without title IX. Would they have had the same success if they had to compete against males 40 years ago?

This really shouldn't be controversial. It is just common sense.

A recent poll from the New York Times, of all publications, showed 79 percent of all Americans believe men should not compete in women's sports—79 percent.

President Trump campaigned largely on this issue. If you remember his campaign, he spent nearly $20 million on TV ads about the importance of keeping men out of women's sports.

So on November 5, 2024, the American people didn't just elect President Trump; they also decisively rejected this ridiculous notion that men can get pregnant and boys should compete against women's sports—ridiculous. And they definitely didn't want their tax dollars funding schools that allow boys to share locker rooms with girls.

My bill would prevent a school from receiving any Federal funding if they let boys compete in women's sports. It also defines gender as male and female for this purpose.

I was glad to see President Trump sign an Executive order defining gender during his first few days in office. The President also made it clear under that Executive order that he wants Congress to take action on this as well because he understands it can go away with the signing of an ink pen.

That is why today, I am also reintroducing a bill to prohibit men from competing in women's Olympic sports because men competing against women at any level is dangerous.

We are all deeply disturbed—all of us were deeply disturbed this past summer to see videos of boys and men boxing against women.

You know, when I was growing up, we were taught to never hit a girl. But I guess that is over now because of the Democrats.

One study found out that males can punch up to 162 percent harder than females. Somebody is going to get killed or seriously injured if we don't stop this absolute nonsense. It is unsafe, it is unfair, and it is just plain wrong.

The Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act will make sure men aren't allowed to compete against women in any sport but especially not in a violent sport like boxing. This bill will restore fairness for the American women who train their whole lives to represent our country on the world stage. Their entire lives, they train.

I know we are all looking forward to the United States hosting the Summer Olympics in 2028 in Los Angeles. I hope our bill has been passed and signed into law long before that so we can all enjoy some healthy, safe women-against-women or men-against-men competition during those Olympics.

But this issue goes way beyond politics. I have heard from parents, students, teachers, and coaches all over the country about this. These are people who have personally seen the benefits of title IX and are very concerned about Democrats' attempts to take these opportunities away from women and girls.

There are countless stories of girls who have benefited from title IX in my State of Alabama. This includes athletes like Rachel Argent of Thorsby High School in Chilton County, AL. Rachel's athletic ability and good grades drew the attention of college coaches across Alabama. Rachel's athletic ability and her good grades drew

the attention of people from everywhere.

Because of her talent and work ethic, she received a basketball scholarship to Faulkner State Community College in Bay Minette, AL. After competing for 2 years and getting her degree, she got a softball scholarship at Samford University. That scholarship put her on the right direction to be able to buy her own uniform or her own equipment like she did in high school. It was all done because of title IX, and it was all paid for, which, years ago, would not have happened.

She didn't have to worry about landing a full-time job while she went to school and participated in sports to pay her bills.

After college, Rachel returned to Thorsby High School as a teacher and a coach. She wanted to give back to the school what she had gotten from title IX. She taught health and physical education for grades K–12. She coached girls softball, basketball, track, and volleyball. She made an impact on hundreds of girls across the State of Alabama. It was all made possible, again, by title IX.

Rachel's daughter Addie played softball, tennis, golf, and basketball at Chilton County High School. She got a gold scholarship to the University of Mobile, where she graduated with a degree in nursing. Her athletic scholarship was a key part of her getting a degree and becoming a nurse.

There are countless other young women like Addie and Rachel across Alabama and every other State across the country. More than 50,000 young women in Alabama alone competed in high school sports this past year—50,000. Every single one of them deserves the full benefit of fair competition.

I am grateful that every Member of the Senate Republican leadership is a cosponsor of my Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act. They have been very supportive. Leader THUNE is a proud cosponsor of my bill, and I am glad to have his support. Leader THUNE is committed to scheduling a vote on this bill and putting every Democrat on the record on whether or not they support men competing in women's sports.

We brought this bill to the floor for a vote during the last Congress—really, we brought it twice—and every single Democrat always voted against it. What does that tell you?

Leader THUNE has not rescheduled it for a vote this Congress. Right now, we obviously have a lot of things to do with President Trump's Cabinet. Then we can get started on the reconciliation process and get the American economy jump-started again. We have a lot to accomplish in the first 100 days of the Trump administration, and I hope this bill is part of that 100 days.

President Trump will sign an Executive order again today banning men from competing in women's sports. Let's lock that commitment in. Let's lock it in for young girls and women all across this country.

Let's bring this bill to the floor for a vote very soon so the Senate can send it to the President's desk and make this permanent.

To my Senate colleagues who are on the fence about this, I would ask: Do you have daughters? Do you have granddaughters? Do you have nieces? Would you want them competing against men in sports? Would you feel comfortable with them sharing a locker room with a biological male?

I am excited to welcome my first granddaughter in a couple of weeks, Rosie Grace. I would raise hell if she was forced to compete, dress, or use the same showers as men. American taxpayers should not be forced to foot the bill for any schools that are allowing this to happen.

The days of woke, swamp politicians running our government are over. Common sense has been restored to the White House, and Congress needs to get back to work and let President Trump work on this bill. This isn't about politics; this is about right and wrong. The American people have delivered a verdict. They want men out of women's sports and women's locker rooms. President Trump is 100 percent with us on this.

The time to act is now. It is time to restore title IX protections and save women's sports.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, today is National Girls and Women in Sports Day. It is a holiday that celebrates women's many accomplishments in athletics.

To be certain, we do have a lot for our athletic women and girls to celebrate, and soon after I leave the floor and these remarks, I will be heading to the White House to join President Trump as he signs an Executive order to keep biological men out of women's sports. This move is a triumph for the more than 3 million high school and college female athletes who deserve safety, fair play, and equal opportunity to succeed.

In many ways, it is disturbing that this action is even necessary. Since title IX's enactment in 1972, which required equal resources for women's sports, the lives of millions of young women and girls have been improved with the benefits of fitness, teamwork, and leadership experience. Yet despite these advances for women, for 4 years the Biden-Harris administration waged a war on women's sports. Instead of empowering young women, they denied biological reality and blurred the difference between men and women.

In 2022, Biden's Education Department announced new rules that would allow biological males to participate in women's groups and activities, essentially forcing schools to accept men into their women's athletic programs. Following up last year, the administration extended the rulemaking to private spaces, such as locker rooms and bathrooms, further jeopardizing the safety of women.

Thankfully, in November, the American people rejected this radical agenda. Instead, they gave President Trump a mandate to protect women, restore fairness, and bring common sense back to government rulemaking. That is why, on Inauguration Day, President Trump issued an Executive order that affirms the Federal Government's position that there are only two sexes—male and female—that are grounded in biology, not gender ideology. In effect, this means no more forcing schools to allow biological men into women's spaces.

For so many female athletes in Tennessee and across the country, President Trump's Executive orders are welcome news. But to ensure that every single one of them receives the safety, opportunity, and fairness they deserve, there is much more that Congress can and should do.

At the top of the list: ensuring the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the NCAA, prohibits biological men from competing in women's sports. The NCAA is the Nation's largest governing body of college athletics. So it wields tremendous power over hundreds of thousands of student athletes all across the country.

That is why it is so troubling that since 2010, the organization has allowed men to compete in female-only events. Time and again, we have seen this policy endanger women's safety and deprive them of hard-earned records, medals, and accomplishments.

Just 3 years ago, at the NCAA Women's Swimming and Diving Championships, Tennessee's Riley Gaines competed against and shared a locker room with a biological male who ultimately took home the trophy that she had rightfully won.

And, in recent months, five NCAA women's volleyball teams were forced to forfeit their matches to avoid the danger of playing against a biological male on a competing team.

To bring this unfairness and inequity to an end, I recently introduced a resolution calling on the NCAA to protect women in sports, including by revoking its policy that allows biological males to compete against women. This move would bring the organization in line with other leading athletic associations, including the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, and more than 20 States that have taken action to preserve fair play in women's sports.

To support young women and girls in sports, I also introduced the Fair Play for Girls Act. Among its provisions,

this crucial legislation would require the U.S. Attorney General to submit a report to Congress on the harms, lost opportunities, and harassment women have faced in athletics, as well as the effectiveness of State and Federal laws to prevent this abuse.

At the same time, it is imperative that we celebrate the accomplishments of the young women who practice, train, and compete every day to achieve athletic success. That is why I introduced a resolution to designate October 10—that would be Roman numerals X and X, like the female sex chromosome—as American Girls in Sports Day. Specifically, the resolution calls on sports governing bodies to protect women and girls in sports.

Young women across the country have suffered injuries, faced sexual harassment, and lost accolades because they were forced to share spaces designed for women with men. Together, President Trump and Republicans in Congress are working together to put an end to this assault on women, once and for all.

JEFFREY EPSTEIN

Mr. President, for years, we have known about financier Jeffrey Epstein's alleged sex-trafficking ring, that the abuse spanned decades and harmed untold numbers of vulnerable, young girls; and that a large network of high-profile, high-dollar predators took part in this horrific abuse. That is why, on the Senate Judiciary Committee, I have repeatedly requested a subpoena for the complete, unredacted Epstein flight logs from the FBI. I have also pushed for the release of Ghislaine Maxwell's unredacted ''little black book'' of contacts and addresses.

The American people have the right to know who flew on his planes, who witnessed the crimes, and who potentially participated in his global sex-trafficking ring.

Yet, time and again, in the last Congress, Democrat leadership and then-FBI Director Wray stonewalled my request.

Make no mistake, by blocking my request, they were delaying justice for Epstein's many victims.

But now with Republican control of Congress and President Trump back in the Oval Office, we are going to see some real change on this issue. Just last week, the President's excellent pick for FBI Director, Kash Patel, vowed to work with me in releasing the Epstein records and breaking apart the trafficking rings that harm countless women and children across our country.

To be clear, this is not a celebrity issue. This is about ending modern-day slavery and finding out who is participating in the sex-trafficking rings, and shedding some light on these crimes. That will bring an end to this widespread, pervasive abuse.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the impressive pace by which this body is confirming President Trump's nominees to important Cabinet positions, to fulfill his agenda and his promises to the American people.

I think it is important to take a step back. November is a few months now in the rearview mirror, but President Trump completed the greatest political comeback in American history.

The Democrats did everything they could, including trying to jail him and bankrupt his family, to prevent him from stepping foot in the Oval Office—never again.

Well, guess what. On January 20, as we stood in that Rotunda, he completed that journey back—a journey that was highlighted by a reform agenda.

So what we see happening right now that the legacy media and my Democrat friends are losing their minds on every day was every single thing that he talked about: securing our border, being energy dominant, restoring accountability back in government, restoring our place on the world stage, after 4 years of humiliation, 4 years of lawlessness.

And just to give a few examples that the Supreme Court weighed in on, the student loan debt forgiveness scam—President Biden had no ability to do that. And I do find it interesting that my Democrat colleagues are, all of a sudden, talking about things that Presidents can and can't do.

Imperial Biden, with a stroke of his pen, tried to wipe out half a trillion dollars' worth of student loan debt. They were sued. I actually happened to file that lawsuit as attorney general of Missouri, and we won at the Supreme Court because the Supreme Court said: You can't do it.

Do you know what Joe Biden's response was? ''Yeah, I don't really care about that.'' He kept trying to do it, and then he would get struck down over and over with each failed attempt.

He tried to force a vaccination, the COVID shot, on 100 million Americans through OSHA. An Agency that was created to make sure forklifts beep when they back up was suddenly now forcing a medical procedure on a third of the country.

The censorship enterprise directed Agencies to coordinate, collude, coerce with Big Tech companies to silence conservative speech.

This all happened in 4 years, and the American people sat in a jury box and watched all this. They saw it play out. They didn't want to become a banana republic. They didn't want lawfare to be weaponized to take out political opponents. And President Trump won the popular vote, including sweeping all of the battleground States.

So now here we are with an opportunity for real reform. Some of those people are already in place. Pete Hegseth was already confirmed—I sit on the Armed Services Committee, along with Mr. President up here—and he promised to get rid of DEI. He is doing that. He promised to really, really focus in on China. He is doing that. He has talked about procurement reform. Our first hearing under Chairman WICKER was about procurement reform.

We have some serious issues to get at, but DEI is poison. It has hurt recruiting. It divides the room, has no place in our military. It doesn't have any place in our government at all, which is why I filed legislation this week to just get rid of all of it writ large across the government. It is discriminatory. It is divisive. And I think actually now the fever has broke. People see it, and there is an opportunity for reform.

Pam Bondi, who was confirmed yesterday and was just sworn in, was an excellent pick. I spoke on the Senate floor last night about why. I won't get into that all again, but we come from AG world. She is incredible, she is smart, she is respected, and she is going to restore credibility to the Department of Justice.

There are a couple more people I just want to mention to highlight I think why the American people are very excited about the reform that is happening.

We had the hearing of Kash Patel last week in the Judiciary Committee. I expect him to get confirmed as well.

The FBI was weaponized against its own citizens to score political points and to settle debts. It went after traditional Catholics. I happen to be Catholic. It went after traditional Catholics, set up a spy network. Because of the religious affiliation of another American, the FBI spied on them and viewed them as domestic terrorists because they went to Latin mass.

They also went after parents who had the audacity to show up at a school board meeting because they didn't like critical race theory in their classrooms. They were home during COVID. They saw what was happening. They didn't like it. They showed up to school board meetings. The teachers union complained. Joe Biden sent the guards out. Merrick Garland used the FBI to go after parents.

Then, of course, there is the lawfare that we saw against President Trump.

So Kash Patel is going to come in. He has a big job. The trust for the FBI is at an alltime low. It has plummeted. You can hardly argue with the reasons why. I laid out just a few. But, again, somebody that is going to come in and clean up.

Then the last person I want to mention, because there are a lot of great nominees—and to the credit of Leader THUNE, we will have gotten to I think 13 maybe by the end of this week, which is the pace that we used to be on before the last 8 years or so, back to the Obama years, when the President actually could get his team in place—is Russ Vought to be OMB Director.

For those in the Gallery and those folks watching at home, the Office of

Management and Budget deals with a lot of sort of the tentacles inside of government, where the wheels kind of turn, and you also get a glimpse of the opportunities to save money that have been neglected for far, far too long. We are $36 trillion in debt. We are going to have an opportunity to vote on him I think tomorrow. We will see.

But the ''hair on fire'' histrionics we have heard the last couple days about—whether it is DOGE or Russ Vought, I am afraid my Democrat colleagues—they haven't hit rock bottom yet. They don't really get what November was about. They continue to be the ones that defend the status quo, the guardians of permanent Washington, of the establishment that—in an election cycle that was decided between the disrupters and the establishment, the people have weighed in.

So let them defend it. I think it is a fight that we want because you can't really defend this kind of stuff: $45 million for diversity inclusion scholarships in Burma; $3 million for girl-centered climate action in Brazil; $125 million to racialize public health; $288,000 for diverse birdwatcher groups; USAID, which is in the center of the storm right now, and rightfully so, spent $1.5 billion to ''advance diversity, equity and inclusion in Serbia's workplaces and business communities''; $70,000 for the production of a DEI musical in Ireland; $2.5 million for electric vehicles for Vietnam; $47,000 for a transgender opera in Colombia—not Columbia, MO, or Columbia, SC, the country of Colombia; $32,000 for a transgender comic book in Peru; $2 million for sex changes and LGBT activism in Guatemala; $6 billion to fund tourism in Egypt. This is what they are mad about, that the veil is coming down. Russ Vought is going to be part of this reform movement.

It is amazing to me the response I often hear on this floor: Well, what is $2.5 million? What is $6 million? What is $1.5 million?

Tell that to the truckdriver working his tail off. Tell that to the waitress who is working an extra shift to afford to send her kid to a school that she wants them to go to or a family saving up to go to Washington, DC, to show their kids our Nation's Capital. It is insulting. It is insulting to taxpayers.

So a reckoning, indeed, is coming. It is coming, and we have been waiting for far too long to have accountability in our government. Business as usual just isn't working for working families anymore. So this team that President Trump has assembled and put together—I am excited for them to get to work. I am excited for a golden age of America. And I am excited for accountability finally to make its way to our Nation's Capital.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, over the last several weeks, we have worked at record pace here in the Senate on nominations. This has been one of those tasks that happen literally every time there is a new President that comes in, but the pace we have moved on nominations has been epic based on the last two terms of different Presidents. We have confirmed more people now in the Senate than were confirmed in the first 3 weeks of the Biden administration and in the first 3 weeks of the first Trump administration combined. It is because we have been willing to be able to run the clock and to be able to compress this.

Now, the nominations process does take a long time. Every single one of the Cabinet officials requires 30 hours of debate here in the Senate. Each one of the other individuals requires 2 hours of debate here in the Senate, and we have 1,200 people total that we have to get through.

But, at the beginning of this time period, we focused on the Cabinet-level officials, moving, for instance, Marco Rubio the very first day of the President being inaugurated, and we came into this Chamber that evening and were able to move Marco Rubio.

We started the hearings before the President was even sworn in, to be able to make sure that we are ready. We are literally doing hearings in committees, cueing up the next people, even as we are dealing with the folks that are on the floor, to be able to make sure we can move as rapidly as possible. This is not just about President Trump. It is about the United States and about us having a good operation for our government.

Let me give you a ''for instance.''

Mr. President, you know extremely well, because you were part of this group to be able to move him, but Sean Duffy was actually sworn in. His nomination was done, his hearings were done, we confirmed him on the floor of the Senate, and within 24 hours, we have gotten the worst airline disaster that we have had in 15 years. That Secretary of Transportation was literally on the frontline within 24 hours, dealing with a terrible accident.

It is important that we have people in these roles.

We moved Doug Collins yesterday. Doug Collins, who himself is an Air Force Reserve chaplain, a veteran himself, will now be leading the VA. He is able to step into that role today, taking care of all those issues because we were able to get him confirmed.

Pam Bondi and all the issues that we need to be able to resolve within Justice—she can actually get started on those issues now because she has been confirmed. She is the new Attorney General of the United States.

All these different roles, as we move through them and through the committees, are vital for us to be able to get done. We are fulfilling the task that we need to do, whether that be for Secretary of State in international policy and the chaos happening right now in the Middle East, or whether that is Scott Turner and his experience that he is going to bring dealing with Housing and Urban Development, and with people in poverty in our country that desperately are in need of getting access to housing. We are moving on these folks to make sure that we can actually fulfill the promise that needs to be fulfilled.

Mr. President, I just want to be able to remind everyone, we have more to go. We are going to continue to be here this week to finish out the Office of Management and Budget and Russell Vought in that role, because if we are going to deal with spending and we are going to make the government more efficient, we have to have leadership in the Office of Management and Budget.

That will be done this week, to make sure that we can continue to be able to implement the policies to be able to help the Nation to continue to move forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

FENTANYL

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, on April 1, 2020, U.S. Marine Corps veteran Jaime Puerta lost his 16-year-old son Daniel.

That dark day, Jaime found Daniel lying on his bed nonresponsive, ultimately seeing what looked like to be a half tablet of oxycodone on his dresser. Paramedics arrived and tried their best, but Daniel's brain had gone too long without oxygen. Five days later, Daniel's parents had to make an unimaginably difficult decision to take him off of life support.

Soon after, Jaime got a call from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office. He ultimately learned that pill was not an oxycodone pill. It was actually fentanyl made to look exactly like a pharmaceutical-grade oxycodone. That is what killed Daniel.

My colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee and I heard, yesterday, Jaime's story. We heard the passion in his voice. You could still feel the hurt. The name of this hearing was ''The Poisoning of America.''

We not only heard his story; we also heard of Bridgette Norring, whose son Devin lost his life to fentanyl poisoning the same week that Daniel died at the age of 19.

Devin had suffered from blackout migraines and dental pain to the point that he sought black-market prescription drugs—opioids—on Snapchat. This was the same platform where Daniel found the counterfeit pill that killed him.

On April 4, 2020, Devin Norring took what he thought was a Percocet. His younger brother Caden, just 14 at the time, found him in his bedroom the next morning. That Percocet was actually a counterfeit pill containing a lethal dose of fentanyl.

Daniel and Devin's stories and what their families have been through are nothing less than heartbreaking, and it exemplifies what we are going through as a Nation—a national nightmare.

I would like to thank them for sharing their stories and the courage they have shown in the face of gut-wrenching tragedy.

As a mom of two kids, what happened to Daniel and Devon is beyond a mother's worst nightmare. It is a nightmare that unfortunately is playing out every day across the United States of America, and it is long past time for America to wake up. It is long past time for Congress to act and ensure that no other family has to experience losses like the ones that I have just discussed.

The CDC has, over the past few years, consistently shown that drug overdoses and poisonings are the No. 1 cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45. Nearly 70 percent of those overdose deaths in 2022 were from fentanyl or other synthetic opioids. Twenty-two thousand pounds of fentanyl was seized at America's ports of entry between October 2023 and October 2024. It is more than 1 billion lethal doses. It could kill everyone residing in this country three times over.

It is 5 to 10 percent of what they say is actually coming into our country. You heard me right. They think there is 90 to 95 percent of fentanyl that is entering our Nation every year and we have no idea. For reference—it may be hard to picture—but fentanyl is 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin. That means 2 milligrams of fentanyl, the size of 5 grains of sand, can be fatal. Meanwhile, it takes 250 milligrams of morphine or 200 milligrams of heroin for a fatal dose. Fentanyl is 100 times deadlier than heroin. That is the scope of what we are dealing with.

So why are we not doing something about it in this Chamber? According to the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, our government has failed to prevent the flow of fentanyl in our country in far too many ways. According to the Homeland Security OIG, screening of participants in the Free and Secure Trade Program, which expedites processing for carriers and commercial drivers thought to be low risk, is far too lax.

In February 2021, the OIG reported, Customs and Border Protections had deployed just over a quarter of the surveillance and subterranean technology solutions President Trump ordered 4 years prior. And in 2023, a vast majority of CBP employees said their field locations, which means the points of entry into the United States, were not adequately prepared or staffed.

President Trump has worked to target the Mexican cartels and transnational narcotics trafficking. He directed Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to present a plan assigning our Armed Forces to the mission of sealing our border and repelling the drug trade.

I heard Pete the other day discuss it. Secretary Hegseth said: My generation went and fought diligently to secure other countries' borders. This generation has the opportunity to secure ours.

Ultimately, President Trump reached an agreement with the Mexican President—10,000 Mexican soldiers placed at the U.S.-Mexico border to stop the flow of fentanyl and illegal migrants into our Nation. And President Trump pushed the Canadian Prime Minister to take significant action to stop the flow of fentanyl across our northern border.

These are all steps in the right direction. And as chair of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, I will work to make sure the people tasked with protecting the public from this poison have the resources they need to help.

But what yesterday's hearing made clear is that we have more to do.

Last Congress, I cosponsored Senator JOHN KENNEDY's Fairness in Fentanyl Sentencing Act, and I am proud to be a cosponsor once again this Congress. That bill would change the quantity thresholds triggering mandatory minimum prison sentences for fentanyl distribution. It would also direct the U.S. Postal Service to increase its chemical screening and dedicate more personnel to the task of interdicting fentanyl and other illegal substances imported into our country.

Our children's lives are worth it. We must do more now.

Additionally, last Congress, the House passed the HALT Fentanyl Act. It passed in an overwhelmingly bipartisan fashion. I am proud to support it here in the Senate. Leading it is Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, BILL CASSIDY, and MARTIN HEINRICH. While I cosponsored it last time, I am proud to cosponsor it again this Congress.

This bill takes the necessary steps of placing fentanyl-related substances under schedule I classification and ensuring law enforcement has the tools necessary to actually end this epidemic.

On January 20, it was a new day in America when President Trump was sworn in. It was a new day in the Senate when we passed the Laken Riley Act, which President Trump signed into law last week. Congress can get this done. Republican majorities in both Chambers have proven we can and will lead the way and are willing to work diligently with our colleagues across the aisle to ensure that happens.

No doubt, we have shown that we mean business. We made promises to the American people that we would work to protect them, and we will keep that promise. We delivered on our promise that we would not tolerate criminal illegal aliens roaming free in our country. Now we need to deliver for the American people once again.

Mr. President, the era of open borders is over. The era of allowing deadly fentanyl to flow into our country is over. The American people need us to act now, and that is exactly what we are doing. We are going to clean up our streets. We are going to protect our families. We are going to secure our borders. And we are going to ensure that our children actually have the opportunity to live their American dream.

Let's make America safe again, and let's continue to talk about this issue. Our kids and their safety should come first.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF RUSSELL VOUGHT

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, our constituents, our country, and our Constitution are under attack by Donald Trump and Russell Vought.

Democrats are fighting back. Russell Vought—also pronounced ''vote''—is the mastermind of Project 2025 and of all of the chaos and the lawlessness that Trump has unleashed across our country.

Today, my Republican colleagues are trying to jam through the confirmation of this man, Russell Vought, and it is our job to say ''stop'' because this man is incredibly dangerous to the foundations of our Republic, the system of laws and checks and balances of our Constitution. When you put into the Office of Management and Budget an individual who willfully avoids and rolls over the laws of the country and says he will not abide by the separation of powers, that is a fundamental danger that all of us, having taken an oath to the Constitution, must stop.

He is Donald Trump's most dangerous nominee. Oh, you may not have heard of him as much as you have heard of the nominee for the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Hegseth. You may not have heard about him in the same way you have heard about Tulsi Gabbard, who went to Syria without the permission of the State Department to consult with a dictator. But this man, who is the chief engineer—the chief engineer—of the Trump train—a train that plans to disregard the law and the Constitution—is a bigger danger to our Republic. That is why Democrats are taking the floor now and will continue to hold the floor over every minute allowed under our rules to say: This is a mistake.

To colleagues across the aisle, you, too, took an oath to the Constitution. You have a responsibility to defend it, and the only way to defend it at the end of this 30 hours is to vote no on Russell Vought.

The American people are watching us today, and I know they are feeling rage about what Trump and Vought are doing. I know this because, this last weekend, I had five townhalls in Oregon, and we had three to eight times the number of people turn out who turned out a year ago, which was an election year, which has a bigger turnout than a normal year.

They wondered: How is it possible to break the law in firing inspectors general? How is it possible to break the law in firing a member of the National Labor Relations Board in the middle of an 8-year term when the law doesn't allow you to do that? How is it possible

to break the law and proceed to dismantle USAID when the law doesn't allow you to dismantle an organization?

Yes, the President can ask Congress to write a new law, but to do it through Executive fiat? No, the Constitution does not allow that.

The impoundment of funds people asked about. It has been very clear since the time of Nixon—when Nixon impounded funds, Congress then stood together and said, ''Hell no, you cannot do that,'' and the courts said, ''Hell no, you cannot do that,'' and then Nixon followed the issue as the courts decided.

But Mr. Russell Vought—or ''vote''—he doesn't care, he said. He says: The President doesn't agree that this should be the interpretation of the Constitution, and I don't agree. So we are just going to impound funds as we want.

That is a dangerous man to our Republic. So I encourage citizens across this country: It is your opportunity to be heard as you were this weekend at my townhalls. Take to the streets. Take to the phones. Let your message amplify and ring from the eastern coast to the western coast and the southern border to the northern border with Canada. Let your message ring that true patriots will stand with the Constitution of the United States of America, that true patriots will defend the separation of powers, that true patriots will defend the checks and balances inherent in our Constitution.

Well, just know we stand with you, America, and we are fighting back from the outside and the inside—patriots, together, patriots united—in defending our Constitution against this sweeping, authoritarian coup. That is what we are doing.

Now, I know you hear the word ''coup,'' and you think: Isn't it a coup when the military comes in and takes over in violation of the Constitution?

There is also a quieter kind of coup. When the President refuses to follow the laws of the Constitution, that is a coup as well, and that is what we are facing now. That is why every Member of this body should be standing up to say no to the architect of this coup—Russell Vought.

What we have now in President Trump is government by billionaires for billionaires. Our fight is to say that that is not the vision of our Constitution. Our vision of the Constitution is of a ''we the people'' Constitution or, as Abraham Lincoln said, ''a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.'' That is a very different vision—the vision embedded in our Constitution—than the vision being pursued by the President at this moment.

So you will hear from many Members of the Democratic caucus over the next 30 hours, and we ask of our colleagues: Listen to what is said. Don't mindlessly follow the dictates of an authoritarian President who is trying to violate the Constitution, because that is not your responsibility, and recognize that what he is doing is trying to take away the legislative power of the House and Senate and replace it with Executive fiats.

Wasn't it strange to listen to an inaugural speech in which President Trump didn't talk about legislative initiatives? It was just one Executive order after the other. The message was clear. He was telling America: I am not going to be a President who executes the laws; I am going to be a President who overrides the laws with Executive orders.

Just within hours—mere hours—of taking the oath to the Constitution, he put forward an Executive order that violated the 14th Amendment on birthright citizenship. Just days after taking the oath to the Constitution, he put forward a strategy of impoundment that violates the core of the Constitution, where the power of the purse is given to Congress, not to the President.

So here we are, going forward. We are in dangerous times for our Nation. We are in the midst of this unfolding authoritarian coup, and we have the responsibility to stop it.

Now, it is hard to focus on any one thing. The expression I have heard almost hourly is the President is ''flooding the zone,'' meaning he is doing so many things at once and so many Executive orders that it just creates, well, confusion and chaos, and it makes it hard to focus on any one action that is so diabolical that normally all of us would be focused on it and saying: No.

So this strategy is an effective one, but that is why we are taking the next 30 hours to not focus on 100 things but 1 thing: the danger Russell Vought presents to our Constitution and our responsibility—our responsibility—in advice and consent under the Constitution to vet that candidate, realize who he is, and say he is not fit to be the Director of OMB, the Office of Management and Budget. In fact, he is not fit to serve in any governmental capacity.

It was quite troubling to experience Donald Trump's dead-of-night directive a week ago Monday night to cut off funding for programs that families depend on—programs to feed children, programs to pay rent, programs to see the doctor—cutoffs that are cruel and indiscriminate and illegal because the President has the responsibility to execute the laws, not ignore them or violate them.

We saw so much happen in terms of disrespecting or breaking the law.

The inspectors general—17 and counting—are the watchdogs who say to the executive branch: You must obey the law. So, if you want to see what an authoritarian President does who is seeking an imperial Presidency where he can write the laws through fiat, one of the first things you do is tear down the watchdogs, and that is what he did. The watchdog for the Department of Labor, the watchdog for the Interior, the watchdog for Housing and Urban Development, the watchdog for the Defense Department, the watchdog for the State Department, the watchdog for Agriculture, the watchdog for Health and Human Services, the watchdog for the Department of Education—all fired in violation of the law.

The law does give the President the ability to dismiss an inspector general under two conditions. The first condition—30-days' notice. The second condition is that it be for cause. Both were broken.

Why is no Member of the President's party standing up on the floor of the Senate and saying, ''Respect the law, Mr. President''?

That is an obligation we all share. It isn't the responsibility of the minority party to say ''defend the Constitution'' alone; it is the responsibility of the majority party as well, of every individual Member here in the Senate.

Then we had the President fire a member of the National Labor Relations Board, but the law says you can't do that. They have a term. You get to put in and nominate a new person at the end of the term. But he was fired anyway. Why? Because it is part of the attack on families and the ability to enforce labor protections this President opposes.

He wants to give free rein to corporations to run over labor provisions embedded in the law. If there is no one to appeal to, then there is no constraint on the abuses put onto working people. That is what we are facing.

The President fired the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. I can tell you, protection of consumers from terrible financial products is incredibly important.

You know, when I was elected to the Senate, we had two types of loans that were predatory mortgage loans that were turning the dream of home ownership into a nightmare.

One was called the triple option loan. What that meant was that you could pay a smaller amount, and the amount you owed on your house would actually escalate over time. Then when you got to a certain point of escalation, then the loan would switch, and you would have to pay a different amount that many people couldn't afford. So it resulted in a lot of foreclosures.

Then we had another type of home mortgage with an exploding interest rate. You would get a subsidized interest rate for a couple of years, and then the interest rate explodes to 9 or 10 percent. People couldn't make those payments.

They had been steered into those loans by mortgage brokers who were getting kickbacks undisclosed to the person taking out the loan. They were being betrayed by kickbacks called steering payments.

That is the type of thing that hurt America terribly because the foreclosures then were a key factor driving the collapse of the economy in 2007, 2008, into 2009. Hundreds of thousands,

millions of homes were foreclosed on, all because there wasn't a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to say those loans were not OK.

I was very pleased to lead the charge in Dodd-Frank to end those predatory loans. But for ongoing protection against scurrilous, scandalous scams, you need a watchdog for the consumer. The President, favoring billionaires and corporations over the American workers, proceeded to fire the watchdog that protects us against scandalous scams in financial products.

Then the President fired members of the FBI, experts who were focused on making sure the executive branch stays within the confines of the law. Well, if you don't want the FBI checking out the fact that you are breaking the law, you fire them so there is no one there to hold you accountable or do a report.

These are the acts of a President determined to rule by fiat and break the laws and break the Constitution.

Then Donald Trump gave Elon Musk unprecedented and unacceptable access to the U.S. Treasury's most sensitive payment systems. Those payment systems control over $5 trillion a year in payments. Those payment systems have everyone's private information.

Do you like the fact that Elon Musk and his team of muskrats, with their laptops, has been in there downloading information on you? Don't you kind of worry about the type of Big Brother government that downloads your private information and sends in inexperienced people to take over the payments and take your private information: where you live, how much you earn, your tax returns, whether you get Medicare, whether you get Social Security, your Social Security number—everything within that world. That is a massive assault on the privacy of American citizens by a Big Brother government—the type of government that wants to be an authoritarian Presidency and control everything and have power over everything, and so they invade the Treasury and the system of payments.

Not only is it a huge risk to the privacy of Americans across this land, but it also is an invitation to exploitation. It is an invitation to extortion because now Big Brother government, in the form of Mr. Trump and Elon Musk and his muskrats, has your information that they can use against you should they so please.

Finally, there is the danger that this crew that invaded Treasury alters the codes and screws up the payments. Maybe they don't intend to, but they do because they don't know what they are doing. They are not experts on the code. Then suddenly the Medicare or Social Security payments or tax returns don't go out the way they are supposed to.

A whole lot of Americans aren't like billionaire Trump and his band of billionaire bros. They are living paycheck to paycheck. So screwing up a single payment can put a family in a world of hurt, including missing a rent payment that gets them thrown out of their house.

That is not the only way that Team Trump is attacking ordinary families. There is also the big sales tax he wants to impose across the Nation in the form of tariffs.

Mr. Trump says: Huh, it will be the Ford companies that pay for tariffs.

Well, just factually, that is wrong. The importer pays the tariff bill, not the group that exports to the United States. The American company that imports pays the tariff. Then, in order to pay the tariff, they raise their prices. So it becomes a sales tax on the American people. So a 25-percent tariff on Mexico or Canada becomes a 25-percent tax more or less on working America.

You know, President Trump posted on Truth Social that tariffs should never have been ended in favor of the income tax system. Just recognize this: Tariffs that result in higher prices on Americans are incredibly regressive. They have a much bigger impact on those who are less well off who have to buy food and groceries. Unlike a sales tax that has an exemption for healthcare or food or groceries, there is no exemption from the higher prices driven by a tariff. So they are incredibly regressive. The tariffs are a strategy to attack working families across this land.

Trump was very clear. He said basically we should go back to the old system of funding our government by tariffs, the system we had before 1913, when America ratified the 16th Amendment and allowed the income tax. In other words, he wants to go from a tax system on income that can, if implemented carefully—and often it is not, and it has way too many loopholes—it can be progressive; that is, the rich who can afford to pay more can pay a higher percent.

But the tariffs converted into a sales tax on Americans—that is, in fact, incredibly regressive, hurting the poor. It is why rich folks always want to have a sales tax replace an income tax, because they know they pay less. The rich pay less, and the working stiffs have to pay more because their paycheck has to go directly to consumption because that is what they have, paycheck to paycheck. They have got to pay the rent, got to pay for food, got to pay the utility bill. But the well off are taking their extra funds and they are investing. So they don't have to spend every dime on consumption. That is the mechanics of how a tariff becomes a regressive sales tax.

Let's be crystal clear about what is happening. There is a three-part plan in Project 2025—again, the architect of which is up for confirmation right now—on the question of advice and consent by the Senate. So the architect of Project 2025 has a three-step plan.

Attack working families—that is step 1. That is what happens when you cut the programs for healthcare and housing and education and children—you attack the families. Step 2, borrow trillions from the Treasury and run up the debt, currently estimated to be in the area of about $3 trillion. Then take and deliver a massive tax giveaway to the billionaires. That is the plan: Attack families, borrow trillions, and give away trillions to the billionaires.

In fact, the current estimate for the amount given to the trillionaires is around $4.6 trillion—or to the billionaires or mega millionaires, the richest Americans—$4.6 trillion.

Kind of ironic, isn't it, that a President who campaigned on helping families is actually driving a plan, in partnership with Russell Vought, to attack families and deliver for the billionaires? Campaign on government for families, get elected, and immediately pivot to attacking families and delivering for billionaires—that is what we are facing.

This is the great betrayal, a betrayal of all the voters who believed Donald Trump when he said ''I am for you,'' who believed him when he said he wants to protect and help working families, and yet he attacks the ability of workers to organize and get a fair day's pay for an honest day's work. That is the great betrayal.

The architect of this is up for confirmation right now. The architect for this is advocating for the President to violate the laws and has already demonstrated that these last 2 weeks. The architect of this is arguing that we cut programs, run up the debt, and give it all to the richest Americans. That is the plan.

So over the next 30 hours, Democrats are coming to the floor united, determined to stand with the families of the United States of America. Mr. Trump is standing with the billionaires.

My colleagues who have indicated they want to confirm Russell Vought, confirm the architect of Project 2025, confirm the person who inspired the attacks on family programs a week ago Monday night—they are standing with the billionaires.

I invite them, come join us. Do not stand for government by and for billionaires. Come join us and fight for families. Come join us and honor the responsibility of the executive branch to obey the laws. Come join us and protect the constitutional separation of powers.

After all, the President's effort to move the power of the purse from Congress—the power of Congress is to say: Here are the instructions. We want you to fund this program and this program and this program. The President wants to say: It doesn't matter; those are just suggestions.

I have news for you: Read the Constitution. The President is not a king, and a law is not a suggestion.

So come join us united in support of the law and the Constitution.

Russell Vought is a leading proponent of the impoundment theory

that says a President can decide how much to spend on programs that Congress has written into the law; in other words, that the appropriations bills are simply suggestions, not the law.

No. We had this conversation back in the Nixon era. Remember President Nixon, along with Watergate? Remember that other unconstitutional thing he did? That was to say: I as President can stop the funding of programs that the law says I am supposed to fund. Well, the Court said otherwise. It said, in fact: No way. That is unconstitutional.

Then in 1974, in the Budget and Impoundment Control Act, Congress said: Hey, Mr. President, we will give you a mechanism by which you can present the idea of changing current law. You don't think we need to spend money on, say, that weapon program because the technology is outdated or maybe you don't need to spend money on some feeding program because it is duplicative of another feeding program or food program or you don't need to spend money on X, Y, or Z. Maybe a nuclear warhead was being rebuilt to be on a certain missile, but we are not building the missile anymore.

So the President could proceed to say: Here is a letter that comes to Congress saying: I know these are in the law. I know I have to fund them. But we shouldn't fund them, so, please, over the next 45 days, debate and vote on changing the current law so that we save this money.

It is called a rescission. It is in the 1974 Budget and Impoundment Control Act. We gave the President a tool by which he could follow the Constitution and ask for reductions in programs already passed into law.

Now, I am quite sure that not a single Senator here, not a single Senator wandering around the Capitol somewhere, has received a rescission letter from President Trump or one on behalf of President Trump from the Office of Management and Budget.

If you want to cut programs that are already in the law, there is a mechanism to do it lawfully. You ask Congress to do so in a letter for a rescission. It is a fancy word. We don't talk about it much. Presidents don't very often ask us to undo programs we have just passed because we budget on an annual basis; we pass those laws on an annual basis. So they are rarely so out of date that a President says: OK, undo that program. But they have the power to do so because we gave the President the ability to ask in the 1974 Budget and Impoundment Control Act.

And by the way, the lower court rescissions that preceded that 1974 law, those were then reviewed and made it to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court said, absolutely, the President cannot impound funds. It is a violation of the Constitution.

So to my colleagues, if you are saying: I don't know if Senator MERKLEY from Oregon is right about this, read the Supreme Court case. And you have a responsibility to defend the Constitution, and that is why you have a responsibility to vote no on Russell Vought, who wants to violate the Constitution.

Another piece that I am concerned about with Mr. Vought is that he didn't wait to be confirmed to start being, essentially, the shadow director of the Office of Management and Budget. I can't count how many nominees have come through and said: Well, actually, I can't go near that office until I am confirmed because that would be a violation of the intent of the Constitution that people have to be confirmed before they take a role.

But what did we hear from the White House after all these illegal Executive orders were put out? Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said: Russell Vought told me to tell all of you the line to his office is open.

So here is Mr. Vought basically saying: I am really the power already at OMB. My line is open; call me.

Well, Mr. Vought, if you would quit breaking the law and advocating for breaking the law, you would know you shouldn't be in the Office of Management and Budget essentially acting as if you have been confirmed when you haven't been confirmed yet.

Again, it is a confirmation of the inclination of this individual to say: The laws don't matter; I will do what I want no matter how much damage it does to the law or the Constitution.

So we did send a letter to Mr. Vought saying: Are you on the payroll currently? Do you have a title? Have you been hired as a senior assistant? Is that legal given you are up for nomination to run the place? Is it legal for you to be hired as an adviser and then act as if you are running the place? Is that legal?

We didn't get any answers.

Another reason to vote no: The file is not complete. He hasn't answered. Why does he not want to answer? Because you wouldn't like the answer. The American people wouldn't like the answer that he is over there running OMB at a time he hasn't even been confirmed by the Senate. So he doesn't answer. That, too, should bother colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Because we didn't have answers, the Democrats on the Budget Committee wrote to the chair of the Budget Committee and said: Delay this vote. Delay it for 2 weeks so we can get answers to questions and get a complete file.

Well, that is a reasonable request in this situation because both sides of the aisle have often worked together to say nominees have to complete their paperwork, they have to answer the questions raised by the committee. But we were told: No. This position is so urgent. The President so desperately needs the architect of Project 2025 to be the engineer on the train that we can't actually wait and get answers and have the file completed.

I certainly disagree with that answer. I think it disrespects the entire membership of the Budget Committee.

And then, the vote in committee was scheduled without the file complete, and it was scheduled to be done in a little room off the floor over here where the public cannot attend and where members would not be allowed to talk to each other and share their observations or concerns, which basically violates the whole premise of members on a committee sharing their observations to try to get to a better answer.

Now, I was told that, as the ranking Democrat, I can make a few comments, but the rest of my committee—other Democrats or even the other members of the Republican side—were told they couldn't make any comments or attempt to influence each other. So we said: No, that is not right. This is such an important nomination and his background is so troubling and his current actions are so troubling, hold that conversation about the vote in a public forum.

Just that morning, we had held just such a public conversation on the Ambassador to the United Nations in the Foreign Relations room. Each member was asked: Do you want to add anything as we consider whether or not to send this nomination to the floor?

Well, the Ambassador to the United Nations is a pretty important role. But, you know, the chief engineer of the Office of Management and Budget, the architect of this entire strategy that Trump has laid out, that is very important as well. So we asked for a public hearing or discussion so that members could talk to each other, share their concerns, maybe persuade each other—though not often enough do we listen to each other—and the result was, from the chair of the Budget Committee: No, we are not holding a public dialogue about whether people think he should be confirmed.

So the vote was held in a tiny room. I think one reporter was allowed in. No public was allowed in, no expanded press corps, no dialogue between the members. We asked a reasonable request that this be done publicly, and that was denied.

I am sorry to the American public that you were excluded because you would have heard then what you are hearing from me now and what you will hear from Members of the Democrats over the next 30 hours: how fabulously unfit this individual is to serve in any government role.

So we are here tonight, on through now, through the night, into the morning—we are here for the next 30 hours to raise the alarm about how dangerously unfit this nominee is to serve in the role of chief engineer because he doesn't respect the law, he doesn't respect the Constitution. He has already demonstrated that by stepping into the role and coordinating the dark-of-night decisions to cut programs to working families all across this land.

Now, I would say: Hmm, but does he really believe in this whole impoundment thing? Is he really an advocate of breaking the law? Well, we saw it Monday night, but we also saw it during

the first Trump administration when Russell Vought was the architect of impoundment of the funds destined by law to go to Ukraine. So this isn't some empty theory. It is already in the historical record. Russell Vought coordinated a strategy of refusing to send the funds required by law to go to Ukraine.

Now, there was another element of this, which was President Trump, during his first term, was trying to use those funds and the impoundment of those funds to get the President of Ukraine to say bad things about a member of the Biden family. That combination of impoundment, which was illegal, and then essentially using that to extort a statement from the President of Ukraine—which the President of Ukraine refused to do—led to Trump's first impeachment trial.

So Russell Vought's illegal, unconstitutional strategy of impoundment and using it as a tool of extortion to try to attack a political opponent led to Trump's first impeachment and first trial here in the Senate. So have no doubt that the man who advocated for impoundment and the extortion of a statement from the President of Ukraine back in the first Trump administration is certainly very honest when he says he is still for impoundment right now.

That is the one thing I will say. He didn't try to disguise this fact. He said: The President doesn't like what the Supreme Court decided on the Constitution. I don't like it. So we are going to ignore it.

He ignored it before. He intends to ignore it again.

I will tell you something else that I think is deeply disturbing, and that is Russell Vought's absolute disdain for the nonpartisan professionals who work for the American people as civil servants. He wants to take folks who are members of the civil service and make them at-will employees of the President so the President can sweep out of position tens of thousands—fire tens of thousands of servants to the American people who use their professional skills to deliver services as efficiently and as effectively as possible and replace them with loyalist lackeys.

I don't want a loyalist lackey in the control tower deciding when planes land. I want a nonpartisan professional.

I don't want a loyalist lackey having access to the Treasury payment system and trying to use that to extort favors from people around the country or disclosing the private information of individuals or actually screwing up the computer code and causing payments not to be delivered effectively. I want a nonpartisan professional.

I don't want a loyalist lackey deciding on how to transport vaccines across the country, who doesn't know a damn thing about whether they have to be refrigerated or not or how long they can sit on the shelf or how to get them effectively delivered. I want a nonpartisan professional.

But not Russell Vought. In fact, Russell Vought called for Federal workers to be traumatized so that they would consider themselves to be villains and would leave public service and could be replaced by loyalist lackeys. That should concern everyone.

And, listen, I understand the pressure my colleagues are under. We all become, as part of our party, essentially part of a team, and the inclination is to support the member of your team who is now President. But there is a higher responsibility here. It is a responsibility to the law, and it is a responsibility to the Constitution that you took an oath to.

And, certainly, supporting the firing of tens of thousands of nonpartisan professionals and replacing them with loyalist lackeys is a huge disservice to the families of America who depend upon all of those core programs in healthcare, housing, education, programs for children, standing on their feet so they can thrive and move into the middle class. It is part of the attack on families embedded in Trump and Russell Vought's Project 2025.

I will tell you what else I don't like about Russell Vought. He wants to weaponize the justice system to prosecute officials who investigated President Trump's crime. Weaponizing the justice system is absolutely wrong. That is what happens in third-world countries with dictators.

And I realize, as an advocate of the imperial Presidency, Vought wants to use every tool available, like a dictator does. But that is wrong. We are a republic; we are not a monarchy. We are not an authoritarian state—unless we become one by refusing to stand up against violations of laws and the Constitution.

You know, Ben Franklin, when he was leaving the Constitutional Convention, was asked by a bystander, because they had met and worked on this crafting of the Constitution: Ben Franklin, what do we have? What type of government do we have?

And he responded: A republic, if we can keep it.

But what are the fundamental elements of a republic?

The integrity of the voting booth is one—the ballot box, the integrity of an election—and that integrity is under assault across this country.

Second, the peaceful transfer of power—and President Trump, at the end of his first term, did everything possible, including incentivizing a riot that stormed through these doors and took over this Chamber, to prevent the peaceful transfer of power. They were calling for the Vice President, who was fulfilling his constitutional role, just down the hallway through those doors—down the hallway—to count the electoral votes. They were calling for him to be hung.

What else is critical to a republic? Well, it is a foundation of laws that will be respected by the Executive branch. That is being violated. And it is the separation of powers that Trump is violating right now. So every piece of our Republic is under attack by Russell Vought and Donald Trump.

Ben Franklin, right now, is turning over in his grave, fearing, perhaps for the first time since he was buried 6 feet under, that we might lose our Republic.

Russell Vought also supports the use of the military to quell domestic unrest. That is an absolute violation of the law, but he supports doing it.

Russell Vought has called for an end to any drugs that provide medical abortions. He wants them banned. He wants to interfere with the right of every family, every woman in America, to exercise her judgment in partnership with her spiritual adviser and her family and her doctor. He wants Big Brother government to be in the exam room of every woman in America, dictating whether or not they can use drugs as part of an abortion process. And he also doubles down on this saying there should be no exceptions to a law banning abortions, for rape or for incest or to save the life of the mother.

You know, I was absolutely struck by the recent memo from the new Secretary of Transportation that said: We are going to prioritize giving our grants to communities that have the highest birthrate and highest marriage rate.

What? Big Brother, socially programming, using transportation grants to determine who gets to repair their bridges or repair their roads or expand their metro system or build bike lanes, or whatever, depending on your marriage rate and your childbirth rate? That is in the memo from the Department of Transportation.

Well, here is Russell Vought. His social programming is he wants his view of reproductive healthcare to be imposed across America with Big Brother, Big Government, in the exam room of every American woman. That is who this man is. Those are his dangerous views.

Presidents are not kings. Laws are not suggestions—unless Russell Vought is confirmed and makes it so. If he is confirmed and makes it so, we have failed to defend our democracy. We have failed to defend our Republic.

We were elected by our citizens of our respective States to be here with the vision of government by and for the people, not the vision of government by billionaires, for billionaires; not the vision of Big Brother government going into our living rooms and into our exam rooms, telling us to have children in order to get a transportation grant. But that is the type of social programming we are facing.

To my colleagues across the aisle, you all have pointed out quite accurately that you are threatened with a primary funded by Elon Musk if you don't loyally follow step by step, move by move, everything Trump wants to do, including confirming Russell Vought.

I say to you: Stop trembling in your boots. You are being threatened. You are being pressed. You are being extorted. Stand up and say: I am a Senator of the United States of America. I was not elected by President Trump. I was not elected by Russell Vought. I was not elected by Elon Musk and the billionaires. I was elected by the people of my State, and I am going to fight for them.

That is your responsibility. That is your path to escape the dilemma we have heard you express. I don't believe, at any other time in our history, the President of the United States has threatened to sic the billionaires against Members of the U.S. Senate, and we need to stand together and say: Hell no.

That is what it means to defend the Constitution. That is what it means to be a Senator, this privileged position, elected by the citizens of our State in order to pursue what the people are asking us to do to build a stronger Union and better opportunity for every, every citizen.

Donald Trump and Russell Vought are trying to use their Executive orders to break the spirit of the American people, to break the will of Congress, to break the back of the Constitution. Such plans are evil, and every one of us, Democrat or Republican, should say: We will not be intimidated. We will not cower. And we will not bend to fear of Donald Trump and Elon Musk. Trump may inflict his worst, but we must awaken our best.

President Franklin Roosevelt said: We won't let them ''clip the wings of the American eagle to feather their own nests.''

Colleagues, stand with me. Stand together. Stand as Senators united to stop the President from clipping the wings of the American eagle to feather the nest of the billionaires. To protect our constituents, to protect the Constitution, to oppose this sweeping authoritarian coup, to stand with American families and against the betrayal of those same families, we are coming to the floor united to say: We must not confirm the nomination of the most unfit man to be considered as Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

You all have heard me say a few words about impoundments. It is a big word, but it is a big word for a simple action. It means that the President refuses to spend the money that he is required to spend by law on a program.

Oh, I don't like healthcare programs that we are doing. And the law says here is what you must spend for this particular program in the coming year, and the President says: No, not doing it.

Yes, well, that is illegal, and it is unconstitutional. It is not up for debate.

In the 1970s, President Nixon did exactly this action, impoundment, to stop funds for the Environmental Protection Agency for individual programs that he didn't like. He told his EPA Administrator, Russell Train, to withhold the funding. A recipient of those funds was the city of New York, and the city sued. And in that case, Train vs. City of New York, the Supreme Court ruled that the White House did not have the power to impound funds and refuse to do what the law says you are supposed to do.

And, furthermore, the Supreme Court said: This is inherent in the Constitution. The Executive is to execute the laws, not to make the laws, not to remake the laws, not to ignore the laws, not to treat the laws as a suggestion.

The Executive must faithfully implement the laws of the United States of America. That is the responsibility.

Congress, in the 1974 Budget and Impoundment Control Act, did create a way for the President to say: I am not just waiting on the budget next year. I am not just weighing in on what programs I want for the next year. I want to change the ones this year.

And we gave him—Congress did—a tool to do so. That is the tool of rescission that I mentioned before.

Well, let's fast forward from 1974 and the battle with Nixon to 1996. In 1996, there was a very interesting debate over the balanced budget amendment. And you needed 67 Senators to approve, in both bodies, this constitutional amendment. The House easily passed it. Here, in the Senate, the Republican chair of the Appropriations Committee said: No, every year, through our revenue bills and through our spending bills—appropriations bills—we decide what the deficit will be, and we can decide, in a year, it shall be zero.

But we shouldn't be so constrained to address national emergencies, whether it be a famine from drought or whether it be war or whether it be COVID—of course, COVID or some disease—that we shouldn't be so constrained as to be unable to meet the moment.

So Senator Hatfield from Oregon said no, he would not be the 67th vote. And then he offered to resign. And what the history books rarely record is that in Oregon the Governor does not have the power to appoint an individual to the Senate seat, which meant there would have been 99 Senators, and 66 would have been enough to pass that constitutional change, and it would have gone out to the States for ratification.

Well, the majority leader, Robert Dole, turned down Hatfield's offer to resign. So the 67 standard was not met.

Well, then the Republican leadership said: Let's give the President line-item veto—essentially, give the President impoundment power, impoundment power that the Courts said the President doesn't have.

And so they passed a law and gave the President impoundment power—line-item veto—and it went to the Supreme Court. And the Supreme Court said: Hey, Congress, the Constitution charges you with the responsibility to lay out what will be funded for what programming. You can't simply delegate to that President. If you could, you could have a majority in the two Chambers that says: We give the power to make up any law the President wants and then to enforce it.

In other words, it would be a pathway toward an authoritarian takeover of our country, if Congress abandoned its constitutional role to set the parameters for what programs are funded. And so the Supreme Court struck it down.

Well, here we have, again, Russell Vought ignoring the Supreme Court in Train vs. City of New York, ignoring the Supreme Court when it struck down the line-item veto, and once again threatening to so undermine the law and the Constitution.

Colleagues, my fellow caucus members will be coming through the night to share their perspectives and why Russell Vought is untrustworthy, unelected, and unfit to serve as the Director of Office of Management and Budget.

I believe that my colleague from Hawaii is going to carry the train of this conversation forward, and, therefore, I am wrapping up my comments while he figures out some issue at the counter. But I want you to all go forward into this long 30 hours knowing just a core fact: that we only have a republic if we can keep it, and we can't keep it if we put a man at the head of OMB who is determined to break the law and violate the Constitution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, thank you to the ranking member of the Budget Committee for his leadership.

We are doing something a little unusual. First of all, every Democrat is united on the vote that will occur 26 or 27 hours from now. Second of all, almost every U.S. Senator on the Democratic side is going to come to the floor to articulate why we are united and why we think this moment is so important.

If confirmed, the Director of OMB, Russ Vought, may well be the most important man that no one has ever heard of. Under normal circumstances, the OMB Directors are powerful but kind of anonymous because they are responsible for technical things, nerdy things—developing and implementing the entire Federal budget, and they advance the priorities of the President, whomever—Democrat or Republican.

But Russ Vought wants to go way beyond that. He wants to take an Agency that people outside of Washington haven't even heard of and turn it into the nerve center and power center of the Federal Government. He wants to consolidate power at OMB in such a stark and sometimes illegal way that he alone will get to decide who deserves the government's help and who doesn't.

You do not have to take my word for it. I am a Democrat. I always want to make the case for our side. But I want you to understand these are his words,

because he is one of the authors of Project 2025.

Let me just say what he says about this job:

The Director must view his job as the best, most comprehensive approximation of the President's mind as it pertains to the policy agenda while always being ready with actual opinions to effect that agenda within . . . legal authorities and resources. This role cannot be performed adequately if the Director acts instead as the ambassador of the institutional interests. . . . Once its reputation as the keeper of the ''commander's intent'' is established—

This is like—everybody has watched ''Game of Thrones.'' He wants to be the king's hand. He wants to be able to say: I represent the President in any and all things: foreign policy, domestic policy, tax policy, spending policy, all of it. That is actually not what an OMB Director is supposed to do.

He then talks about a practice called apportionment to essentially get around the bills that we passed, the appropriations bills.

He wrote:

No Director should be chosen who is unwilling to restore apportionment decision-making to the PAD's—

Program associate directors, who are political appointees, not career officials.

—personal review, who is not aggressive in wielding the tool on behalf of the President's agenda, or who is unable to defend the power against attacks from Congress.

Look, the door swings both ways in Washington, and this attempt to consolidate power and basically make the legislature irrelevant is going to bite us all in the butt. There is going to be a progressive President, and if this is allowed to stand, they are going to reach in and defund stuff you like. That is the creature of a dually enacted law.

I get that this is nerdy. I am not saying anybody should make this their primary point of opposition to the President, but we are on the floor of the U.S. Senate, so let's be a little serious for a moment and say that we swore an oath to uphold the law and Constitution of the United States.

The Constitution is actually—it is ambiguous about a couple of things, but it is not ambiguous about this. We hold the purse strings. We are the article I branch, and our power, besides confirming or rejecting nominees, is substantially that we set the parameters for a spending bill.

I get that there are 53 Members on the other side of the aisle that have a different view of spending than I do, and I get that we just lost, and so we are in for some outcomes that we don't like. I am not complaining about outcomes that I don't like; I am complaining about an unlawful view of the separation of powers.

We saw it last week when they just literally froze all Federal funding—not even with a pretext of like ''Hey, we are just going to review this and make sure everything—you know, no fraud, waste, or abuse.'' They just shut down the Medicaid portal. They shut down Head Start. They froze construction projects.

So I want everybody to understand that what is at stake here is literally the American system of government because these guys view this branch of government—the one that is plural; not just 1 person elected but 535 people elected from their States and their districts to represent all of the people in the United States of America. It is supposed to be messy, and it is supposed to be contentious. And do you know what? It is also sometimes supposed to be slow. It is supposed to be slow. It is supposed to be hard.

We have the best document underlining any country that has ever existed in human history, and what it does is it says: We don't want any branch of government to be too powerful. So this is not some trivial little partisan dispute about particular programs; this is the ability for the executive branch to literally seize power, storm into the offices of an Agency that they hate and shut it down operationally and use a bunch of white-shoe law firm fancy-pants words to develop a pretext for eviscerating the U.S. Constitution, which clearly gives us the authority to establish spending laws, right?

And can we spare ourselves the punditocracies? ''Well, Democrats should be focusing on something else.'' I understand. I understand that some of the stuff that we are going to say to each other on the Senate floor is not necessarily compelling to people outside of this building, but people outside of this building understand on a very basic level that there are three branches of government, and they are supposed to be roughly equal, and stealing power from the legislative branch is inherently bad even if you agree with the outcome, even if you think: Well, I kind of agree with them. I don't like this program.

If you don't like a program, introduce a bill. If you want to defund something, there is an actual process for that.

There is a lot of stuff I don't like in the Federal budget, and I usually propose cuts to those things I don't like. Sometimes I prevail, and sometimes I don't. But I have no illusions that I am a monarch.

It is true that this President of the United States won a free and fair election to be at the helm of the executive branch, but he did not win a free and fair election to be the monarch of the United States or the CEO of the United States.

I think one of the conceptual problems with bringing in all these billionaires is they really are the monarchs of their companies. That is like how the private sector works. You are the CEO and you want something to happen, you tell them: This is what is going to happen. This is not a democracy. I am the boss. Do it.

That is literally not our constitutional system.

So Russ Vought has ideas that I disagree with about the size and the scope of the Federal Government, and that is part of this, right? He really does want to cut Medicaid, cut Medicare, cut the Affordable Care Act, eliminate programs that I think are essential for people in Hawaii and people across country. But there really is something bigger at stake right now. We, all of us—Democrats, Republicans, Independents, the media, which is so damn casual about what is happening—we have to understand that when you are in the middle of the fight, you are not sure if this is a historic moment. When you read about it in the past, you can identify that historic moment. When you observe it in a faraway place with a hard-to-pronounce name, you can identify what is happening—creeping fascism. When it happens and you are in the middle of it, you are not so sure if it is your moment to display any sense of independence or courage.

If this is going to be stopped, we only have 47 votes. Three people, at some point—I have no illusions that it will be in the next 30 hours, but three people at some point have to say: I like conservative outcomes, I like conservative justices, I like tax cuts, but I don't like unlawfulness, and those are my parameters.

I am an adult. I have been here for 13 years. I have been in the majority, and I have been in the minority. I have been in sort of every iteration of whatever elections bring. That is OK. That is the way this process works.

What is happening right now is an attempt to reorder the whole damn system in a way that is going to make every individual citizen across the country less powerful, because when you elect someone—and I will yield to the Senator from Minnesota in just a moment—when you elect someone and you tell them your spending priorities and they come home and say ''Good news; I got this'' or ''Good news; I cut this'' and then you realize that is only a recommendation, it is the OMB Director whose name you have never heard of—his name is Russ Vought—who gets to decide. That is not our system of government, and that is why we are going to be fighting all night about this issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today—I just want to thank my colleague Senator SCHATZ for his clear-eyed description of what is happening right now and how that connects to this nomination that is before the Senate right now, the nomination for Mr. Vought.

So I rise today to join my colleagues in calling out the threat that Russell Vought poses to our system of government. As Senator SCHATZ says, this is not about liking or not liking what Mr. Vought has written, what he stands for, what he has tried to do, what his policy positions are, although I clearly

disagree with those; this is about whether or not we are going to abide by the systems of law in this country that say that we have a separation of powers and that the power of the Senate and Congress, the power of the purse that rests in the Senate and the Congress—that we keep that power.

That is an institutional prerogative that I think is on the line today with this vote, and that is why my colleagues and I are going to be using the full 30 hours of debate in order to really make this point clearer to the American people.

But I will tell you, Mr. President, that Minnesotans are waking up to this, and they are not happy. In the last week, thousands of Minnesotans have called or written my office about the unprecedented chaos that is occurring at Federal Agencies and programs in Minnesota—and they can see it as well across the country—which has come from Elon Musk and from President Trump but is rooted in Russell Vought's dangerous Project 2025—Donald Trump and Russell Vought's dangerous Project 2025. These ideas are dangerous, they are unconstitutional, and they are already hurting real people.

The funding freeze that was announced last week is straight from Russell Vought's 2025 plans, and that is one of the many reasons I am going to be opposing him when we vote on this ultimately tomorrow.

Whether this freeze is frozen, whether it is temporarily blocked in court, or whether it is still in effect is in some ways beside the point because I think that the point here is to create chaos. The real point right now is that people are feeling this pain. They are concerned. They are scared. And for what? Why is this happening? It is to test out Russell Vought's extreme and dangerous ideas and see how far they can take it.

That is what we will be voting on. We are going to be voting on the man who is behind all of this chaos.

I know my colleague Senator SCHUMER is going to be speaking in just a couple of minutes, but let me just go for a second about what this means for Minnesotans.

For Minnesotans, a Federal funding freeze means life or death, seriously. The administration's list of frozen programs covers people's most basic needs—food, shelter, medicine, safe drinking water.

I have heard from thousands of Minnesotans who are terrified of what this means for their families. The Senate phone lines—colleagues, I think we all know this—have been overwhelmed to a breaking point this week because of people who have been so outraged by Elon Musk and Trump's actions. This is creating torment and real concern and real pain for real families and leaving them wondering what this is all going to mean for them tomorrow.

The scope of Vought's Project 2025 and the funding freeze that it inspired is so broad that I don't think there is a single person in this country who won't be impacted in some way, direct or indirect. This is not going to be good for anyone. Americans, it is true to say, are less safe today than they were last Monday before this funding freeze.

The freeze has put our most fundamental and essential services in this country in limbo. What does this look like in Minnesota? It means that counterterrorism programs, programs to combat human and drug trafficking, programs to fight child sex trafficking—all of those were covered by this freeze. LIHEAP, which is a program that helps keep heat on for low-income families in Minnesota, that is what has been at stake. It was minus 12 degrees in International Falls last night, to give you an idea what this means in the whole North Country of Minnesota.

I also want to just acknowledge that what it means for food assistance and clean water projects is also a real and specific impact and pain that people in Minnesota are feeling.

I have a few letters I am ready to receive, but I am going to yield to the Senate minority leader, Senator SCHUMER from New York, so he can tell us what this means for the people of New York and the whole country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. I want to thank my colleague from Minnesota for her passion for representing the people of Minnesota and showing how terrible this nominee is.

We are going to be speaking all night. We want Americans, every hour—whether it is 8 p.m. or 3 a.m.—to hear how bad Russell Vought is and the danger he poses to them in their daily lives if he were put as head of OMB. We want to sound the alarm—sound the alarm—on the reckless and lawless things that Russell Vought will do to American families; to sound the alarm on the chief architect of Project 2025; to sound the alarm on Russell Vought because Russell Vought—sadly, alarmingly, outrageously—stands on the brink of confirmation as Director of OMB, thanks to Senate Republicans who have fallen in line one right after the other behind Donald Trump and have rubberstamped his nominees, no matter how unqualified, no matter how harmful to the American people.

And of all of the nominees, of all of the extremists that Donald Trump elevated, of all the hard right ideologues who have come before the Senate, none of them hold a candle to Russell Vought. He is far and away the one most dangerous to the American people.

Most people have never heard of Russell Vought before. But make no mistake about it, my fellow Americans, he is the most important piece of the puzzle in Donald Trump's second term. He will be the quarterback of White House policy.

For all intents, he will run the command center of the Trump administration. And his decisions will reverberate from one end of America to the other, every city and every town and every household and every rural area.

And of all the people—of all the people—Donald Trump could have picked to lead the White House policy, he chose the godfather of the ultraright. And make no mistake about it, Russell Vought is Project 2025 incarnate. Russell Vought is the chief architect of 2025, its intellectual inspiration. And now he will have the ability, as head of OMB, to put these awful ideas into effect. And who will suffer? Not the billionaires who seem to be running the Trump administration, but the average American—the tens of millions, the hundreds of millions of average Americans.

Let me say this: There can be no worse proposal for the American people than Project 2025. There can be no position more able to implement this terrible proposal than Director of OMB, and there could be no person who would be worse for running 2025 from OMB than Russell Vought.

It is a triple loser—the worst program, the worst place to put it because it does the most danger, and the worst person to run it all rolled up into one in this vote.

Remember during the campaign, Russell Vought put together 2025 with a bunch of other rightwing ideologues. Their goal: slash the government, smash the government, break the government—not just eliminate waste. Oh, no, that is not what they wanted to do. They are so, so deeply anti-anything government does—whether it is Social Security or helping our veterans or defending our country—that they are against it.

Why? Well, their ideas really started with this small group of hard-right people who felt they didn't want to pay any taxes and they didn't want any regulation: We don't need a government. And they gained strength on the hard-right side of the Republican Party that became the MAGA part of the Republican Party. And Donald Trump embraced it.

He hid it during the campaign. When Project 2025 became public, Donald Trump said ''I don't know anything about it'' because he knew that he would lose the election if he embraced 2025; that an overwhelming majority of Americans would be against 2025. He knew that, and so he said he knew nothing about it. But the minute he won the election, Russell Vought started to take over and the pieces of Project 2025, already, we have seen, are begun to be implemented.

It is such hypocrisy for Donald Trump to say he didn't know what 2025 was during the campaign and now is putting its chief architect in the most important position where it can be implemented to the great harm of America and the American people.

Americans don't want to see Social Security or Medicare cut. They certainly don't want to see Medicaid cut.

They certainly don't want to see help to veterans and hospitals and to help people pay for healthcare and to afford housing—there are so many bad things in 2025. Some of them are pretty obvious—just slash government programs. Some are a little less obvious.

One that really bugs me: We have so many people who need housing in America. It is one of the greatest needs. And over the years, the wisdom of the American people, administrations—Democratic and Republican—said: Let's give a little help by having the Federal Government back mortgage loans, Fannie and Freddie. And it made interest rates be lower than they normally would have been for a young family that is looking to buy their first home. They are having their second little baby and they are so happy and they can have a home for their children.

And they want to get rid of it—in part, maybe, so some private sector people can make some money doing it themselves. But mainly because they just are so viciously anti-government that they will just slash anything no matter the consequence, no matter who is hurt. That is what we are on the brink of happening here.

We had hoped on this side of the aisle—because we know how our colleagues feel. If you asked the 53 Senators on that side of the aisle to vote yes or no on Project 2025, my guess is of the 53, probably 50—at least 45—would vote no. But they are actually voting to implement Project 2025 when they vote yes for Russell Vought.

Remember, he is the architect, and they are putting him in a position where he can take that plan and implement it—basically, shove it down America's throat.

So here we are. We have already begun to see the chaos that the Russell Vought philosophy, the Project 2025 philosophy, engenders: A freeze—freeze—on funding of all programs.

They didn't look at which programs were good, which programs were bad. No, no, no. They froze them all. Chaos erupted. Daycare centers were not funded, Medicaid hospitals were not funded, veterans' programs were not funded, mental health—so much that they had to back off, at least for a period of time.

But that is Project 2025 at work.

And now, the Treasury payment system—which in one sense is a lifeblood of how government works, of how we help people because we are giving money to things that people need—is being infiltrated by DOGE.

What is DOGE's view? Let's cut $2.5 trillion. They don't say how. They don't really care, as long as they can just slash government and hurt Americans so that their billionaire friends can pay even less taxes than they do now, despite the fact that income inequality in America is getting worse and worse. That is one of the main things that bothers average working-class Americans.

His fingerprints are all over this past week's disaster—whether it is at Treasury, whether it is with Federal workers, whether it is at AID, whether it is hurting Justice Department people, prosecutors—all of that is Russell Vought at work. He is working to hurt you, Mr. and Mrs. America, even before he gets into office. Imagine how much more harm he will do should he become the head of OMB.

I want to ask Mr. Vought some questions.

Mr. Vought, how is freezing all these funds supposed to lower people's costs?

Yeah, it may lower the taxes on your wealthy friends, but how is it going to help the average American? You never explained it. The fanatical hatred of government without rhyme or reason, without looking at its effect, without distinguishing between programs just permeates everything.

So, Mr. Vought, explain how freezing all these funds is going to lower people's costs? How is privatizing Fannie and Freddie going to lower their housing costs? How is getting rid of—I mean an example we talked about, it is small but it is indicative, it is knowledge—cutting the programs that help us eliminate bird flu and lower the price of eggs. They raised it. People hate that. The price of eggs are so high, I don't blame them—6 bucks, 5 bucks—wow.

So imagine this, folks. Imagine a world where Russell Vought and the DOGE team, team up, and it is a team that can do such, such harm and pain for America. They team up to eradicate the funding they allege is wasteful.

What would it mean for kids at school who struggle to get a good meal? They will say it is wasteful. Or parents who struggle to pay for groceries and the things we do to try to keep food costs down? They will say it is wasteful. A couple seeking a loan to build a starter home; they will say it is wasteful.

Getting rid of Head Start. Right now—right now—in my State, even though the funding freeze has been rescinded, there are Head Start programs that are getting no money. Two hundred kids in rural Cattaraugus and Wyoming Counties had to be left out of Head Start; 200 families struggling during the week because so many of them have either one parent who is working or two parents who are working. What are they going to do? Who is going to watch the kids? Will they have to quit work for a few days? Will they get fired? Will they get demoted?

All painful, really painful.

Head Start provides dental and medical care for little kids. What a waste, Vought would say. When we know that when kids have bad teeth at a young age, it hurts their learning, it hurts their ability to become productive citizens. There is nothing more cost-effective than something like that.

Folks, bad news—bad news. What we saw this past week with the beginning of Russell Vought's ideas and programs and philosophy and ideology to be implemented is just the beginning, just a preview. I hate to say this, but, unfortunately, we ain't seen nothing yet should Vought get into office in this powerful OMB position.

Let me just say it again so people hear it: Why does Vought want to do this, the average person would ask? Why does he want to hurt so many people? Why is he being so mean and cruel and heartless and uncaring?

Very simple: So Republicans can give tax cuts to Donald Trump's billionaire friends and supporters. Of course, it is cloaked in some kind of ridiculous ideology that was paid for by the hard right. They set up think tanks for 30 years to come up with this libertarian-type philosophy. But it has no basis in reality. Where it comes from is not what would make America better but, rather, would make a few rich people richer. And the harm is amazing. Everything we see happening today—the flurry of Executive orders, all of the awful things happening at the Treasury Department and at OMB and elsewhere—all boils down to one endgame: a broken, paralyzed government that breeds corruption and self-dealing and self-interest; that ignores the public and caters to the ultra-ultrawealthy. That is the entire ball game of Trump 2.0.

The only solace I can take is we are a democracy, and it will catch up with them all—with President Trump, with Russell Vought, with all of the Republicans who vote for these things. That happens. The roots of democracy are deep. We saw little sprouts of it this week when President Trump had to back off tariffs and back off a funding freeze because so many people were going to be hurt.

But it will—it will—be rejected by the American people, and I am confident that it will change the political fortunes of both parties as it is implemented. For those who support it on the Republican side, the American people will like them a lot less. And for those who oppose it on our side, the American people will understand we are on their side.

But the damage—the damage—that will be done in the interim is enormous. The number of the millions—of the tens of millions, probably of the hundreds of millions—of people who will be hurt and hurt in real, severe ways will be horrible. So there is no solace.

I do believe that the political system, with all its infirmities—with all the big money, with having so much power with Donald Trump and his Republican friends—that even with all of that, I believe, ultimately, our democracy's roots are deep. Ultimately, I believe those who support Russell Vought—he himself, the President, who put him in, the Republicans who voted for him—will be rejected by the American people for doing it. But the damage in the interim will be enormous—worse than almost anything we have seen.

So I say to my colleagues on the Republican side: Maybe, it is not too late. Maybe, somehow, you will realize how damaging Russell Vought is. Maybe, you will say to yourselves: Despite the fact that I might have Trump angry with me, I am doing the best thing for him by voting down Russell Vought, ultimately—ultimately politically. Maybe. Unlikely. A forlorn hope. I always try to be an optimist—but maybe.

This is a very, very important vote. The way it is looking now, it is a very awful and sad vote—one of the worst, if it passes, that I will have seen in this body in the many years I have been here.

For those who think Russell Vought won't be so bad, read his book. See what he has done. I mean, read his Project 2025. It is a project, not a book, I don't think. Maybe, maybe, maybe we will realize—it is unlikely, highly unlikely; it is a forlorn wish—when things are so bad if Vought gets in, and we will cling to that forlorn, highly unlikely hope.

Twenty years ago, it would be hard to believe that somebody as hard right, as narrow-minded, as vicious in his philosophy as Vought would get a single vote on the floor of the Senate. But, now, he may get a majority.

We are warning the American people how bad this is. We will see the consequences in the weeks and months ahead. There are very few votes I have cast with greater fervor than this ''no'' vote for Russell Vought.

He is, as I said, a danger to working people, a danger to America's beliefs and ideals, and a danger to the unity, cohesiveness, and beauty of this great America. I proudly, strongly, and with complete conviction will vote no on this awful, awful nominee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is not unusual in this job of ours in the U.S. Senate to run into a reporter in the hallway. It happens all the time. They are trying to write a story, and they want to ask a question or two to get a quote, possibly, for the story.

Today, I came out of one of our hearing rooms on the Committee on Agriculture, and one of the more prominent reporters for one of the cable news networks said to me: Can you give me a reaction to the suggestion by President Trump, yesterday, that, somehow or another, the United States of America is going to take over control of the Gaza Strip and develop it?

Well, I had read that in the morning papers, that assertion, and all I could say to him was, If you follow his suggestion to let Canada become the 51st State; that we take over the Panama Canal—if necessary, by force—that somehow or another we come into ownership of Greenland, then the notion of developing hotels on the ocean on the Gaza Strip is just one of the Trump suggestions we are dealing with.

For those who argue, ''Well, the American people voted for it,'' were they voting for those things?

The point I am trying to make was made earlier by Senator SCHUMER. There are efforts afoot that go way beyond the issues of this last Presidential campaign, where the American people, I believe, said: We want a change. We are going to vote in the majority for Donald Trump because we want to see a better lifestyle for ourselves and our kids. Those things make sense to me, and I will tell you, in my life, as I reflect on things that have happened to me, there were times when the government played a very important role in my life.

I recall when my father passed away when I was in high school. There was a Social Security Disability assistance check that helped me go to college. Then, of course, there was something called the National Defense Education Act, where I could borrow money from the Federal Government. That had to be paid back, but I could borrow the money to pay for my school expenses.

Had the government not been there in those two instances, I am not sure if I could have completed college or where I would be today. I didn't start off with a litmus test of whether I love the government or don't. I needed a helping hand, and there was a program created by this government, by this Senate, that came to my rescue.

What we are discussing now is the nomination of Russell Vought. I don't know the man personally, but I have read plenty of what his philosophy consists of. I believe he is being offered one of the most powerful jobs that most Americans don't even know—the Office of Management and Budget. One of the essential powers of the Senate, under our Constitution, is advice and consent, which means the Founding Fathers said the President can pick his team, but the Senate has to approve that team. It has to advise and consent when it comes to that person. The constitutional authority gives the Senate the power to review and approve Presidential nominations and, with it, the responsibility to ask hard questions.

Well, that has been the case, in the last several weeks, as the nominees for the President's Cabinet have all come forward to be reviewed by Members of the Senate. Our Nation's Founders viewed this as a check on the power of the President, ensuring that the country's most important leadership posts are filled by truly trustworthy, qualified, law-abiding Americans. I take that responsibility seriously.

I probably, as I reflected on running for the Senate, did not reflect on how many times I would be called to judge a person as part of my job. As a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee—the ranking member at this point—I have had to review the resumes and interview literally hundreds—sometimes thousands—of applicants for lifetime positions with the Federal Government. When I reflect on it, it is an awesome responsibility, but you have to project as to what that person will do once they have the power of office, and that is what we are doing today.

I join with my colleagues in opposing the nomination of Russell Vought to be the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. He has been nominated by President Trump to run this Agency. It is the largest office within the executive branch of the government. Its job is to oversee Federal Agencies and administer the Federal budget.

Now, most of the time when we are called on to evaluate nominations, we do our best to take a look and review the nominee's qualifications and experience. We meet with the candidates—I have done that today several times with several nominees—and ask them questions to determine their fitness for the roles. Sometimes, you can tell this is the first time they have ever really, seriously, considered serving in government in their lives. We try to imagine what they will do with that power. But for Mr. Vought, there is no need for imagination. He already served as Director of OMB during the last half of President Trump's first term in office, and I believe he proved who he was in that period of time.

When he served as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget during President Trump's first term, Mr. Vought illegally refused to release hundreds of millions of dollars in security assistance to Ukraine, and he delayed $20 billion of disaster aid for Puerto Rico. If that sounds like a lot of power, it is. There was literally a question as to whether Ukraine would survive the invasion of Vladimir Putin. Our government had committed to helping, but Mr. Vought decided, in his capacity as the head of OMB, to withhold the funds, and there was a serious question as to whether Ukraine—in fighting for its life—would survive. The $20 billion in disaster aid for Puerto Rico after the hurricanes that struck and that did such great damage to that nation was a life-and-death proposition, and he decided that he would withhold these funds.

When he left that role, Mr. Vought went on to become a key architect of what has been referred to many, many times as Project 2025—a policy proposal written by a conservative think tank, outlining a sweeping, extreme vision of America's future. Project 2025 included policies to consolidate power in the executive branch and to undermine critical services the Federal Government provides to American families. If that sounds familiar, perhaps you are following the President's ongoing attempts to freeze Federal funds legally appropriated by Congress. That is no coincidence. Mr. Vought is the MAGA puppet master in this administration, and, 2 weeks ago, we saw it at its worst.

I see Senator MURRAY of Washington is here on the floor. She is our Democratic leader when it comes to Appropriations. I sit on that committee and respect her judgment. I am sure she remembers, as I do, when the word came

out that there was a pronouncement from OMB that they were going to put a freeze on Federal spending. It didn't sound real to think that they would stop spending across the board. They made a few exceptions—but to stop spending in so many areas?

Then the phone started ringing from the State of Illinois. They started calling Senator DUCKWORTH's office and my own office, and we were telling people exactly what was involved.

This involves programs like Head Start. Head Start is a critical program that began in the 1960s. It is for kids who are prekindergarten to spend a day under supervision in a learning experience and in a socialization experience that can make all the difference in their lives. For their parents, it is a great opportunity.

Last Friday, I visited one of these Head Start facilities in the city of Chicago. It is known as El Valor. It is remarkable. Seeing those kids and the experiences they are going through is heartwarming. These kids are from working families. They are not from families who have a lot of wealth. But they have an opportunity in Head Start to have a good, clean, positive classroom experience that prepares them for school and prepares them for life.

One of the parents made a point of coming in and telling me his story. He talked about what a transformation it was that took place in his little boy when he became part of this Head Start Program.

I have such positive feelings about that because I can't think of a better investment of my tax dollars and anybody's tax dollars than in making sure those kids—that next generation—have a fighting chance, and Head Start gives them that chance.

Well, when OMB announced the freeze, some of the first agencies that felt it were the Head Start Programs. They started realizing they couldn't keep their doors open because they don't have a lot money to turn to if they didn't get the regular infusion of Federal funds that had been guaranteed to them over the years. Some of them actually thought ''Maybe we could last a day or two without that Federal funding,'' but most of them realized they couldn't last at all without it.

So why in the world would OMB turn to a program like Head Start and say: That is where we want to freeze Federal spending. For goodness' sake, I will be the first to admit that there is waste in our government. There is waste in corporations. There is waste in many directions. But to start with kids, struggling kids from working families, and to say: We are going to cut off their program—that is your first priority for cuts?

Meals on Wheels. What is Meals on Wheels? Well, it is something most people with an elderly parent or grandparent know full well. It is that one time each day when someone knocks on the door and brings literally a hot meal to someone who is living alone usually and has to depend on that—not just for food but for socialization and that friendly smile once a day that they just dream of and live for. To cut that program, along with Head Start—come on. But that is what I learned. I learned that this freeze from OMB that started with the Trump administration involved Meals on Wheels.

It isn't just these programs that touch my heart and I hope touch yours; we had calls from medical researchers, from hospitals across the city of Chicago. And I am proud of those hospitals. We have some of the best in the world. They do key research, critical research—cancer, heart disease, and so many other things. They work with the National Institutes of Health, the premier medical research Agency in the world.

Well, it turns out that when the OMB of President Trump wanted to start turning out the lights, they decided to do it on medical research as well. What were they thinking?

If you have ever been in a terrible moment in your life where someone you love is seriously ill and you are wondering if they can survive, one of the first things you are going to ask that doctor: Is there a medicine? Is there a process? Is there a surgery? Is there some breakthrough that maybe can save the life of somebody I love?

That is one of the first questions you ask when you face that awful moment.

So what did this OMB decide to do under President Trump? They decided to cut off funding for medical research. These are researchers who literally said: We were told at 5 o'clock to go home. That means walking away from an experiment which I have been working on for a long time and losing all the progress I have made.

Really? That is your priority? I don't think the American people thought that was what they were voting for when they voted for Donald Trump in this last election.

Mr. Vought has made his beliefs perfectly clear. He believes the President can refuse to spend money that Congress has appropriated for the American people despite this being in direct violation of the law. The law is known as the Impoundment Control Act.

Some have naively claimed that Project 2025 is nothing but a thought and an expert. It is clear that since the President took office, it has been a blueprint for a radical rewrite of the principle of the balance of power in our Constitution.

It is no surprise that as a key author of Project 2025, Mr. Vought continues to lead that charge. Knowing this as we do, placing him in charge of OMB would be irresponsible—you saw what they did initially with the freeze just a few weeks ago—and it would entirely undermine the role of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the U.S. Senate itself.

What I find disappointing and discouraging is that so many of my Republican friends who worked so hard to be elected to this Chamber are willing to give away our constitutional rights and our constitutional authority. This idea of impoundment gives away the power of Congress to appropriate.

This latest attempt to put a sweeping freeze on Federal funds is far from the first time Mr. Vought has broken the law and undermined Congress's power of the purse that is set forth in the Constitution. It is clear from Mr. Vought's comments and actions that he has contempt for Congress as a coequal branch of government.

It is appalling that so many of my Republican Senate friends voted to advance his nomination as he actively attempts to strip Congress of our congressional authority.

We are not opposing Mr. Vought solely because he poses a threat to our ability to do our jobs in Congress. Mr. Vought has made it clear that he is targeting working families across the country.

Both in his previous tenure as OMB Director and in policy proposals, Mr. Vought has proposed budget cuts that slash the social safety net resources for tax cuts for the wealthy.

It is being reported today that representatives of Elon Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency are now inside the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, where they have gained access to key payment and contracting systems.

I know Elon Musk. I have met him on two or three occasions one on one. We had conversations. I respect him in many respects for achievements with his car, as well as with SpaceX and solar energy projects. He has done some remarkable things, making him the wealthiest person in the world.

Having said that, I don't believe he has any qualification to sit here in judgment of our government and its future. He has been given an outsized role in the Trump administration although he has no authority from the American people. He hasn't been elected to a damn thing, but he has currently won over the heart of the President and is making decisions which affect people's lives every day.

Each representative of DOGE—the Department of Government Efficiency, which isn't even a Department—is looking at the systems technology in Medicare and Medicaid, as well as the spending that flows through them. That means every hospital, every senior in a nursing home, and every child with a serious health condition is at the mercy of what Elon Musk's minions consider to be worthwhile spending.

The Director of OMB should manage funds that serve everyday Americans, not billionaires.

Moreover, Mr. Vought clearly intends to politicize the Federal workforce. While serving as OMB Director during President Trump's first term, he was the architect of ''schedule F,'' a plan which would allow the President to fire

nonpartisan civil servants and replace them with partisan loyalists.

On January 20, President Trump signed an Executive order reviving schedule F—another move right out of Mr. Vought's Project 2025 playbook—effectively stripping thousands of career civil servants of job protections.

Mr. Vought has called civil servants ''villains,'' and he has advocated for their mass termination. But more than 70 percent of the Federal workforce serves in national security roles. His plan—Vought's plan—would jeopardize American security.

To my Republican colleagues, for the sake of the institution in which we work for, the constituents we were elected to serve, and the constitutional foundations of our Nation, please don't vote for Mr. Vought.

Maya Angelo once said:

When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.

Well, from his tenure running OMB to his authorship of Project 2025, Mr. Vought has shown us exactly who he is and what he believes. He is a man with little respect for the Constitution and limited understanding of the plight of real working Americans. Giving Mr. Vought the reins of OMB is an invitation to a policy battle at the expense of our Constitution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in urging all of our colleagues to vote against Russ Vought's nomination to lead the Office of Management and Budget.

The Senate should not vote to confirm as the head of OMB or to any important role, for that matter, someone who does not respect the constitutional authority of the Senate and thus the people we represent.

We should not entrust someone to implement our laws who made clear time and again through his past actions in this same role during President Trump's first term, through his work as the head architect of Project 2025, and through his own words in hearings and meetings that he will not follow the laws and that he will not send our communities the funding we all work together to pass.

Why on Earth would any one of us confirm someone whose entire game plan is to break the law and then dare the world to stop him? That is it. That is how Russ Vought plans to run the OMB. It is not a secret. It is a very public fact. He has put this on the record time and again.

Just look at what happened last time Russ Vought served as Director of the OMB. He tried to break the law to give President Trump unilateral authority he does not possess to hold up security assistance to Ukraine and override the spending decisions of Congress. And he has not given up on that idea. He has written about it many, many times in the years since.

As a chief architect of Project 2025, Vought doubled down on lawlessness and charted a blatantly unconstitutional plan for the President to ignore the will of Congress, which led him to being named in the first Articles of Impeachment against President Trump.

He mapped out a lawless path that, as I will detail shortly, President Trump is already barreling down at full speed.

But if you still aren't convinced that Russ Vought will trample all over the separation of powers, will ignore the authority of Congress, and will hurt the American people by holding back funds they rely on, well, you are in luck because at our hearing with him, I asked Vought directly, point blank, ''Will you follow the law?'' That should not be a hard question. Even if you disagree with the law, you don't ignore it. Maybe you don't like the 25-mile-an-hour speed limit in a school zone, but unless it is changed or struck down, you still have to follow it. It is true for speed limits, and it is certainly true for the Constitution.

That is something that almost every single American understands—except, apparently, Russ Vought and Donald Trump, because today, the Impoundment Control Act is the law of the land. Despite Vought's own wishes and his own feelings, it has not been changed, and it has not been struck down in court.

Despite what Vought pretends is true, the reality is, the Constitution gives Congress, not the President, the power of the purse, and yet Russ Vought will not say he will follow the law.

Look, Vought is not just lawless; he is extreme. Let me drive that home for a second. Let's take abortion for example. Project 2025 already calls for ripping away birth control, allowing States to deny women lifesaving emergency care, and effectively banning all abortion nationwide. That is already a dangerous Republican fever dream—far out of line, by the way, with the American people—but Vought wants to go further.

On abortion, he is for ''abolition.'' ''Abolition.'' Do you know what that means? It means a national abortion ban without any exceptions even in the case of rape or when a woman's life is at risk. That is as far right as it gets.

Of course, abortion is not the only issue where Vought has made statements that are deeply alarming. He has stated that he believes the 2020 election was ''rigged.'' That is just not out of touch with America, that is dangerously out of touch with reality.

He has said he wants to traumatize our Federal workers. That means all the people who work really hard to help in our communities, whether they are inspecting food or reviewing the safety of drugs or keeping our travel safe; maybe they are strengthening our infrastructure, fostering innovation and small business or getting care to veterans or supporting our Tribes and so much more.

Vought has said we live in a ''post-constitutional time.'' It doesn't get any clearer than that. A post-constitutional time? That is what he believes we are in. Do my colleagues agree with that? Do they think it is time to shred the Constitution? That is what is at stake with this confirmation vote because Vought has made it all too clear that as OMB Director, he will put everything on the chopping block, from programs that people rely on to the checks and balances our democracy is founded on. Again, he has put it down on paper in black and white.

We know he wants to cut Medicare and, in particular, Medicaid, by hundreds of billions of dollars. We know he wants to find significant savings from eligibility changes to veterans' healthcare and disability benefits. We don't even need Project 2025 to see that. He laid some of that out in his budgets from Trump's first term.

Vought's goals are not secret, nor are they subtle. We do not have to decipher anything here. There is no mystery. We know he is planning for cuts beyond anything this country has ever seen. And we know, if Russ Vought gets his way and gets his hands on the Nation's funding again, he will not just draw blood; he will cut programs families rely on—families rely on—down to the bone: SNAP cuts that leave families hungry, policies to cut people off from their healthcare, cuts to disability benefits that veterans have earned through their service to America, thousands of public servants forced out of roles serving the American people—all while he works with Trump to dole out more tax breaks to billionaires and the biggest corporations.

And here is another thing. We don't have to imagine just how painful and chaotic Vought's lawless ideas would be in practice because Vought is actually already putting his agenda in place, which, frankly, raises another question: Why should the Senate vote to confirm someone who is already secretly doing the job behind our backs?

Because—guess what—those Executive orders that Trump still has in effect, those orders which are right now illegally blocking money our communities need—that is right out of the Project 2025 playbook. Or the effort, now, to get rid of thousands of Federal workers through illegal firings; and, now, scam buyout offers that have no basis in law to carry out; or trying to illegally abolish entire Agencies with the stroke of a pen—that has Project 2025 written all over it.

And it is not just a parallel in ideas here. When OMB issued its blatantly illegal guidance and attempted to block trillions in Federal dollars Congress—all of us—passed, there were digital fingerprints all over that document linking right back to Project 2025.

And in the chaos that followed, do you know who reportedly met with OMB staffers about how to respond? Russ Vought.

So let's not pretend we have no idea just how lawless this guy is. Let's not

pretend we have no idea what sort of damage he will cause if he is put back in power. The chaos that Vought and Trump caused last week alone was unlike anything I can recall. Never in my time in the Senate have I seen a President cause as much chaos, panic, and damage in 48 short hours—chaos, panic, and damage which continues even now. President Trump inflicted serious harm when he implemented Vought's reckless vision to brazenly and illegally freeze Federal grants across the government and across the country.

My phone has been ringing off the hook because, unlike billionaires like Trump and Musk, unlike hyperpartisans like Vought, the American people actually have a painfully clear sense of how this will hurt our communities. After all, they are the ones who would actually suffer the consequences of the reckless policies like this.

And let's remember that the Trump administration's first half-hearted attempt to clean up the massive mess they made with this new guidance essentially boiled down to: We will let some funding go, but we are still going to hold up everything else. And while, later, they finally admitted they were disastrously wrong and revoked the entire guidance, they are now, still today, illegally holding up other funds, which I will say more about later.

And the chaos alone they caused with their cruelty and incompetence is utterly unacceptable. The explanations the Trump administration offered throughout that saga last week—freezing seemingly trillions of dollars that families rely on—created no clarity or certainty for many panicked families and businesses and nonprofits and towns and States. And nothing they said changes the basic fact that Trump was and is still holding up funding that our communities need, funding that is the law.

But let's talk about the effect. Let's talk about the chaos and alarm they caused, the damage done to communities and families that all of us represent, and the collision course we were on before Americans spoke out and forced Trump to retreat—because, in terms of chaos, the Trump administration was trying to say a lot of programs were not affected even when we had firsthand accounts making clear that was not what organizations across the country were experiencing.

I will give you one example. Head Start providers were locked out of their reimbursement portal, meaning folks taking care of our youngest kids were suddenly not sure how they were going to keep their doors open or pay their teachers and staff. And, by the way, some providers in my State are still locked out, not getting the funding.

Let's talk about rental assistance. That is the payment system for housing providers. It was down for over a day, with rents that were due at the end of the week.

Seniors who count on Meals on Wheels were left wondering whether they would have dinner last week.

Grant programs to combat the fentanyl crisis, to get families healthcare, and so much more were, in an instant, put at risk of evaporating into thin air.

The panic and confusion were absolutely widespread because there was a long, long list of programs President Trump tried to put on the chopping block here—programs that, by the way, help red States and blue States alike.

Funding to address the opioid use epidemic could have been paused. This is a longstanding bipartisan priority, and Trump wanted funding frozen for an indefinite period that would absolutely upend prevention efforts and cut people off from the treatment that is helping them beat addiction.

COPS hiring grants, which help our States and communities hire career law enforcement officers—Trump was freezing those too. These investments increase community policing capacity, and they prevent crime. Without this money, our streets and our neighborhoods would be less safe.

And let's not forget about other crucial DOJ grants: funding for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, for AMBER Alert, for safe havens that support victims of human trafficking. Or, in my State, there are 25 child advocacy centers that were trying to figure out how they would be affected by the freeze. Think about that.

Funding for firefighters. You know what doesn't stop when Federal funding stops? Fires. And speaking of fires, Trump's move also threw funding for recovery and relief efforts into uncertainty. In Eastern Washington, in my State, $44 million was announced weeks ago to help Spokane County rebuild from wildfires. We were left with big questions about the future of that badly needed funding last week.

And while it was just 2 weeks ago that Trump visited communities in both North Carolina and California that are still reeling from disaster, the very next week, he sent them reeling himself, throwing funds that they were counting on into limbo with his initial OMB guidance because, for a while there, the system that all of our States use to get disaster relief funding was shut down.

And let's not forget grants from the Violence Against Women Act. I heard from organizations in Washington State that support survivors of violence that they were trying to figure out what to do because their Federal payment site went down. Without that vital funding, survivors would be left with no way to access the legal aid and services they deserve. Like so many other organizations, they were ringing the alarm bells because they were not going to be able to pay their staff or pay their bills.

This illegal freeze left domestic violence centers wondering how long they could keep their doors open and pay their staffs.

And our Tribes were thrown in chaos as well. The Puyallup Tribe was told they couldn't move forward with a critical road project, and our Tribes in general were all concerned that housing and healthcare and education and so much else was getting caught up in this funding freeze. One told me they were left trying to determine if they were going to have to lay off 400 people because of this. Causing layoffs with an illegal funding freeze would be a profound breach of the Federal trust responsibility to our Tribes.

Here is another alarming one: One of Trump's Executive orders was set to cut funding used to help detain nearly 10,000 ISIS militants in Syria—to detain them in Syria. That funding was about to be cut off altogether, potentially leading to prison guards leaving the job and risking ISIS militants getting out of jail, until this administration was alerted to how reckless that would be and they carved out that funding.

But trust me when I say there are many other funding streams that help keep us safe that are still at risk, especially because of the illegal Executive orders that are, today, still blocking foreign assistance—and the absolutely lawless effort to dismantle USAID, which does lifesaving relief work around the world. I will have more to say on that in just a bit.

And, by the way, how does undermining health, which will mean diseases run rampant, particularly at a time when bird flu is on the uptick and impacting many of our producers and workers and States—how does that make any sense? Because when it comes to healthcare, this attempted freeze posed a huge threat to our families.

Set aside the fact that the Medicaid payment portal went down in my State and in every State—something we are told was a coincidence. That doesn't change the fact that all Federal healthcare grant reimbursements stopped. It doesn't change the fact that community health centers were blocked from getting the funds they needed to pay their staff and continue providing care in our communities, including rural areas where they are often the only option for miles. It doesn't change the fact that title X providers who support care like family planning services and cancer screenings and more couldn't draw down their funds.

I also heard from HopeSparks. It is a healthcare provider in my State. They warned that, without Federal support, kids in the South Puget Sound would lose access to mental healthcare and crisis services.

Biomedical researchers were suddenly left dealing with questions not about how to save lives but about grant freezes and how these vague, broad actions might stop research programs and clinical trials across the country.

Chaos alone presents a huge risk of derailing crucial studies. Scientists at the University of Washington and Washington State University told my office they were deeply alarmed. A freeze like Trump ordered would have meant research projects collapsing and staff being furloughed or laid off.

The Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center moved to bridge the gap to keep research from being derailed, but not getting this fixed would have meant putting them in the hole to the tune of over $1 million a day. That sort of unexpected burden would have had a huge impact on lifesaving cancer research.

And agricultural research was faced with uncertainty as well. WSU is a national leader in this important work: research to help our farmers grow more crops, grow more resilient crops, fight challenges like pests and plant diseases. WSU was deeply concerned funding for that research could be cut off, undermining important work supporting our Nation's farmers.

And the threats didn't stop there for those who are in food and agriculture. One organization which works alongside our local growers told me losing funding would mean a reduced capacity to grow and distribute fresh local food to our communities. Now, that would hurt both the farmers and the families who rely on those programs to put food on the table.

Meanwhile, a group in Washington who are addressing youth homelessness warned it would have to kick kids out if the funding issue wasn't resolved.

Let me repeat that. A homeless youth group was pushed to the brink of having to kick kids onto the street because of President Trump's illegal freeze.

I was also deeply concerned about how the freeze might halt an important diaper pilot program, as well as the reports I got from multiple housing providers in my State, worried that tens of thousands of people would be at risk of homelessness thanks to this illegal freeze.

And don't let me get started on infrastructure. These are projects that take years—years—to plan, to build, to complete, and do an awful lot of good for our communities.

In my State alone, there were big questions about what was going to happen to electrical grid upgrades that are happening in Okanogan and Pierce County, improvements that were planned at the Ports of Seattle and Everett and Whitman County, or SeaTac Airport's plan to deploy new trucks.

And, by the way, some of those questions remain till today, because, as I will detail in a minute, there are still many other ways programs are being put at risk by Trump illegally blocking funds with his Executive orders.

I will continue fighting for the Federal funding Congress already provided to keep all of those projects on track, but that can only get us so far if President Trump illegally blocks it all, and our Republican colleagues could let that happen.

The list goes on and on; the calls keep coming in. Even now that OMB has reversed course, the chaos has not died down. The questions, the uncertainty, the fear, from families and communities that Trump will pull the rug out from under them is still there, because even though after the intense outcry from the American public, Trump has now admitted this was a colossal mistake because he rescinded the guidance; but the threat, the chaos, the panic, cannot just be wiped away—especially while some funds are still today being blocked.

No one feels any sense of calm after this. People aren't feeling lasting relief. They are wondering: How could something like that ever happen, and what in the world is going to happen next?

The Trump administration, through a combination of sheer incompetence, cruel intentions, and a willful disregard of the law, caused—and is still causing—real harm and chaos for millions of people over the span of just a mere 48 hours.

But we did learn something extremely important: When the American people speak out with one voice, when regular people stand up, it makes a difference. That victory belonged to everyone who raised their voice. But I want everyone to know—make no mistake—this fight is not over.

As I said before, we still have a lot of work to do right now to make sure all that funding actually does get moving again. This is not like turning on a light switch. We just saw through the chaotic rollout this is complicated stuff. So I want you to know I will be watching closely to make sure funds get where they belong as soon as possible. I already know that in many cases, this has not been what is happening at all, so this is a very serious concern.

I actually spoke with a constituent last week—Mike. He runs a nonprofit supporting military families and helping servicemembers transition back to civilian life. And even days after the OMB guidance was reversed, he was still unable to access Federal funding, so he used his own line of credit to pay his staff in the meantime. And if this didn't get fixed, his organization wouldn't have been able to help military families or pay its employees.

The homeless shelter that I mentioned a few minutes ago, short $5.1 million—$5.1 million because of Trump. They still have their funds frozen. They are still looking at reducing beds and facing layoffs. And as I mentioned earlier, some Head Start programs are still not able to get their grant funding.

So the chaos of this OMB saga is far, far from over.

And let me make one thing perfectly clear, even before this latest whirl of chaos, President Trump was already—already—illegally blocking billions of dollars. And even after that OMB guidance was reversed, he is still holding back all of those funds through his illegal Executive orders. You don't have to take it from me, you can take it directly from the White House press secretary.

> This is NOT a rescission of the federal funding freeze. . . . The President's [Executive orders] on federal funding remain in full force and effect, and will be rigorously implemented.

So that was the chaos of last week. I want to talk about how that chaos remains, what we are still seeing this week, and what it means for folks back home and across the country, because there is still significant confusion. And the remaining freezes are still causing significant pain.

For example, I have heard from cities in my State and from the Washington State Department of Transportation—now, it is still hard to get a clear picture, given the chaotic rollback and more, but they are telling me they are concerned about infrastructure projects all over my State that are already getting delayed now and could get derailed entirely because President Trump is still illegally blocking funding we passed with his Executive orders.

If this illegal freeze continues, people will lose jobs, communities will lose out on projects that have been in the works for years. Trump is blocking money to repair electric chargers, to install heavy-duty chargers for trucks, to make critical repairs to bridges in order to protect the safety of millions of drivers, and to install new chargers along major roads in my State, like I–90, US–97, US–2, US–195, and US–395.

Stopping these projects is just pointlessly—pointlessly—hurting commuters and businesses. It is costing construction workers; it is killing jobs. Trump is holding up road projects to make streets safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers, like a safer streets project in Richland, WA, and critical safety barriers in Spokane, not to mention the Liberty Park Land Bridge in Spokane—which would reconnect communities and provide more green space for families to enjoy, or funds for the City of Lakewood—they are planning to revitalize their downtown and bring in more retail space and restaurants and healthcare services and financial services and make upgrades to roads and provide a new festival area and park areas and more.

Trump's freezes are also a concern for the Samish Indian Nation as it works to improve safety and access to their land at the Campbell Lake Road intersection, which has seen growing traffic in recent years, and for a project led by the Tulalip Tribe to improve the interchanges along I–5 exits; the congestions on these ramps can get so bad it backs all the way up to the main highway.

We want to get those projects done. We want to get them done, and the last thing we need is uncertainty about these stalled funds.

There is also a project underway to upgrade the technology at our border with Canada, replacing and improving the outdated wait-time system to improve accuracy and help our inspection and our transportation Agencies.

This will help travelers who are headed to Canada avoid long wait times at the border and help fans from around the world, by the way, who are traveling between Seattle and Vancouver for next year's World Cup move quickly—but not if Trump's Executive orders stop all of this funding.

Same for the efforts to update our statewide planning with a new electronic system that would make the process for planning and specifications and estimates more efficient. And, of course, in Washington State, we can never forget about fish, which are crucial to our culture and our economy in many ways.

Trump's ongoing funding freeze is putting projects to improve fish habitats on ice: replacing the culvert at Thornton Creek; replacing the failing culvert at Wapato Creek, which is right underneath the Pierce County terminal at the port of Tacoma; or removing the fish barrier culverts at Johnson Creek, which will open up nearly 3,000 meters of upstream habitat; not to mention other wildlife preservation work like an undercrossing structure and wildlife barriers east of Winthrop and work on our waterways. Funding from the bipartisan infrastructure law is still not restored, still not restored today for some projects on the Lower Columbia River, projects like a stormwater infrastructure that will help keep toxins out of our water and restore our wetlands and protect our ecosystems.

Our ports, our ports, so critical for not only Washington State's economy but for the entire country, are caught up in this too. There are port projects now on hold across my State, including for electrical infrastructure and shore power for vessels.

These impacts are being felt from Anacortes to Port Angeles to Vancouver, frozen funding is hurting working families in Washington and across the country, and it is making our economy less competitive.

And we cannot forget our ferries, which are so crucial to many commuters in my State. Washington State ferries are looking to improve their data with a better system for collecting and analyzing and reporting wait times at all of our terminals. That would help give them some information so they can improve their efficiency and make life better for the people they serve.

Losing that funding means more people will miss ferries, and it means long waits in line for Washington State commuters who cross the water for everything from work to school to medical appointments.

We also have absolutely essential electric transmission and distribution projects that are on hold now, and they are in jeopardy. These are projects that are necessary, helping reduce our wildfire risks, ensuring grid reliability, improving resilience to natural disasters, and lowering costs for ratepayers across my State of Washington.

Those are all funded under the bipartisan infrastructure law; that is a bipartisan infrastructure law that Members of Republicans and Democrats worked on and passed. It is a program that Republicans thought was important enough to provide $10.5 billion. After what we have seen in recent months and years, I don't know how you could say with a straight face that modernizing our grid isn't absolutely vital to the future of our country.

You don't have to listen to me; Secretary Burgum and Secretary Wright said as much in their confirmation hearings.

But this project, all of these projects and many more, have been thrown into complete uncertainty because of President Trump's Executive orders.

It is completely unclear when or if those projects are going to get the funding they were counting on and that they were owed from bills that Congress passed and signed into law.

And that is not just causing chaos, it is causing delays. It is causing harm and alarm, because it could mean construction grinds to a halt, workers lose jobs. It means the work will go unstarted or, perhaps, in some cases, unfinished. Plus, it would mean increasing costs, increasing costs for our cities and counties and States and Tribes for those projects that somehow make it through all of this.

And while there are many more infrastructure projects in my State I haven't touched on, not to mention the other projects across the entire country, there are so many other projects and organizations and people who are being harmed right now by President Trump's reckless funding freeze.

I know there are medical researchers still worried their work will somehow be considered woke, when, in reality, it is actually pretty darn important that we do understand the risk of health disparities, things like why the maternal death rate is so much higher for Black or Native American women. Yet now researchers are being told that their research is at risk of being defunded if they are examining issues of equity or barriers to care, or even if they are specifically studying females.

And there are hospitals in my State and across the country who are worried that some of these programs, which are appropriately focused on someone's gender or race, are in jeopardy.

For example—give you a good example—we know that pulse oximeters are less accurate for people with darker skin tones. Making sure that these clinical measurements are accurate will save life, and it has life-and-death consequences for patients.

We know women have much higher rates of autoimmune disorders than men. We need to look at why that is. We need to invest in training the next generation of scientists, including from diverse backgrounds. Studies actually show us that diversity in the scientific workforce leads to greater innovation and productivity, but there is a serious concern that lifesaving work is going to get caught up in President Trump's sweeping, illegal Executive orders.

Another impact of Trump's actions: The National Park Service has rescinded all of its employment offers for our summer seasonal staff. Now, that doesn't just mean people are going to be facing longer wait lines or dirtier bathrooms—though they will—it could mean park closures throughout this entire summer. It will mean delayed responses to emergencies, making people less safe. And outside our national parks, Trump is also freezing regional cleanup efforts, things like stopping illegal dumping and improving air quality in our communities.

And let's talk about foreign assistance, because for decades now, there has been widespread, bipartisan understanding that promoting stability abroad, promoting democracy, improving health, strengthening trade, building partnerships, is crucial to U.S. leadership.

But Trump's Executive orders put all of that at risk by illegally freezing funds.

I have heard from organizations that operate all over the world about how they were unable to deliver the lifesaving aid that millions of people rely on due to the stop-work orders. That meant millions of doses of lifesaving drugs sat unused on shelves; time-sensitive prevention methods against diseases like malaria were not carried out, putting millions at risk; training for more than 64,000 healthcare workers was put on hold; and hundreds of millions of metric tons of U.S.-grown commodities are sitting, at the risk of spoiling, in transport instead of reaching their final destinations across the world to feed people in need.

Despite a so-called waiver from the U.S. State Department to resume work, much of this lifesaving aid is still today on hold. Without a start-work order, those organizations fear they are taking on significant risk now in continuing operations.

Put simply, this was already unacceptable, and now over the weekend, President Trump and Elon Musk have decided—against all reason, against all evidence, and against the law, mind you—to completely dismantle USAID, and that is on top of the illegal funding freeze that has already been pushing U.S. businesses and nonprofits and international aid groups to make tough choices for truly pointless reasons.

It should be obvious that these cuts will hurt people across the world. These cuts are going to mean that people starve. These cuts will mean that people don't get clean water. These cuts will mean more disease outbreaks with higher death counts. These cuts will mean less help for victims of violence and higher death rates for pregnant women.

Anyone with an ounce of humanity can see this freeze will get devastating fast. It is important to note that it will get devastating in ways you cannot just make up with more money later once that damage is done. That is just not how it works. When people are starving, you cannot just feed them money; you need to have already made the investments to grow food. When democracies are in crisis, you can't just cut them a check; you need to have helped them build strong institutions. When a deadly disease outbreak strikes, you are going to learn very quickly that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

These are not lessons we need to learn the hard way by letting people die. We know it all painfully well right now. So to freeze that funding is asking for disaster, and not just for other countries across the world but for us, for the United States and for our families here at home.

Freezing foreign assistance is not putting America first; it is guaranteeing America comes in last because every funding gap we leave is an opportunity for our adversaries to step in, fill that gap, and play the hero while casting us as the villain.

How are we supposed to lead the world if we are unwilling to invest in it? I will tell you right now, China is not holding back. They are investing constantly because they know they aren't just building infrastructure across the world, they are building stronger partnerships. We just counted ourselves out of that competition.

You want to end U.S. global dominance? You want to tell the world the United States is done being a leader? You want to tell other countries we cannot be trusted to keep our word? Because that is exactly what we are doing if we let Trump get away with illegally cutting off global aid with the stroke of a pen and let the richest man in the world cut off help from some of the poorest people in the world.

Let's be clear. It is not just U.S. leadership on the line here; there are U.S. jobs at stake. That reality is hitting home hard this week. Back in my home State of Washington, there are some world-class organizations that I know may have to lay off people this week, hundreds of people, all because of President Trump's funding freeze. It is a scene that is not isolated to Washington State. I know it is playing out across the country as well with thousands of layoffs across 38 States and Canada. I know that so long as President Trump's lawless war on foreign aid continues, so will those layoffs. We will see hundreds, if not thousands, more every week.

International aid organizations may make a difference around the world, but they support American jobs too, people who have a paycheck and a family, people who work incredibly hard and who are incredibly proud of the work they do to make the world a better place and reaffirm U.S. global leadership. But they are being sent packing, not because they have done anything wrong, not because this work is not important, but because President Trump and Elon Musk are listening to wacko conspiracists and ultra-isolationists while ignoring the experts, ignoring the obvious realities, and, again, ignoring the law. We should all stand against this.

I know we are here tonight to discuss the Vought nomination, but I want to talk about someone who has not been nominated to anything. He has not been elected to anything. Yet he is serving as de facto co-President—Elon Musk. Arguably, he is more important and more influential than the elected, sitting President, and he has proven himself in lockstep with Russ Vought—whom we are voting on tomorrow—when it comes to slashing programs that matter to American families and ignoring the laws of our Nation.

In recent days, Musk has been busy illegally shuttering USAID, cutting off foreign assistant programs, which I said will lose jobs for Americans, lose lives in countries around the world, and lose leadership as adversaries like China fill that gap. Shockingly, Musk has even had people fired—fired—for denying his lackeys classified resources that they had no authority to access.

Last weekend, we all learned that Elon Musk essentially commandeered access to the Treasury Department's most sensitive payment system, handling $6 trillion every year and managing nearly all of our Federal reimbursements. It is a system that contains extremely sensitive personal and commercial information.

I have been hearing from people across my State who are truly alarmed about what Musk and his associations having access to this system could mean for their data and for funding they count on.

Let's not mince words here. An unelected, unaccountable billionaire with expansive conflicts of interest, deep ties to China, and an indiscreet ax to grind against perceived enemies is highjacking our Nation's most sensitive financial data system and its checkbook so that he can illegally block funds to our constituents based on the slightest whim or wildest conspiracy—funds, mind you, that Congress on a bipartisan basis passed.

Some Republicans are trying to suggest that Musk only has viewing access to Treasury's highly sensitive payment system—as if that is acceptable either—but why on Earth should we believe that, particularly when Musk himself is saying the exact opposite loudly and repeatedly for everyone to hear?

What funds will Elon target next? Lifesaving medical research? Homelessness assistance? Food banks? We already know he has falsely attacked faith-based organizations that help folks and is promising to cut off funds based off conspiracy theories. In other words, the world's richest man has vowed to cut off funding that helps the least among us. Think about that.

Next, think about how many dollars he himself makes from government contracts. I mean, seriously. The richest man in the world, with countless government contracts, ties to our adversaries, is taking over the Treasury in the name of fighting corruption? The irony is almost as rich as Musk himself.

Let me underscore just how dangerous this is because now that Trump has handed over Treasury's checkbook, what if Elon decides he doesn't like how Rivian is getting Federal funds to build an EV manufacturing facility? So what next? All Elon has to do is say ''Oh, they are woke,'' and he can convince Trump to illegally cut off those funds. Is that how this works now?

Maybe Elon will decide he doesn't like Blue Origin and not SpaceX getting a contract, so he wants to gum up the works on their payments. Is that how this works?

Maybe Elon decides he wants to get into electronic healthcare systems, and maybe he wants to punish hospital systems that don't take him up on whatever he is selling.

Private corporations and competitors need to take note. The potential for abuse and corruption by Elon—especially considering his track record—is pretty much limitless.

And it is not just Treasury. Musk and his henchmen are launching a full-scale invasion of sensitive data systems across government. We are talking about the Small Business Administration. We are talking about NOAA. We are talking about Medicare. The reporting is now clear. They are not just looking either; they are directly making changes to some of those critical systems.

This is not Silicon Valley, where you can just move fast and break things. When you break things here, people don't get their healthcare; they don't get their Social Security check; they don't get crucial warnings and lifesaving information.

Anyone who thinks ''Well, that surely won't happen'' has not been paying attention because just this week, Elon Musk and Donald Trump put Americans in danger. We have citizens in dangerous corners of the world who were suddenly locked out of their emails, and they were cut off from an app that is meant to help address threats like kidnapping.

So no one should be shrugging this off and just saying ''Well, what is the worst that could happen?'' because this can get really, really bad, really, really fast.

If anyone is thinking ''Well, it is OK. We have guardrails. We have laws,'' make no mistake, even though Trump and Musk have absolutely zero legal authority to hold up any Federal payments that are law, this has not stopped them so far. As we have seen,

they are already halting other funds illegally. They are already firing government watchdogs and officials left and right regardless of our laws. They are already putting forward blatantly unconstitutional Executive orders.

The fact of the matter is, Trump and Musk have yet to find a law they think applies to them. They think because they are rich and powerful, they get to call all the shots regardless of the courts and regardless of Congress. That is not how things work in this country. Billionaires are not above the law, and neither are Presidents. We do not have a monarchy where a President is king. We do not have an oligarchy where the richest people get the largest say. We in this country have a democracy—if we can keep it—where each citizen has a vote. We have checks and balances where the President is accountable to the Congress and to the people, where he has to follow the laws we pass.

But some of my colleagues across the aisle seem to be forgetting that our democracy doesn't work by magic. We have to do our part—our part—here to hold Presidents accountable. Our job is not to say yes to everything the President does, no matter how lawless or harmful. Our job is not to shrug our shoulders or cover our eyes. It is to fight for the people who sent us here and to defend the Constitution.

So Democrats will be pushing back with the tools we have. We will speak out. We will press this administration. We will open investigations, and we will demand accountability. But one tool we do not have is the majority in this Congress. So that means our Republican colleagues have to say: Enough. We need them to join us. We need them to stand up to the corruption and the lawlessness and stand up for the people they represent.

While I am on the subject, I want to talk about another scheme Elon Musk cooked up. We are approaching the deadline that is set in the Trump administration's ''Fork in the Road'' message, which claims—and I have to emphasize that it merely claims—to give Federal workers the option of a deferred resignation that would allegedly allow workers to retain all pay and benefits regardless of your daily workload and be exempted from all applicable in-person work requirements until September 30.

I want to speak directly to all of our Federal workers about this because they deserve better than to be pushed out the door with a 9-day pressure tactic that comes with no clarity, no details, and a lot of questions left unanswered.

So here is what is important for everyone to know. First, there is no guarantee workers who accept that offer will get paid through September 30, as they have been promised. Not only is there no funding for that timeframe right now, but I personally am deeply skeptical of any offer from a President like Donald Trump, who has so consistently shown he will try to stiff workers at every opportunity.

Being given only 9 days to decide something like this should set off alarm bells. That is a short amount of time to consider all of the financial impacts of potentially accepting this offer—including, if you were able to find another job, how would this impact your benefits like health insurance, retirement, and a lot more.

And we all know, scammers often pressure people: Act immediately.

Additionally, information being provided continues to change and includes a lot of caveats. It claims you can rescind your resignation if you change your mind. But your job may no longer exist if that happens—tough luck.

It claims you aren't expected to work if you accept this offer, except in cases determined by each individual Agency.

It claims you can stay in your current role. However, there is no guarantee your position will be needed.

The lack of clear information and research about exactly what will be allowed is rightfully creating confusion for the more than 56,000 Federal workers in my State alone. To me, this leaves a lot of questions unanswered.

Finally, I want to express a real gratitude for our Federal workers who power so many essential services provided by our government. The American Government is not Twitter. People rely on our Federal workers, and sometimes their work can be the difference between life and death.

Federal workers help inspect meat processing facilities. They make sure baby formula is safe. They approve lifesaving drugs and treatments. They manage air traffic. They help ensure clean drinking water. And there is so much more.

Where this administration continues to show outright hostility toward many of our Federal workers, I want you to know I will continue to fight for our Federal workers—everyone from Hanford workers, scientists at the Pacific Northwest National Lab, to the people making sure you get your Social Security check.

Mr. President, I got a letter this week from a Hanford worker. They started last year, hoping it would be a stable job that would let them provide for their family while making a difference in their community. This employee has already been recognized several times for hard work. And then Elon Musk tried to push them out the door with this scammy buyout, and now they are on the list of employees who are at the threat of being terminated for no good reason.

That is an utter betrayal. It is a betrayal of a hard-working parent who did nothing wrong and a betrayal of my Hanford community, where Trump is undermining important environmental cleanup work, because at Hanford alone, which is already understaffed, there are nearly 30 people now on the chopping block. They are nuclear safety engineers. They are facility safety representatives. They are procurement and contracting personnel. They are attorneys. They are labor relations staff. They are accountants.

How is firing nuclear safety engineers supposed to make anyone safer or better off?

Mr. President, there are so many stories like this already happening or just around the corner. I have heard that Musk and Trump plan to cut workers at the Department of Energy in half. These are Federal employees who put in long hours to support their families and to strengthen our country. And for all their years of service, for all their sacrifice, Elon Musk is showing them the door and saying: Don't let it hit you on the way out.

This is wrong, and it is ungrateful. And for God's sake, we are talking about nuclear security here. Why on Earth would anyone think it is a good idea to cut corners?

Here is my message to our Federal workers: You do so much for our communities. You deserve so much better than to have a billionaire with no understanding of what you do come in, belittle your work, suggest he can do it better, and push you out the door. I hope you will all keep up the good work for the American people. I want you to know we will keep fighting for you as well.

Mr. President, before I conclude, I just want to state once more what is at stake with Vought's nomination. We are talking about hundreds of billions of dollars in Federal spending that Congress—us—passed that our communities are counting on and that Mr. Vought has made painfully clear he will not think twice about illegally blocking it.

Giving this man the power to enact his illegal schemes will do real harm to folks back home. It will cut people off from getting groceries and making rent. It will cut our families off from childcare and healthcare. It will cut veterans and their survivors off from disability and education benefits they earned through their service to our country. It will cut off breakthrough medical research and help for people who are struggling with opioid addiction. It will cut off communities that are working to build bridges and improve roads and strengthen their energy infrastructure. That will have serious consequences we cannot overlook.

We are here to fight for our families, but there is also another serious consequence here, one that cuts to the heart of what makes this Senate work and what makes our democracy work. Confirming Russ Vought to OMB makes it that much harder to negotiate our spending bills. It is much harder to reach a bipartisan deal with my colleagues, whom I respect and trust and have worked with for years, if that deal is going to be implemented by someone in whom I have zero trust; someone who has made clear that despite our laws, he is going to block any funding we pass. Why should any Senator vote to confirm someone who has

made it perfectly clear he will undermine their authority to help their constituents?

Mr. President, as I have said, our system of checks and balances does not work on its own. We have to actually do our part here in Congress to be the check of Presidential abuse of power. And we have an opportunity—actually, it is an obligation—right now, to do just that. Before us right now is a nominee who has made it very clear he will not respect the authority of Congress—of all us and the people who voted us in—nominated by a President who is not respecting the authority of Congress and the people who voted us in.

We have to say we can't stand for that. We have to say from here that the law is the law. And a simple way we can send that message is by rejecting Russ Vought's nomination outright.

Mr. President, I am here today to strongly urge my colleagues to join me in doing just that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I would like to start by thanking Senator MURRAY for her extraordinary leadership. She has been a stalwart in the Senate for many, many years and now is the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee and knows firsthand the importance of the process by which we make a law in the United States. And that includes that we pass those laws in Congress. We fund them in Congress. It is signed by the President of the United States. And people across this Nation can know, through that process, those are what the laws are. If you don't like those laws, then elect different people who will come up with different versions of the law.

But everyone—Democrat or Republican—sticks to the same version, and that is: A law is a law.

The President of the United States or his co-President, Elon Musk, do not have the right simply to go back on the laws and say: Oh, we pick that one, that one, and that one to enforce—and that one, no; that one, no; and, maybe, that one, half time.

That is not how the process works.

Senator MURRAY has been the leading voice in fighting back against this, and I want to say how much I appreciate all that she has done.

I want to talk for just a minute about Project 2025. During the 2024 election, the American people became familiar with this Republican document called Project 2025. The document laid out Republican plans to reshape our country if they gained control.

Now, Americans, a little at a time, got a chance to see the plan. People started to read it, and they were shocked. In no time, people from across the political spectrum—not just Democrats; Democrats, Republicans, Independents—made clear how much they hated Project 2025 and that they wanted no part of it.

So what was in Project 2025 that made it so widely hated across the political spectrum?

A few things: firing civil servants, weaponizing the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigations, unleashing force onto protesters and targeting political opponents, restricting abortion nationwide, ripping retirement and healthcare benefits from seniors, dismantling public education, and—biggest and best—funding tax cuts for the rich by raising taxes on America's middle class.

I want to be clear, it is a big document. Those are just the top lines.

So Donald Trump's response was to swear over and over and over again that he had nothing to do with those plans; he didn't know about them, didn't endorse them, didn't want anything to do with them.

Here are some of the things that Donald Trump said about Project 2025 back in 2024:

> I know nothing about Project 2025.
>
> I have nothing to do with Project 2025.
>
> I disagree with some of the things they're saying and some of the things they're saying are absolutely ridiculous and abysmal.

And my personal favorite:

> They've been told officially, legally, in every way, that we have nothing to do with Project 2025.

So think about that. During the 2024 election, Donald Trump claimed he didn't know anything about Project 2025. But he lied. Shortly after the election, he nominated one of the chief architects of Project 2025 in a key role with the government.

Donald Trump has named the lead architect of Project 2025, Russ Vought, to oversee the Federal Government's entire budget office. That is right. Listen to this one. He is putting the head writer of the plans that you had only read about in nightmares in a key government position.

Russ Vought wrote Project 2025, and now, Donald Trump is rewarding him by inviting him into the government in order to carry out the Republican blueprint to make our government force people to live in the image that Russ Vought and other extremist Republicans approve of. And he plans to rework our economy to benefit the wealthiest among us and make everybody else pay for it.

Here are just a few of the things that Russ Vought has called for. Russ Vought has called on Congress to outlaw medication abortion nationwide, restricting women's reproductive rights, even in States that protect abortion. Russ Vought has encouraged discrimination against transgender people in the workplace and in healthcare. In his first stint as OMB Director, Russ Vought decried the use of Federal funding for diversity and equity training in a letter to Federal Agencies.

The Project 2025 playbook calls for eliminating almost every civil rights office in the Federal Government. And Russ Vought has said he intends to put Federal workers ''in trauma'' and destroy the merit-based system for civil servants so that he can fill the government with rightwing extremists.

I am going to pause here for a minute to see if Senator GILLIBRAND wants to speak.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Thank you so much, Senator WARREN, for your unbelievable tenacity and clear-eyed and thoughtful remarks.

I yield the balance of my postcloture debate time on the Vought nomination to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Duly noted.

Ms. WARREN. Let's keep in mind, Russ Vought has called for outlawing abortion—medication abortion—nationwide. It doesn't matter whether or not you live in a State that says, no, we are going to protect abortion. Russ Vought wants to find a way to make sure it is shut down everywhere.

He wants to encourage discrimination against transgender people.

He thinks that getting rid of civil rights is the way to go for the American Government.

And he says he wants to put Federal workers in trauma and destroy the merit-based system for civil servants so he can fill up our government with rightwing extremists.

Now, we are already seeing firsthand the devastating effects of Russ Vought's plan for America. Russ Vought was the puppet master behind the funding shutdown that threw this country into chaos last week. I saw this in Massachusetts. Parents didn't know if their toddlers' daycare would be open. Seniors didn't know if the hot meals they were expecting from Meals on Wheels would grind to a halt. No one knew if the nursing homes funded by Medicaid would be able to pay their workers.

That was just the tip of the iceberg for Russ Vought. If he is confirmed, you can absolutely bet on Russ Vought pulling out the rug from working people over and over and over again. Quite frankly, we don't know where he will stop. This is where they have started. Three weeks in, and this is where they have started.

Will Russ Vought, Elon Musk, and Donald Trump stop when they have ripped abortion rights away from every single woman in America?

Will they stop when he has abolished the Department of Education and fired 180,000 teachers from their jobs?

Will he stop when he has privatized Medicare and when seniors can't afford to go see the doctor?

Will he stop when he is done stealing from middle-class families in order to fund tax breaks for the wealthiest households? By the way, that is in his blueprint, too—tax hikes for the middle class and tax breaks for the rich.

Will he stop when he crashes the economy? Take it from me, with these kinds of plans, crashing the economy is

no longer a stretch. Russ Vought's Project 2025 proposals will lead to higher inflation, higher interest rates, and weaker economic growth. Project 2025 would seriously threaten another recession.

Look, already, families all across this country are feeling the pressure from high grocery prices while Donald Trump and his administration just turn their backs on working families.

American families cannot afford for Russ Vought to be in charge. We don't know how far Russ Vought's extremism will go, but we can't afford to wait and find out.

Americans voted for each and every one of us right here in the U.S. Senate to fight for them, and they do not expect us to roll over and play dead. It is our sworn duty to stop dangerous people like Russ Vought before he destroys our freedom, our economy, and the stability of every working family in this Nation. So I urge every Senator to vote no on his nomination.

I also want to take this chance to share some of the stories I have been hearing from my constituents, the people of Massachusetts. The impacts of Donald Trump's and Russ Vought's policies are affecting people in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and all across this country. I am here to fight for the people of Massachusetts, and I am here to share their stories.

I want to start with a message I received from a family childcare center that cares for hundreds of children each day so that moms have the opportunity to succeed in their careers.

Here is how the message goes:

Our community of early educators and families is on edge. We work with a very diverse population, and the rumors and threats related to immigration activities are having an impact. We have begun having families question removing their children from much needed and valuable early education programs because they are scared to separate from one another or even to go outside. Ninety-nine percent of the families we are working with are receiving a subsidy for their care.

So, with current funding through the Department of Early Education and Care, I believe it breaks down to approximately 60 percent federal and 40 percent state funds.

We have also historically been recipients of CDBG funds to support our training program, which would only be possible with Federal support.

So think about that.

When Russ Vought and Donald Trump and Elon Musk just decide to start shutting programs down, we have childcare centers that are writing in, saying, in effect, they are not going to have the money to keep the doors open for the children and the mommas whom they serve.

This is from a small business owner in Lynnfield. Sadaf owns a small business that works to innovate new lab equipment to improve cancer and prenatal screenings. She gets money from the National Institutes of Health. This is exactly the kind of person we want to see doing work right here in the United States.

Here is what she writes:

My small business . . . is currently partially funded through an NIH-NHGRI grant. Today, the grant is frozen, and we are unable to access any funds. If this freeze lasts more than a month, we will have to lay off hard-working employees and shut our doors.

Think about that.

Here is someone who has built a small business around doing more effective cancer screenings and prenatal screenings, and she has been recognized by the National Institutes of Health as someone who is doing the kind of cutting-edge research and delivering the kind of services we need. Because Russ Vought, Donald Trump, and Elon Musk say, ''No. We are just going to freeze funding here,'' the consequence is, she says: I am at risk of having to lay off employees and close my business.

I have heard this from many of my constituents.

Another in Worcester runs a small nonprofit to help communities vulnerable to the climate crisis. They have $1.5 million in contracts that they now can't access, and soon they are going to have to lay off employees.

The impact of holding this money up is real. It is felt in our communities. It is felt household by household by household when people can't get to the money they need so that they can issue the paychecks and keep people working. Why and how is that making America any better off?

Take this story from the Boston Globe, entitled '''Am I going to lose my husband?': The real price of Trump's budget freeze.''

The freeze is harming real people. One of them is James, a Virginia resident who told his story to the editorial board but asked that his last name not be used because he fears retaliation.

Eight years ago, when James was 32, after years of health problems, he was diagnosed with neuroendocrine tumors (formerly called Carcinoid cancer), with accompanying severe Carcinoid syndrome. Tumors were in his intestines and liver, with nodules on his lungs. A doctor gave him 3 to 6 months to live.

Standard treatment for these tumors is shots with one of two drugs—

And I am going to do my best to pronounce them—

octreotide or lanreotide. The first couple of months after his diagnosis, James spent a total of around $10,000 on shots and scans, [and that was in addition to his] insurance coverage.

So this is someone with health insurance.

He was working in a toy shop and studying graphic design, and the medical care [completely] drained his savings. Then James entered a National Institutes of Health research trial.

Because James was unusually young to get Carcinoid syndrome, NIH researchers wanted to study how he reacted to the disease and treatments. For the next 8 years, NIH provided and paid for his shots, scans, surgeries, medications, and procedures. ''All I had to do was be a guinea pig,'' James said.

As of December, he was getting a shot of lanreotide, which can cost thousands of dollars.

He was getting the shot every 3 weeks to keep his tumors from growing.

''If I were to lose the medication, they'd likely ramp up, become more aggressive, and potentially spread to other organs. It could be a death sentence,'' James said.

The disruptions started when it became clear Donald Trump might win the Presidential election. In October and November, NIH began recommending that if patients could get some medications—anti-nausea medicine or painkillers—from other doctors, they should, because the federal agency feared budget cuts. In December, after Trump's election, James said his doctor told him NIH could no longer provide lanreotide. But he was still part of the research protocol, so he would get yearly scans, and the NIH would conduct and pay for any necessary surgeries.

In other words, they wanted to continue to be able to study him.

In December, James started experiencing aphasia and memory loss, and a scan found spots in his brain. He's still undergoing diagnostic tests. NIH had a treatment protocol prepared for if the cancer did spread to his brain. Once Trump took office in January, however, James was told the research was frozen indefinitely, and he won't be getting any NIH care until that changes.

James is continuing treatment with a Medicare insurance plan provided by Kaiser Permanente, and he qualified for a financial assistance grant through May. But he worries the Trump administration will end that financial assistance. James receives disability payments, and his wife is a teacher, so they can't afford high out-of-pocket payments. ''When I heard about this, I thought, 'Am I going to lose my husband? Is he going to die?''' his wife, Becki, said.

Make no mistake, these are not one-off stories. Families everywhere, all across the country, in red States and blue States, are feeling the impacts of these policies—everyone.

Now, maybe you knew about this, maybe you didn't, but Trump is trying to keep you in the dark on some of these things while he distracts by renaming the Gulf of Mexico or dreaming about Canada as the 51st State. In just his first couple of weeks in office, Donald Trump has gone on a rampage against working people, signing hundreds of Executive orders—rolling the clock back on progress and reinstating harmful and unpopular policies from his first term. He signed many of these Executive orders in the middle of the night because he and his administration didn't want people to know about them.

So I just want to remind everybody, for all of those pictures of Donald Trump signing while everybody looked on and everybody smiled or with Donald Trump holding up an Executive order that he signed very proudly, those are not all of the Executive orders. There were a lot of his Executive orders that got signed late at night and then were just pushed out.

Here are some of the Executive orders that the American people may not know about, and they are right in lockstep with Project 2025:

In one Executive order, Donald Trump called for a Federal Government hiring freeze. Project 2025 proposed implementing a ''hiring freeze for career officials.'' So Trump does the Executive order exactly to what Project 2025 was proposing.

Here is Donald Trump's Executive order:

I hereby order a freeze on the hiring of Federal civilian employees to be applied throughout the executive branch.

There it is—Project 2025 and Donald Trump's Executive order.

Another Executive order: He withdrew from the Paris Climate Accords. So let's start with Project 2025. It proposed that the ''next conservative administration should withdraw the U.S. from the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.''

Here is Donald Trump's Executive order that was signed late at night:

The United States Ambassador to the United Nations shall immediately submit formal written notification of the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Project 2025 calls for it; Donald Trump delivers.

He paused the implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act and the bipartisan infrastructure law, which is fighting the climate crisis and helping cities and towns across America to upgrade their roads and bridges.

Project 2025 called to repeal ''massive spending bills like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act, which established new programs and are providing hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidies to renewable energy developers, their investors, and special interests, and support the rescinding of all funds not already spent by these programs.'' In other words, Project 2025 is saying: Shut it down. Shut it down.

Here is Donald Trump's Executive order:

All agencies shall immediately pause the disbursement of funds appropriated through the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 . . . or the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

So there we are. Project 2025 calls for it; Donald Trump delivers with an Executive order.

The fact that he cannot legally do that doesn't seem to have slowed him down at all. In fact, Project 2025 talks about repealing those laws. That means you come to Congress, and then Congress votes on it—the House and the Senate. And only if you get majorities in the House and Senate do you send it over to the President of the United States to sign it into law.

Donald Trump isn't doing it. Republicans are in charge of the House. Republicans are in charge of the Senate. But instead of saying we are going to amend the law that has already gone through the process and been signed in and the money has all been appropriated for it, nope—instead—Donald Trump says, with a middle-of-the-night Executive order, I am just going to say: Stop spending money.

That is impoundment, and it is clearly unlawful. He is in violation of the law.

Now, on abortion, Trump reinstated and expanded the global gag rule—a heartless rule that makes women and girls across the world less safe by cutting funding for health centers that may provide abortion.

Planned Parenthood gave us an idea of just how bad this is. Here is their quote on this:

Also known as the Mexico City policy, the global gag rule prevents foreign organizations that receive certain U.S. assistance from providing, counseling, referring, or advocating for legal abortion in their country—even with their own money and [their own] resources. The global gag rule blocks health care access, disrupts coalitions and stifles local advocacy efforts, and undermines reproductive rights worldwide. [By the way,] it is also deeply unpopular with the American people.

In fact, here is what Alexis McGill Johnson, who is President and CEO of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America said:

President Trump is kicking off his second term exactly as anticipated: attacking sexual and reproductive health care. The global gag rule not only disrupts the delivery of health services in areas of the world that are most in need; it also rolls back progress in countries that have fought to advance access to health care and human rights. Elected officials should not be interfering in personal medical decisions, in this country or anywhere else in the world. We must reverse and end the global gag rule permanently, full stop.

But Donald Trump just signed that Executive order in the middle of the night, and women—particularly poor women—all around the world will pay the price.

Here is more of what Donald Trump did to try to turn back the clock on women's bodies. This one comes from POLITICO:

President Trump's campaign-trail promise to leave abortion regulation to the states lasted just a few days into his presidency.

He issued executive orders . . . that revive some anti-abortion policies from his first administration—including restrictions on federal funding for family planning and other health programs abroad that discuss abortion as an option or provide referrals for the procedure.

So the President signed the Executive orders hours after addressing the annual anti-abortion March for Life in a prerecorded video.

A 2022 study by the National Academy of Sciences estimated that Trump's anti-abortion restrictions on foreign aid led to 108,000 deaths of women and children in poor countries over the 4 years of his first administration. How does that happen? Well, it is because that Executive order from the first time around slashed funding for groups like the nonprofit MSI Reproductive Choices, which operates clinics that provide contraception and testing for sexually transmitted infections with U.S. funds, and it uses separate revenues to fund and provide abortions.

MSI said, ahead of the policy being reinstated, that it wouldn't abide by it. This will lead to the organization losing $14 million in U.S. Agency for International Development funding, an MSI spokesperson said. The organization estimates the financial loss could result in an additional 2.4 million unintended pregnancies because the organization would have to stop providing contraception in several countries.

I am at a complete loss to explain how the United States is better off if more unintended pregnancies happen in poor countries and how we explain that, the last time around, when Trump did this, it resulted in 108,000 deaths of women and children in poor countries, and that we are headed straight into the same plan again.

Another study by Stanford University researchers found that the narrower version of the Mexico City policy that several GOP Presidents enacted prior to Trump caused the number of abortions to increase across Sub-Saharan Africa because so many women lost access to contraception.

Let me say that once again. For everyone who thinks that abortion should not occur, understand the consequence of the Trump Executive order, and that is that it increases the number of abortions across Sub-Saharan Africa because women lose their access to contraption.

Abortion rights advocates have also argued that the policy is overbroad because it imposes restrictions in countries where abortion is legal. One day earlier, in another move that thrilled abortion opponents, Trump issued pardons for roughly two dozen people convicted of forcibly entering and blocking access to abortion clinics. In fact, this has been an important part of the Trump Executive order stream in this area.

The idea that the Federal laws that protect women who are walking from where they have parked their car to an abortion clinic and also a place where they may get contraception, where they may get a mammogram, where they may get other health screenings, not to be interfered with; that they get a chance to walk without having people scream in their faces and spit on them, that has been taken away by the President of the United States. He has said: Move in a little closer. Bear down harder on those women.

And, still, the anti-abortion groups that helped Trump win reelection are looking beyond these actions and are pushing for more from the new administration.

For example, what are they asking for now? Well, they want to look at a ban on telehealth prescriptions and mail delivery of abortion pills. They want to do rules forcing States to provide more detailed information on all abortions within their borders, so they can see more about who is getting what treatments, and repeal of the Biden administration rules that expanded abortion access for some military members and veterans. It is all happening out in plain view.

Let us be clear: This is and always has been about controlling women's bodies. Donald Trump packed the Supreme Court with anti-abortion extremists to get Roe overturned, and he

bragged about it afterward. This is the latest in Trump's yearslong crusade against women's reproductive rights. And understand this: We will fight back.

As you probably have already seen in the news, Elon Musk has taken control of the government's critical payment systems, which include sensitive personal information for millions of Americans.

This is the system that makes sure that your grandpa gets his Social Security check. This is the system that makes sure that your mom's doctor gets the Medicare payment to cover her medical appointment. And this is the system that makes sure that you get the tax refund that you are owed. Now it has been taken over by Elon Musk.

Every organization—from your State government that uses Federal money on that bridge project to your local Head Start that takes care of little kids while their mommies and daddies go to work—is now at the mercy of Elon Musk.

Maybe you get paid, but, then again, maybe you don't. Elon just grabbed the controls of that whole payment system, demanding the power to turn it on for his friends and turn it off for anyone he declares he doesn't like—one guy deciding who gets paid and who doesn't. It is not the law, but it is the reality.

There is a second problem here. It is not just payments from the Federal Government that are now in Elon's control. Elon and his handful of friends now have access to your personal financial information, anything that is in the system. Your payment history, your Social Security number, your address, your bank account numbers—Elon now has the power to suck out all that information for his own use. And, now, whether it is to boost his personal finances or to expand his political power, it is all up to Elon.

Understand, in a world in which data is power, Elon has just increased his power.

There is a third kind of problem here. In order for this handful of programmers to gain access to our $6 trillion payment system, we don't know what kind of safeguards were pulled down. Are the gates wide open now for hackers from China, from North Korea, from Iran, from Russia? Heck, who knows what black-hat hackers all around the world are finding out right now about each and every one of us, copying that information, and storing it for their own future criminal uses.

How many back doors are being installed right now in the system that is truly the financial guts of our economy—the one that makes sure that the payments go out? All of that information is now at risk.

This week, I wrote to the Secretary of the Department of the Treasury, Scott Bessent, with extreme concern following this reporting. Here is what I said:

I write regarding a disturbing report that—in one of your first acts after [you were confirmed] as Treasury Secretary—you have given Elon Musk and his surrogates ''full access'' to the federal government's critical payment systems, which includes the sensitive personal information of millions of Americans.

It is extraordinarily dangerous to meddle with the critical systems that process trillions of dollars of transactions each year, are essential to preventing a default on federal debt, and that ensure that tens of millions of Americans receive their Social Security checks, tax refunds, and Medicare benefits. I am also alarmed by reports that you personally sidelined the key official responsible for managing the extraordinary measures the Department of the Treasury is taking to avoid a default on U.S. debt, risking missteps that could result in a global financial meltdown that costs trillions of dollars and millions of jobs. I am writing to seek answers about your role in this security and management failure and about how you intend to protect the integrity of the federal government's financial operations after handing over the systems to Mr. Musk's team.

According to public reports, even before President Trump's inauguration, Mr. Musk's surrogates began demanding access to the sensitive payment systems that the federal government uses to disburse trillions of dollars every year. The public depends on the integrity of those systems, which control the flow of over $6 trillion in payments to American families, businesses, and other recipients each year—with millions relying on them for Social Security checks and Medicare benefits, federal salaries, government contract payments, grants, and tax refunds this filing season. In just one year, for example, the Department's Bureau of Fiscal Service disbursed nearly 1.3 billion payments totaling $5.4 trillion. It also collected nearly $5.5 trillion in federal revenue. Given the highly sensitive nature of the information in these systems, control over them is typically limited to a small number of career officials.

The Musk team's unprecedented demand for total access to the system reportedly caused serious concern at the Department, particularly given that ''the system has historically been closely held because it includes sensitive personal information'' on millions of Americans and sends out virtually every federal payment—including payments that are critical for the economy and national security.

I just want to say off to the side, the Presiding Officer and I were both in a Banking hearing this morning, and one of the questions that Democrats put to our bankers who were present is, Would you let someone come in and see the personal banking records of your customers? And the bankers, of course, said no, there is no way they would permit that. Yet the Secretary of the Treasury opened the door and said Elon Musk and his designees could come in and look at anything they wanted to look at.

Controlling the system could allow the Trump administration to ''unilaterally''—and illegally—cut off payments for millions of Americans, putting at risk the financial security of families and businesses based on political favoritism or the whims of Mr. Musk and those on his team who have [managed to work] their way inside. It could also give them access to millions of Americans' personal and financial information that is protected by law.

We would shut down a bank that did what the Secretary of the Treasury did in letting Elon Musk come in and root around in the personal financial information of Americans all across this country.

The Washington Post reported that the Department's top career official, David Lebryk—who had served in nonpolitical roles in the Department for decades—

Served Republicans, served Democrats—

including as Fiscal Assistant Secretary since 2014—resisted political pressure to cave to the Musk surrogates. The demands of those outsiders were especially concerning because Mr. Musk and the Trump Administration have tried to control spending in alarming and potentially unlawful ways—including through the chaotic announcement of a federal funding freeze last week that caused widespread harm and confusion. Mr. Musk was reportedly trying ''to deploy his engineers to find ways to turn off the flow of money from the Treasury Department to things that Mr. Trump wants to defund.'' In other words, a small group of insiders would suddenly be in a position to make decisions about whether to hold up payments to individual families or businesses—with absolutely no transparency or accountability. But rather than protecting the integrity and function of the payment system, [our Secretary of the Treasury] reportedly bent to pressure from the White House, suggested putting Mr. Lebryk on leave, and ultimately forced him out.

This astonishing mismanagement—turning over the federal government's entire payment system and sidelining the most senior career official responsible for managing it—also puts the country at greater risk of defaulting on our debt, which could trigger a global financial crisis. The Fiscal Assistant Secretary was ''the government staffer perhaps most responsible for figuring out how the United States should handle the alarming prospect of running out of money, making him a pivotal, if lesser-known, player in [a] debt ceiling standoff.'' The Fiscal Assistant Secretary is responsible for assessing when the country will exhaust its funds and ensuring that Congress has that information, for ''coordinating and determining how much money the Treasury needs to borrow to finance the government,'' and for ''manag[ing] the 'extraordinary measures' '' that the Department uses to ''delay a default for as long as possible.'' The Fiscal Assistant Secretary—unlike the amateurs [that the Secretary of the Treasury has] empowered [when he forced them] out—was well-prepared to manage these kinds of crises. He had ''moved through positions that gave him deep exposure to the plumbing of federal financing'' and was a ''scrupulously apolitical'' civil servant who was ''not angling for a political promotion.'' That expertise is particularly critical at this moment, when the Department is already taking extraordinary measures to avoid a default that ''would precipitate another financial crisis and threaten jobs and savings of everyday Americans.''

I sent this letter to Secretary of the Treasury, and I said:

I am alarmed that as one of your first acts as Secretary, you appear to have handed over a highly sensitive system responsible for millions of Americans' private data—and a key function of government—to an unelected billionaire and an unknown number of his unqualified flunkies. The American people deserve answers about your role in this mismanagement, which threatens the

privacy and economic security of every American.

It is no surprise that working families are paying the price for Donald Trump and Russ Vought's reckless actions. Just look at who is running the government: Donald Trump, billionaire; Elon Musk, billionaire; Scott Bessent, billionaire; Linda McMahon, billionaire; Howard Lutnick, billionaire; Charles Kushner, billionaire. And the list goes on. The total net worth of the billionaires in the Trump administration is at least $382.2 billion. That is more than the GDP of 172 different countries.

Elon Musk, first buddy and head of the Department of Government Efficiency, himself is worth $410 billion. He is $150 billion richer than he was on election day. Linda McMahon, Secretary of the Department of Education, is worth $3.2 billion. Howard Lutnick, nominated for the Secretary of the Department of Commerce, is worth more than $1.5 billion but likely more. Kelly Loeffler, head of the Small Business Administration, is worth $1.1 billion. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., nominated for Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, is estimated to be worth about $15 million. And he has refused to give up a lucrative arrangement with a law firm that will enable his family to make millions off vaccine-related lawsuits, even while he is heading up HHS. Steven Witkoff, Envoy to the Middle East, is worth a billion. Jared Isaacman, NASA Administrator, is worth $2 billion.

Take this piece from CNN:

Elon Musk plowed at least $260 million into efforts to send Donald Trump back to the White House, new filings show—a massive infusion that makes him one of the largest single political underwriters of a presidential campaign and underscores the outsized influence of the world's wealthiest person in this year's election.

Thursday's filings with the Federal Election Commission show that the Tesla and SpaceX executive gave a total of $238 million to a super PAC that he founded this year, America PAC, which worked to turn out voters on Trump's behalf in key states.

But he also was the financial backer of other groups that cropped up in the final days of the election to support Trump, including one that spent millions on advertising to defend [Trump's] record on abortion. It had sought to link Trump's views on abortion to those of the late Supreme Court Justice and liberal icon Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

These people have no shame.

Musk, through a trust that bears his name, donated $20.5 million to the group, named RBG PAC, on October 24, according to filings with the Federal Election Commission. He was the sole donor to the group, which was formed in mid-October. The donation's timing meant that Musk's involvement was not disclosed until—

After the election, after the inauguration, not until last—

Thursday's post-election filings with the federal regulators.

Ginsburg's granddaughter, Clara Spera, publicly denounced the ads—which sought to neutralize abortion as a liability for Trump in the campaign—as misleading and an ''affront'' to Ginsburg's legacy as a staunch defender of abortion rights.

So true.

According to the new filings, Musk also donated $3 million to the MAHA Alliance, a super PAC that ran stark ads in key swing states urging supporters of Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to back Trump in the closing stretch of the campaign. Kennedy himself had ended his independent campaign over the summer and endorsed Trump.

MAHA stands for ''Make America Healthy Again,'' Kennedy's spin on Trump's MAGA catchphrase. Trump has now tapped Kennedy, one of the nation's most prominent anti-vaccine conspiracy theorists, to oversee the Health and Human Services Department.

Trump has selected other big donors for roles in his incoming administration.

Howard Lutnick, the Cantor Fitzgerald investment bank chief whom Trump has tapped to head the Commerce Department, made a nearly $3 million ''in-kind'' donation of stock on October 21 to a pro-Trump super PAC, MAGA Inc., according to the organization's filings Thursday night.

That's on top of the $6 million that Lutnick previously donated to the super PAC over the course of the election cycle.

Other Trump supporters who have landed spots in his administration also donated to MAGA Inc. They include Linda McMahon, the former wrestling company executive tapped to serve as Education secretary. She donated more than $20 million to the Trump-aligned super PAC this cycle.

McMahon and Lutnick also served as co-chairs of Trump's transition operation.

Other Trump picks who have made seven-figure donations to MAGA Inc. include former Georgia Sen. Kelly Loeffler, his choice to lead the Small Business Administration; Scott Bessent, whom Trump has selected as Treasury secretary; and two of his choices for plum diplomatic posts in Europe, Arkansas investor Warren Stephens and Charles Kushner, the father-in-law of Trump's daughter, Ivanka.

And look, don't get me wrong, if you made a fortune because you had a great idea and you built a terrific business, good for you. But I guarantee that any great fortune in America was built, at least in part, using workers that all of us helped pay to educate; built, at least in part, by getting your goods to market on roads and bridges that all of us helped to pay to build; built, at least in part, protected by police and firefighters that all of us help pay the salaries for.

And now, instead of creating a system that will help the next guy or gal that comes along build something, these guys want to pull up the ladder. They poured money into the 2024 election, and now, they expect a return on their investment at the expense of everyone else.

The Trump strategy is to flood the zone, partly so we don't see each of the horrible orders and pay attention to them, but partly to demoralize us. Trump and his Republican friends hope that we will be demoralized. They hope that we will give up, curl in a little ball, and let them do whatever they want to do. I get it. It is tough right now, but it is important that we get back up and fight, and that is exactly what I am doing.

I am challenging Elon Musk on his Department of Government Efficiency efforts to take away help for seniors who are living in nursing homes and little kids who are hoping for their daycare. I am asking questions of every nominee and pointing out to other Senators and to the public where they pose a real danger to the American people.

Look at the fight over Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth. He is a credibly accused rapist who has been falling down drunk at work events, and he has run not one but two nonprofits directly into the ground. Nonetheless, Republican Senators stood beside him. He made it through his confirmation, but it wasn't a freebie. Some Republicans broke ranks, and everyone in the country who was paying attention got to see up close and personal just how far the Republicans were willing to go to cower in front of Donald Trump.

Those are the fights we must keep fighting. We will not roll over and play dead. This is not business as usual. The No. 1 thing people can do right now is speak out. Speak out on social media about every one of these things. Talk about the threats these people pose. Speak out about what Donald Trump is doing.

In the middle of the night last Friday, Donald Trump issued a batch of Executive orders turning back the clock decades on women's reproductive rights. If people talk about that, then that is how we will begin to rebuild a movement to push out the Trump vision of America, in which billionaires are on top and everyone else is left in the dirt—and women don't get to make their own health decisions.

I have only got 24 hours a day, but I plan to spend as many of them as humanly possible fighting back against Trump, Musk, and the billionaires who have taken over our country to promote themselves at the expense of everyone else.

It is up to us. I am not lying down and playing dead, and I hope nobody else does either.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, I yield 30 minutes of my postcloture debate time on the Vought nomination to Senator MERKLEY and 30 minutes of my postcloture debate time on the Vought nomination to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Louisiana.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with me today is one of my colleagues from my Senate office, Mr. James Shea. He is one of my right-hand people and does great work. And I am honored that he could join me today.

Gosh, I don't know where to begin. I have been in the Senate for 8 years. In dog years, that is 56 years, and it feels like 56 years. I have learned a lot, met a lot of interesting people. You know, before I got here, everybody told me about the Washington bubble, and I said, you know, how serious could they be.

Well, it is true; there is a Washington bubble. This place is different. It is in its own way sometimes disappointing, sometimes refreshing. It is deeply weird. For one thing, common sense is illegal in Washington. It is illegal.

For another thing, I have discovered that this is a town of very frustrated ex-class presidents, and there is a Washington way of doing things. And when things aren't done that way, when somebody challenges the status quo, many—not all—but many of these frustrated ex-class presidents in Washington, on the Hill and otherwise, they get excited, not in a good way.

They can't get their mind around doing anything other than the Washington way. Some of them, particularly in the media, they go almost catatonic, or the exact opposite, they foam at the mouth. And they really get upset. They can make a Valium nervous. It is like we are not doing things the way we have always done them, and the world is going to spin off its axis.

I want to try to put in perspective what many of my Democratic friends have been talking about today. They are very, very, very upset at President Trump, and they are very, very, very upset at Elon Musk.

President Trump ran for President on a number of issues. One of the issues he ran on—he said it almost every day. He said: If you make me President, I am going to go through the entire budget and review all the spending, line by line. If I heard him say that once, I heard him say that a thousand times. And that is what he has been doing.

He went out and appointed, through an Executive order, Elon Musk—who some people like him, some don't, but he is not a dummy. He is a very successful business person. He has got a top secret security clearance. President Trump issued an Executive order, and he turned to Mr. Musk, and he said: Mr. Musk, I want you to do for me what I said I was going to do in the election. I want you to go through all the spending line by line.

Now, let me ask you something: How are you going to review the spending without reviewing the spending? How are you going to audit the spending by an Agency without auditing the Agency? That is what I mean when I say common sense is illegal in Washington, DC. That is what Mr. Musk is doing.

He has put together a crackerjack team, and they are going through everybody's spending line by line, item by item. And my Democratic colleagues are very, very, very upset, and they have been very eloquent. They have talked about the process, and President Trump's Executive orders supposedly violates the Constitution. And they have accused Mr. Musk of having conflicts of interest. And I have heard people say he is sitting over there with a notepad copying down everybody's Social Security number, and he is going to go use it to make money.

I mean, people in this town—not just my Democratic colleagues—they are really upset. They have never had anybody question their spending. But that is what Mr. Musk is doing. But you know what, I have listened, this has been going on for a week. People have been screaming like they are part of a prison riot. Oh, my God, look at what Musk is doing. He is looking at the spending.

And I have listened to the people talk about the process and debate whether it is constitutional and discuss how many lawyers can dance on the head of a pin, but you know what I haven't heard one single person who is upset with President Trump or Mr. Musk talk about? What he has found. They don't want to talk about the spending, the spending porn, the waste of taxpayer money that he has found. I mean, that is the point of all of this.

I tell you who is interested, the American people, the people in America who get up every day and go to work and obey the law and pay their taxes and try to educate their kids and try to do the right thing by their kids and try to save a little money for retirement. And they have had to live through 20 percent inflation under President Biden. They understand what Musk is doing. They understand spending porn and wasting taxpayer money.

Now, Mr. Musk started with USAID. It handles a lot of foreign aid for America. The American people are very generous. In our country, when you are homeless, we will house you. When you are hungry, we will feed you. In our country, when you are too poor to be sick, we will pay for your doctor. And we send a lot of money overseas to help our world's neighbors. And USAID is a part of that.

But I will tell you what Mr. Musk discovered—I will tell you it fascinated me. He discovered that the American taxpayers are giving money to Afghanistan. He found that we are giving money to Yemen. He found that we are giving money to Syria. I didn't know that. Some of our foreign aid is going to Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria.

He found that USAID has 10,000 people—10,000 people—employees, and every year, they give away $40 billion. Mr. Musk also found—and I am not saying that all of this money is wasteful; I am not. Some of this money, I am sure, does some good. That is why Secretary Rubio is going to revamp the Department and separate the good from the bad.

But this is the kind of stuff Mr. Musk found: He found that USAID gave money to support electric vehicles in Vietnam—our money, taxpayer money. He found that USAID gave money to a transgender clinic in India—I didn't know that. I bet you the American people didn't know that.

He found that USAID gave $1.5 million to a Serbian LGBTQ group called Grupa Izadji. I probably mispronounced that. My apologies. Anyway, they got 1.5 million to ''advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in Serbia's workplaces and business communities.''

What else did Mr. Musk find that my colleagues don't want to talk about? Well, he reviewed a study and then went and checked it. The study was done by the Middle East Forum. They found that USAID spent $164 million to support radical organizations around the world. We are not talking Cub Scout troops here. We are talking about radical organizations around the world. They gave $122 million of that to groups aligned with foreign terrorist organizations—our taxpayer money.

According to this report and Mr. Musk, the USAID has given millions of dollars to ''organizations . . . in Gaza controlled by Hamas.'' Why aren't my colleagues talking about that?

Recipients of the money, they found, have ''called for their lands to be 'cleansed' from the 'impurity of Jews.' '' That is who we are giving our foreign aid to? What else? I am not going to spend my whole time talking about this, but nobody else is talking about it. They are just talking about the process and Mr. Musk and he is a mean guy and he shouldn't be looking at our spending. Well, he is, and I kind of find what he found out interesting.

He found that we gave $2 million—USAID did—for sex changes in Guatemala. He found that we gave $20 million to produce a new ''Sesame Street'' show in Iraq. He found that we gave $4.5 million of taxpayer money to combat disinformation in Kazakhstan. He found that we gave $10 million—USAID did—of meals to an al-Qaida-linked terrorist group called the al-Nusrah Front. Mr. Musk found that we gave $7.9 million of taxpayer money to a project that would teach Sri Lankan journalists to avoid binary-gendered language. We took—the USAID took 8 million bucks and gave it to a bunch of journalists in Sri Lanka to teach them how to avoid binary-gendered language. I don't know what the hell binary-gendered language is. I think I do. You think most taxpayers would support that? Why aren't we talking about that? USAID gave $1.5 million to promote LGBT advocacy in Jamaica. They gave $1.5 million to rebuild the Cuban media ecosystem. They gave $1.5 million for Art for Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Belarus, another $3.9 million for LGBT causes in Macedonia, $8.3 million for equity and inclusion education in Nepal. I could go all night.

And many of my colleagues are upset. They are really mad at Mr. Musk. Hell, I think we ought to give him a medal. All he is doing is what President Trump said he was going to do. President Trump said he was going to audit the spending. So Trump goes and hires Musk—again, with a top-secret security clearance. Nobody can quibble with his intelligence, you know. The guy is as smart as Einstein's cousin. He is a very successful businessman. Some say he is the richest guy in the world. And he is doing the auditing. And, man, he is finding a lot of stuff. I call it spending porn.

Now, I am not saying everything that USAID does is wasted, but I am saying a lot of it is—a hell of a lot of it is. And we ought to be on the floor of this U.S. Senate thanking Mr. Musk, and we ought to be asking him to go through every Agency and look at everybody's budget—everybody's budget.

That is what the American people want. They don't want to talk about process. They don't want to continue with the Washington way. They want to save some money.

Now, let me tell you what is really going on here too. For 4 years under President Biden and for, what, 8 years under President Obama—and I respect both of them. I don't hate anybody. I don't. When I say my prayers at night, one of the things I ask God: God, don't let me hate, because it is hard in Washington. Don't let me hate. I have all the respect in the world for President Biden and President Obama. Tough job. But between them, they spent 12 years in Washington. And Presidents set the tone; they control the questions that are asked.

And here is the question that President Obama and President Biden asked for 8 years—for 12 years. I heard it every single day: Who needs to pay more in taxes? Is it you? Is it you? Who needs to pay more in taxes? We need more money. Who needs to pony up more? That was the issue.

But that is not the issue today. We have a new President. You know what the issue is today? What the hell happened to all of the money? What the hell happened to all of the money? And that is what Mr. Musk is finding out. That is all this is about.

I am just shocked that my colleagues have decided that this is the hill they are going to die on. How can you look the American people in the eye and support this kind of waste? Support this kind of spending porn?

I mean, the election, to me, made at least one thing clear, that the American people are sick and tired of people in Washington denying reality. The last administration tried to convince us that we were living in a crime-free world where inflation was temporary and the border was secure, and the American people didn't buy it. You know why? Because it wasn't true.

And the administration, our last administration, tried to argue that Bidenomics was making our lives better, but the American people knew differently. They understood Bidenomics to mean: I get to spend more to live worse. And they voted.

Now, I mean, the American people were poorer under the last administration, but they didn't become stupid. They could see that the government was creating the problem, not trying to fix it. And they noticed the national debt too.

Put up that first chart for me.

You know what our national debt is? $36 trillion. Not million, not billion—$36 trillion. It takes my breath away. Highest it has ever been, over 100 percent of our gross domestic product. Our debt is growing faster than our economy. And we toss around these numbers—a trillion, a billion, a million, a squillion—like it is nothing. I want to try to put this in context.

If I started counting right now and I counted one numeral, if you will, per second—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7—and I kept counting all day and all night, I didn't sleep, I counted between bites of oatmeal at breakfast, I just counted continually one numeral per second, it would take me 32 years to count to 1 billion—32 years to count to 1 billion. It would be 2057. I would be dead as Woodrow Wilson. I wouldn't live that long, and that is just a billion.

Our debt is $36 trillion. Do you know how long it would take me to count to a trillion? It would take 31,000 years if I counted one numeral per second. About as old as CHUCK GRASSLEY—31,000 years.

It would take me 1 million years to count to 36 trillion.

Those are the kind of numbers we are talking about, and the American people understand it.

Since 2019, America's population has grown 2 percent. We are not having babies—2 percent. And that is after massive immigration.

You know how much our budget has grown? It has grown 55 percent—55 percent. Yeah, we have had inflation, but we haven't had 55-percent worth of inflation. That is how we got to this $36 trillion in debt.

Put up the next chart for me.

Now some of this money we had to spend during the pandemic, and it was a bipartisan effort during the pandemic. Republicans voted for it, and Democrats voted for it because we had no choice. I was there. I saw it from the inside. We came this close to losing the American economy.

And you know who helped a lot, doesn't get enough credit? Jay Powell with the Federal Reserve. I watched it. The whole world wanted to go into a cave and retreat.

Back in the great recession, I remember all the other countries in the world looked to us. They may hate us, but they know we are the greatest country in all of human history. They look to America.

And you know what? Back in the great recession, all the other countries wanted treasuries, treasury notes, treasury bonds. Not this time. They were so scared; they didn't want treasuries. They wanted dollars, cash dollars. So Jay Powell—thank the Lord—he goes over to the Federal Reserve. He opens what is called a currency swap line. And he told every country: You want dollars? I will trade you dollars for your currency. Everything calmed down. He doesn't get any credit for that, but it was a gutsy thing to do.

But on top of that, to save the American economy—that wasn't helping the American economy. We had to keep the economy going. We spent a lot of money.

But then COVID ended. And what we should have done was go back to pre-COVID spending, but we didn't do that.

President Biden, after the shutdowns and the coronavirus, the pandemic was over, passed the American Rescue Plan. COVID was over. He spent $1.9 trillion. Never let a good crisis go to waste. I didn't vote for it.

Then he came back and passed what he called an infrastructure deal. It was really just the green new deal. I know what is in that bill. That was another $1.2 trillion.

And then he passed the Inflation Reduction Act. I didn't vote for it. But that was another $1.0 trillion.

And then he passed the CHIPS Act. This is really special. He said: Big Tech, the semiconductor companies, need our money. They need taxpayer money. They are not making enough money. And he gave them money.

He didn't give hardware stores money. President Biden didn't give the healthcare industry money. He said: I want to help Big Tech, and, boy, they sucked it up like a Hoover Deluxe. We spent $280 billion subsidizing Big Tech.

And you add it all up, and that is 4.3, almost $4.5 trillion, and that is how we got $36 trillion in debt. And that is why Donald Trump said: I am going to look at every single line item we are spending. And that is why he gave the job to Elon Musk. And that is why Musk is altering these accounts. But nobody wants to talk about what he is finding. Nobody wants to talk about the spending part, except the American people. They get it, Mr. President. They get it.

I hope Mr. Musk continues. My colleague and friend—we had a little discussion in Banking today. Senator WARNER makes a good point. He wants Mr. Musk to come over and talk to Congress about how he is doing this. I am all for that. I am all for that. I would love to have him come over and walk us through what he is doing and how he is discovering all this spending part. We need all the help we can get in reducing our spending because we can't continue at this pace.

I just want to spend a few minutes putting all this in perspective. The world is not going to spin off its axis, folks. Every business that I know of goes through an audit. Now we are being audited. But we are being audited by—not by the usual auditors—but we are being audited by a person appointed by the President of the United States.

I am betting you, when he is through—and he is going to go through all these Agencies. He is starting on the Department of Education next. I think he will end up finding that some of our money is being well spent, but he is also going to find that some of our money is being stolen and it is being wasted, and that is an insult to every taxpayer in this country.

I am going to end like I began. We ought to be giving Mr. Musk a medal. We ought to be thanking him. Maybe nobody else wants to hear about the

spending part, but I can't wait to read the book. I hope he finds all of it and compiles it. I hope Marco Rubio, the new Secretary of State, takes USAID and shakes them by the shoulder and lifts up the good people there and fires the bad people—the people that wasted taxpayer money like this, giving money to terrorist organizations, giving money to organizations that support Hamas. I hope he gets rid of every single one of them.

I think, if we listen to Mr. Musk, we can save a lot of money. And I hope he does come over and explain what he is doing.

CHAGOS ISLANDS

Mr. President, I want to talk about one other subject real quick. I talked about it before. I am not going to repeat it.

This is India. This is China, which wants to run the whole world. China is already trying to take over the shipping lanes in the South China Sea. This is the Chagos Islands, right down here.

Years ago, the Chagos Islands were owned by France. France ceded the Chagos Islands to our friends in Great Britain.

A number of years ago, the United Kingdom and America got together and we built—mostly with American dollars, by the way—we built a military base in the Chagos Islands, on one particular island called Diego Garcia.

This is a really important military base. For one thing, it is very close to the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean and China, so we can watch it. For another thing, it is one of the only bases where our nuclear submarines can dock—hugely important.

Well, the United Nations got mad at the United Kingdom. They said: Great Britain, you are bad people. You used to be colonialists. You acquired other countries, sometimes freely, sometimes by force.

Every country I know of in the world of any strength has done that. It doesn't mean we ought to be proud of it, but it is part of our history.

But the United Nations said: Shame on you, UK. Shame on you—bad, bad, bad, bad. You have to give back the Chagos Islands and the military base there.

The U.N. doesn't have any jurisdiction over the United Kingdom. But the U.N. said: Not only do you have to give it back, but you don't give it back to the people of the Chagos Islands; you give it back to another group of islands way down here called Mauritius. Mauritius used to own the Chagos Islands when France ceded them to Great Britain. They were run by Mauritius. But the people of the two island groups—archipelagos—the people don't have any affinity.

What does Mauritius say? Of course, we will take it.

But they want to start charging the United States and the UK 9 billion for a 99-year lease. So we can lease our own military base all because the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom feels guilty because somebody, some tofu-eating ''wokerati'' at the United Nations, says they are bad people—bad, bad, bad colonialists.

And the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, he is going along with it, but he says: I am negotiating with Mauritius. And the leader of Mauritius just issued a press release saying: Yes, he is negotiating. He increased the price and shortened the leash.

Do you know who is loving all of this? China, because China has a close relationship with Mauritius. And do you know what? It is going to get a lot closer.

This is insane. This is cell-deep stupid. This is bone-deep, down-to-the-marrow stupid, because the United Nations wants the United Kingdom to feel guilty, they want to give our military base and their military base to Mauritius.

Now, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom can stop this, and Marco Rubio, our new Secretary of State, is against it. I haven't talked to him directly, but I think President Trump is against it. The United Kingdom is our friend. I went to school there for a while. I love it.

I want to see the Prime Minister do well, but he needs to put down the bong. He needs to put down the bong.

This makes absolutely no sense, and it is going to be a big part of his legacy if he gives away this island and our military base to, in effect, what will eventually be China.

I would say to the Prime Minister tonight—I don't mean any disrespect. I want to say this respectfully. I shouldn't have said the ''bong'' part. I take it back.

Please, Mr. Prime Minister, don't do this. Don't do this. We will stand with you in telling the United Nations, who is upset with you, to go fill out a hurt feelings report because we are not doing it. We will stand with you. Please say no. Don't give our military base away. It is going to really hurt the relationship between the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

I know Donald Trump pretty well. I know Marco Rubio pretty well. They will forgive, but they will never, ever forget. Don't do it, Mr. Prime Minister.

I have taken too much time. I am sorry.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I know my time has been squeezed a little bit. I have other colleagues. I want to mention one thing to my friend from Louisiana. I love to listen to him talk. There are a lot of things he says that I tend to agree with, a lot of things I tend to disagree with.

I do want to make sure folks know what I have some concern about. You want a debate about any of these programs; that is fair cooking. If there are ways to save spending, count me in. In fact, you are a former Governor; I am a former Governor. Virginia got named best managed State in the country when I was Governor. And you know how we got that information about line item programs? Because about a decade ago—maybe 12 years ago—Rob Portman and I did something called the DATA Act, which gives you that line-by-line information.

We can debate about the validity of these programs. What you don't need to do is to put two—I have the name of one person, maybe not the name of the other—into the Treasury with, to my knowledge, at least for one of them, we are not sure if they have any security clearances at all—to look at $1.3 billion of checks being written out by the U.S. Treasury.

You want to debate about USAID; have at it, if the programs can't be defended.

But why would you give someone—a coder—the potential keys to the kingdom of the U.S. Treasury? Why does this coder—or Mr. Musk's DOGE bros—need to know how much the U.S. Government paid the Senator from Louisiana on a tax refund or the Senator from Virginia or anyone? I will make it a simple question to ask. Come in and explain yourself.

I would love to go through more, but I know I have colleagues waiting too.

NOMINATION OF RUSSELL VOUGHT

Mr. President, I want to get back to what we are talking about here, which is how strongly I oppose the President's nomination of Russ Vought to be Director of the Management and Budget, OMB.

I have gotten a lot of grief. I supported a number of President Trump's earlier nominees. I believe the President and a Governor ought to mostly get their choices. But the remarkable thing about Mr. Vought is—and why I so strongly oppose him—this man is the author of Project 2025. Remember that?

Again, let's go back, as my friend said, to the campaign. I remember Donald Trump saying: I am going to lower inflation. I am going to bring down grocery prices. And he also said: As a matter of fact, this Project 2025, I don't know what you are talking about.

He claims to have never read it. Instead, he is putting the lead author in charge of OMB. And this manifesto, this doctrine, this author, Mr. Vought—and I quote—said he wants our Federal workforce to be ''traumatized.'' He wants them to be seen as villains.

Well, I have run a business or two. I am proud of that. I know the Presiding Officer has, as well. If you want to get more out of your workforce, you don't go in with a plan: Let's traumatize the workforce or let's arbitrarily cut here, cut there, fire the good people, let the folks maybe not so good stay on.

But that is what I believe is going on.

Mr. Vought's vision of a traumatized workforce—a group of folks that nobody elected and may not even have appropriate security clearances go into

the Treasury and get access to the files that never have been subject to this kind of thing. If you want to decide about a funding program, fight it at the Agency that authorizes it, not at the folks who write the checks.

The only reason you want to find out who the government is paying beyond what you can find on USAspending, which is something we created more than a decade ago—I would have to say: Why is it somebody no one has elected? This file has never been examined in Trump 1, Bush, Obama—unless you want to get in and potentially manipulate this file. I don't know if that is the case. But I do know you don't put a coder who is 25 in to look at all this information.

How many of those $1.3 billion line items will he be able to look at? I fear there may be something inappropriate here. And these nonelected officials—and I hear my Republican friends talking about nonelected bureaucrats. These aren't even bureaucrats; these are special government employees.

I can tell you from a national security standpoint, this information—I know I am not surprising anyone, but the U.S. Government does some things through the CIA and other entities that, for the most part, stays classified. You give up that information, and programs will be destroyed. Potentially, lives will be put in jeopardy.

I know, as former chairman of the Intelligence Committee—the reason I like this job, I am vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee. What these men and women do often in the shadows but never get thanked the way our men and women in uniform do—they have to do that. We need to make sure this remains classified information, and unfortunately, we are seeing a careless attitude from this administration that is stunning.

I will point out from earlier today that the CIA sent over a nonclassified form with a series of names and the letter of the last names, which could be discovered, of new CIA hires. It takes a year and a half sometimes to get a clearance at the CIA, and it takes another year to train them. We don't know if those names that were so carelessly thrown around are burned at this point.

But to come back to what we were talking about here with Mr. Vought, this is the agenda: Take everybody in the workforce and make them traumatized—his words, not mine. Again, it is this idea that Mr. Vought and now the folks he has at least indirectly deputized or Mr. Trump has deputized—Mr. Elon Musk and the DOGE bros, whose names we don't know, whose backgrounds we don't know, whose security classifications we don't know—are now going Agency by Agency.

I am particularly concerned about what is going on at Treasury. And I have great respect for the new Secretary of the Treasury—I think he is a good man—but I worry about what has happened right now.

If it were just Treasury and these sometimes potential accesses to classified information, that might be one thing, but you know, we have had for over 150 years almost the idea that our Federal workforce ought to be above politics. We call it the civil service. I already mentioned the fact that Mr. Vought wants not to treat those workers with respect, but he really wants to go ahead and just simply say: We want you traumatized. That person shouldn't be the head of OMB.

More recently, we have seen an offer put out to say to the Federal workforce: Here, if you take this offer to quit, we are going to give you 8 months of free salary. Well, I have got a bridge in Brooklyn that we will give you as well if you take that offer.

If you believe either one of those things, it is true, then, that you are operating in a different universe than reality because—first, have you ever seen our President ever pay any of his contractors on time or fully? Let me assure you that there is no money in the budget to do all of these payouts. Frankly, even the basis of the offer—and I will let the lawyers litigate it—is, I believe, illegal.

We have seen this pushback at AID, but it is not just AID. We heard yesterday that the CIA put out an offer to all of their employees. It didn't say: No, we don't want the spies to quit. It didn't say: No, we don't want our best analysts to quit. It said: Anybody who wants to quit.

I hope the folks at the CIA who know a little bit about deception will realize this phony kind of offer and that, at the end of the day, if our best people quit, who is going to do those jobs? You can't just slot in a new coder to discover how we identify bad guys around the world.

That then got extended today to the other intelligence Agencies. It takes years and years and years. We have some of the best people in the world who work at the NSA who are in the cyber domain. They could all make 10X in the private sector. Yet, we are offering this fantasy 8-month buyout with no guarantee of being paid. I hope they will be smart enough and understand that this is not a real offer. This is a sham. But, God forbid, if they do take it, how are we going to protect our national security?

The FBI. We finally got the information on the eight individuals—senior leaders at the FBI—who got RIF'd. Is it really the time to get rid of the top person at the FBI in cyber or in antiterrorism or in counterespionage? How does that make us safer in any form?

Then we have the funding freeze. First, it was on; then it was off. I can tell you some people might say: Well, the FBI and the CIA and even those government workers—how does that affect my life? Well, we don't know what the real status is, but I can tell you, in Virginia, I have had firefighters in Southwest Virginia who are saying they are not getting the money to replace their—or fix their tanker trucks. I had an affordable housing organization in Northern Virginia say that they don't know whether they have to stop operations entirely. I have law enforcement that actually gets funded from Federal funding that has not been unfrozen, and they are saying: Maybe we have to lay off cops. We are already seeing community health centers, which I saw today, that are shutting down and not serving some people.

So I appeal to my friends, many with whom I have worked together on so many of these items: Do you want this mastermind of 2025 who wants to traumatize our workforce and calls them villains? Do you want our best people at the FBI, CIA, and NSA to take an imaginary offer, which probably wouldn't be fulfilled, and then be actually set up to be fired later? Is that going to make us safer?

I know I have gone on a bit long—not as long as my colleague from Louisiana—but I will urge my colleagues to oppose Russell Vought.

I believe I will then offer the balance of my time—postcloture debate time—to oppose Mr. Vought's nomination to Senator MERKLEY.

I yield the floor to my friend from Arizona.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, I will bet a lot of folks watching tonight cannot believe that we are here, talking about the Office of Management and Budget. The Office of Management and Budget—there is nothing more bureaucratic sounding in this whole city, and that says something. It is not an office Arizonans should really have to think about, let alone see their Senators debate for hours.

Think of this: Think of this office as our government's financial planner. They keep track of spending for everything from veterans' benefits to disaster relief for communities. When Flagstaff gets hit by flooding or North Scottsdale gets hit by a major wildfire, this is the office that signs off on Federal relief. Every single Federal Agency must go through the Office of Management and Budget to access the dollars that Congress writes into law for the work they do for the American people.

When it is working right, this is the office that helps build the Federal budget and then makes sure it gets executed according to the law, but that is the problem. Under this administration, it is not working right, and it is not following the law.

We saw this a week ago when this office tried to illegally freeze all Federal grants. In the most reckless, incompetent action we have seen yet from this administration, they issued a two-page memo—two pages—that said:

> Federal agencies must temporarily pause all activities related to the obligation or disbursement of all federal financial assistance.

This effort is now temporarily blocked by the courts, but it created a

mess all over the country, and it still isn't fixed.

We had Head Start Programs in Arizona that nearly had to lay off staff and turn families away because they didn't get the payments they were promised. I had Arizona community health centers in my office today that just had a frozen payment come through, but it was more than a week late.

Are there places where we need to make Federal spending more efficient and effective? Of course there are, and I am willing to get together with anyone who wants to make our government work better, who wants to save taxpayer dollars, and who wants to improve people's lives. But that is not what the Trump administration is trying to do here because their endgame is not efficiency; it is not being more responsible with taxpayer dollars. The endgame of all of this is giving rich people another massive tax break on the backs of hard-working Americans.

The endgame of all of this—and, folks, we have heard a lot about this from Elon Musk over the last few weeks, about unelected, unaccountable Federal bureaucrats. Elon Musk is himself a billionaire and an unelected, unaccountable bureaucrat who is illegally shutting down Federal Agencies that make Americans safer and more prosperous.

Today, we are debating someone whose very reason for getting picked for this job is that he wants to break the law and be an unaccountable bureaucrat. We know this because Russell Vought has had this job before. When he was picked for this the last time, he told Congress he would follow the law. He said he wouldn't delay or refuse to spend money that was appropriated by Congress. He said he would follow a law that was passed by Republicans and Democrats in 1974 in response to Richard Nixon trying to abuse the powers of his office. He said he would follow that law. He lied.

He held up critical funds to support Ukraine. This was in 2019, before Russia invaded Ukraine. An independent government watchdog found that this broke the law.

Then again, after Hurricanes Irma and Maria ravaged Puerto Rico and Congress passed aid to help communities recover, Vought broke the law again by blocking the funds. Congress passed them again, but do you know what he did? Russell Vought blocked those funds once again.

This is what an unelected, unaccountable bureaucrat looks like—Russell Vought.

Agree with these programs or disagree with them—Congress, Republicans and Democrats, voted for them. If folks don't like it, they can vote out their Members of Congress. That is what accountability means. It is not up to this guy to decide. But now it is very clear what he believes because after he left this job the last time, he went a step further. He has said plainly that the law he broke was unconstitutional and that the next time he gets in there, he doesn't think he has to follow it.

He wrote about this in his playbook, Project 2025. Do you remember that?

Now, I evaluate each and every nominee based on whether they have the experience and are committed to doing the job. Nothing disqualifies someone faster, in my mind, then when they say ahead of time that they plan to break the law. He has said that. That means he will try to singlehandedly gut the programs he and President Trump disagree with.

But what are they? Well, he spelled it out himself in budgets he has written.

He wants to cut housing support by 43 percent, including completely eliminating the largest source of housing assistance for Arizonans, and that is going to put working families on the streets.

He wants to end the expansion of Medicaid that has extended coverage to 600,000 Arizonans through a program called AHCCCS. That means more Arizonans without health insurance and unable to get the care they need. Also on the list are student loans, food assistance, and so much more.

Russell Vought wants to make it harder to afford a place to live, harder to afford health insurance, harder to afford college, and harder to afford to put food on your table. For anybody listening, do any of those things matter to you?

If he gets this job, there won't be any debate on the Senate floor about these cuts. We won't be able to have a conversation about how to make housing assistance more effective for working families. There won't be bipartisan hearings about where we can cut waste and fraud out of programs to save money and focus where it is needed. Nope. He is just going to try to stop funding these things on his own. He said he would do that. He said he is going to break the law. He has told everybody that.

That is why President Trump picked him for the job in the first place because, remember, none of this is about efficiency. None of this is about looking out for everyday Americans. This is about billionaires paving the way to get another tax cut for themselves and for their corporations and to do so on the backs of you, hard-working Americans.

Folks, we have been here before. The first time around, President Trump signed a tax giveaway that he said was going to grow the economy and help working people, but that is not what happened. In the years since that tax bill was passed, we have seen a massive transfer of wealth to the richest Americans. That is part of the reason why Elon Musk is now worth more than $400 billion. More big profitable corporations are now paying nothing in Federal income tax. Zero.

The plan is to double down on tax breaks for the rich while, behind closed doors, unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats like Russell Vought and Elon Musk, they gut programs that help working families. I couldn't think of a more backward way for the Federal Government to operate.

We are supposed to be here to make government work for the American people. And I will sit down with anybody to make that happen. But the plan seems to be to break the Federal Government in order to help rich people, and I can't get on board with that.

I want to yield the balance of my postcloture debate time on the Vought nomination to Senator MERKLEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, we are less than 3 weeks into the Trump administration, and already, Americans across the country are reeling from the chaos.

Donald Trump ran on lowering costs for working Americans—an admirable goal, but one he clearly had no intention of making good on. Instead, he is hellbent on sowing chaos and making life harder for the American people while he pushes through massive tax cuts for his billionaire buddies.

In just the last 2 weeks, here is what Trump did. He threatened tariffs on Canada and Mexico that will do nothing but raise costs on everyday essentials like food and gasoline, estimated to increase costs for the average household by nearly $1,200 a year. So much for lowering costs for the American people.

He put a freeze on all Federal funds, creating such uncertainty that seniors in Hawaii were calling my office asking if they needed to prepare for homelessness.

He tried to scam 2 million Federal employees, including more than 23,000 in Hawaii, into taking an unauthorized, unfunded buyout. Whoever heard of such a thing?

And he has given an unelected, unaccountable billionaire free rein to raid the Treasury, to root around in the Treasury and any other Federal Agency he sees fit, enabling him to get his hands on all of our data. If this isn't a data breach, frankly, I don't know what is—right in front of our faces.

In case there was any doubt, the last few weeks have shown that Trump never gave a rip about working people and has no interest in doing anything to help make our lives better. The chaos is dizzying. But behind this chaos is a detailed, methodical plan: Project 2025. While campaigning, Trump swore he had nothing to do with Project 2025—a big fat lie, like so much of what comes out of Trump's mouth.

As soon as he was elected, guess what, Trump began appointing many of the people behind Project 2025. His handpicked choice to lead the Office of Management and Budget, or OMB, is Russell Vought, the architect of Project 2025. Mr. Vought is dangerous, and he has a total disregard for the

Constitution, Congress, and the millions of hard-working Americans impacted by decisions he will make at OMB.

Americans need to know that OMB is extremely powerful, with oversight over the President's budget and, functionally, all Federal Agency actions, including regulatory decisions. With such responsibility, the person leading this office needs to be levelheaded and impartial. They need to put loyalty to the Constitution above loyalty to the President. Mr. Vought, however, is the ultimate yes-man.

In Trump's first term as acting OMB Director, Vought wrote a budget that, among other things, would have cut nearly $1 trillion from Medicaid; slashed nearly $300 billion from social safety-net programs, like food assistance; eliminated $170 billion from student loans; and zeroed out programs, like LIHEAP and community development block grants to help with housing assistance and building community infrastructure.

Just like for families, where we spend our money reflects our priorities and our values. Mr. Vought's 2021 budget demonstrated that he sees no value in helping the American people. This time, we know it will be even worse because he is going to be in charge at OMB. Like Trump, Mr. Vought will do whatever he wants, regardless of the law or the Constitution, from forcing out civil servants to withholding funds appropriated by Congress.

We know the story of Robin Hood, who stole from the rich to help the poor. With Mr. Vought, on the other hand, he is a robber baron, who wants to steal the tax dollars of hard-working Americans to line the pocket of Trump's billionaire buddies—a robber baron.

At the end of the day, Trump, Vought, and all their cronies have just won gold, giving huge tax cuts to billionaires on the backs of working people. We have been repeating this. Why? Because how the heck are they going to do this otherwise, except on the backs of working people?

Their plan to do so is so simple. First, they will gut programs working families rely on—things like nutrition assistance, education funding, and Medicare and Medicaid. Then they will borrow trillions of dollars and run our country deeper into debt, just like they did the last time.

Finally, they will give massive tax breaks to billionaires, leaving the American people to foot the bill. Their plan is clear. They wrote it all down. This is Project 2025—Project 2025, the 900-page plan Russell Vought helped to mastermind, filled with all sorts of terrible ideas for our country and the American people. That is why I call it the plan to screw the American people. They call it the mandate for leadership; I call it the 900-page plan to screw over the American people.

I thank Democracy Forward for summarizing some of the worst proposals in Project 2025 in a report that I am going to read parts of.

Democracy Forward said:

Project 2025 is among the most profound threats to the American people.

What is Project 2025?

The Project 2025 Presidential Transition Project is a well-funded . . . effort of the Heritage Foundation and more than 100 organizations—

More than 100 organizations—

to enable a future anti-democratic presidential administration—

That would be this administration—

to take swift, far-right action that would cut wages for working people, dismantle social safety net programs, reverse decades of progress for civil rights, redefine the way our society operates, and undermine our economy.

A central pillar of Project 2025 is the ''Mandate for Leadership,'' a 900+ page policy playbook authored by former Trump administration officials and other extremists''—

Like Russell Vought—

that provides a radical vision for our nation and a roadmap to implement it.

Democracy Forward noted:

We—

They—

read Project 2025's entire 900+ page ''Mandate for Leadership'' so that you—

We—

don't have to.

They said:

What we discovered was a systemic, ruthless plan to undermine the quality of life of millions of Americans, remove critical protections and dismantle programs for communities across the nation, and prioritize special interests and ideological extremism over people.

From attacking overtime pay, student loans, and reproductive rights to allowing more discrimination, pollution, and price gouging, those behind Project 2025 are preparing to go to incredible lengths to create a country only for some, not for all of us.

If these plans are enacted—

Even without congressional approval—

4.3 million people could lose overtime protections, 40 million people could have their food assistance reduced, 220,000 American jobs could be lost, and much, much more. The stakes are higher than ever for democracy and for people.

These threats aren't hypothetical. These are their real plans.

The Heritage Foundation and the 100+ organizations that make up the Project 2025 Advisory Board have mapped out exactly how they will achieve their extreme ends. They aim to carry out many of the most troubling proposals through an anti-democratic president—

Trump—

and political loyalists—

Vought—

loyalists installed in the executive branch, without waiting for congressional action. And, while many of these plans are unlawful, winning in court is not guaranteed given that the same far-right movement that is behind Project 2025 has shaped our current [judicial] system.

Proposals from Project 2025, discussed in detail throughout this guide, that could be implemented through executive branch action alone include:—

And I am going to repeat—

Cutting American Rescue Plan programs that have created or saved 220,000 jobs

Limiting access to food assistance, which an average of more than 40 million people rely on monthly

Rolling back civil rights protections across multiple fronts, including cutting diversity, equity, and inclusion-related, or DEI programs and LGBTQ+ rights in health care, education, and workplaces

Eliminating the Head Start early education program, which serves over 1 million children

Stopping efforts to lower prescription drug prices

Cutting overtime protections for 4.3 million workers

Pushing more people towards Medicare Advantage and other worse, private options, that's 33 million people

Restricting access to medication abortion

Denying students in 25 states and Washington, D.C. access to student loans because their schools provide in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants

Exposing the 368,000 children in foster care to risk of increased discrimination.

Again, I thank Democracy Forward for this summary.

Mr. President, these are just some of the countless proposals in Project 2025 that will make our country and the American people less free, less safe, and less prosperous.

Behind it all is Russell Vought. If confirmed, he will move to implement Project 2025 without delay to line the pockets of billionaires at the expense of working Americans.

You know, we have got to repeat this time and again because, guess what, this is exactly what happened during Trump's first term. Their goal was to give trillions in tax cuts to their billionaire buddies, and they are going to do it again. Trust me. That is what they are going to do.

Project 2025 is dangerous. Mr. Vought is dangerous. I urge my colleagues to oppose this nomination.

I yield the balance of my postcloture debate time to Senator MERKLEY, up to the 2-hour limit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I yield 10 minutes of my postcloture debate time on the Vought nomination to Senator VAN HOLLEN, and I yield 60 minutes of my postcloture debate time on the Vought nomination to Senator SCHATZ.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I rise today in strong opposition to the nomination of Russell Vought to be the head of the Office of Management and Budget. His leadership will only continue the disruption that is hurting Georgians in every corner of my State even as I speak.

Over the past 2½ weeks, my State has been plagued by chaos and by confusion that has harmed Georgia families and Georgia workers and organizations serving their communities.

We are witnessing right now a careless and heartless assault on Federal investments and a freeze of government funding that has already been appropriated by Congress to help Georgia

seniors, veterans, students, and so many more.

Let's be clear. These are funds that have already been appropriated. We have already gone through the legislative process. And somehow the President has created this new process in which he says: I don't care what Congress has done. I don't care what laws have been passed. It has to come back by me, through the OMB manager.

This cannot stand. And I am afraid that these undemocratic antics will only continue if the Senate confirms Russell Vought to be head of the Office of Management and Budget.

Vought is one of the architects of Project 2025, which initially President Trump ran away from. You know a politician's program is really bad when he won't even admit that it is his program but, as soon as he is elected, surrounds himself by the very architects of the program he denied during the election was his.

He has now nominated the very people who wrote the playbook for reshaping our entire democratic Republic into their dystopian image. This is radical. This is extreme. This is undemocratic.

I dare say that the people of Georgia who elected me and the people of Georgia who elected Donald Trump did not vote for this. But, just as we warned, his dangerous plans are playing out in real time. This is exactly what they said they were going to do. Some didn't believe them. Even after they attempted to gaslight the American people into thinking otherwise, here we are in no time flat.

Now, I believe in democracy. I often say that democracy is the political enactment of the spiritual idea, the notion that each of us has within us a spark of the divine. And if we have a spark of the divine, if we were created in what theologians called the imago dei, the image of God, we all ought to have a voice in the direction of the country and our destiny within it.

So I respect elections. They have consequences. I know, as a result of what happened on November 5, things will happen that I don't agree with. I am not mad about that. I will push and stand and speak about the direction I think the country should go in, but elections do have consequences.

But people are tired of what happens here in Washington, DC. What all of us ought to be able to agree on is that once we have gone through the legislative process, that process of three coequal branches of government ought to be respected—I don't care if the President is a Republican or a Democrat.

So there is no question that there is a lot of pain out there. The status quo was not and is not working for Americans, and that has been the case for a long time. Folks have seen wealth trickle up and pain trickle down, and they have seen an increasing disconnect between what they need from their government and what they are able to get from their government. We can't even get movement on the things that Americans on the left and the right agree on in this country.

A FOX News poll reported—and you don't often hear me quote FOX News polls. A FOX News poll said that Americans on both sides of the aisle believe we ought to have background checks, but after one school shooting after another, after another, we can't get any movement on that in this Chamber. It suggests that somebody other than the people is trying to own the democracy, squeezing the voices of the people out of their own democracy.

That is why what is happening right now is so deeply concerning, and if you are not concerned, you are not paying attention. Billionaires surrounding Donald Trump are trying to own the democracy. They are trying to move the vision of this country away from citizenship to ownership.

Vought as OMB Director would be a disaster. He would be a disaster for the people who rely on crucial government programs to make life more affordable.

I am thinking right now about the veterans that I serve in a military State. They are the best among us. They deserve the best from us. They have been imperiled by the actions of the last 2 weeks. I am thinking about families who need accessible childcare.

This stunt that was pulled a few days ago is a disaster for communities who want well-funded law enforcement, thriving businesses, safe roads and bridges. And as they attack Federal workers, attack the government, they are trying to convince you that the government is some third entity outside of us. No. This is government for the people, by the people, of the people. Our democracy represents the highest of our aspirations, what we are trying to achieve together, and as we witness this assault, it is hitting Democrats and Republicans, blue States and red States, as the people's voices are being squeezed out of their democracy.

Just last week, without even being confirmed, Vought orchestrated the effort to freeze Federal spending—as if this money is his money rather than our money, the people's money—throwing programs, from infrastructure upgrades, to Medicaid, to free school lunches, to support for homeless, veterans, into chaos. How dare you take funds that are needed by the veterans of Georgia and all across this State. Those who fight for us should not have to fight with us to get what they deserve.

With the power of the OMB, he would enact even more harmful policies. If he is behaving with this kind of reckless disregard for the law right now, what do you think he will do if we confirm him?

This is a dangerous disregard for the separation of powers that keeps our government in check and gives the people a voice through the people's House—a check on those who would recklessly exercise power.

Vought has made it clear that he feels the OMB, the Office of Management and Budget, can turn on and turn off any spending by the Federal Government, ignoring the requirement that Congress, being directly elected by the people, decide where your tax dollars can go.

In 2024—listen, in 2024, he even published an article stating, ''We are living in a post-Constitutional time.'' That is dangerous rhetoric from a dangerous man.

I beg to differ. I believe in my Constitution—hard fought and hard won. It is not a perfect document. We have had to amend it. Thank God for the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, the First Amendment.

But he should explain what he means when he says we are living in a post-constitutional time. The Trump administration and its architects, including the nominee before us today, have a very simple playbook to shrink the Federal Government and to enrich themselves, even at the expense of the American people and their financial security. You are witnessing the unfolding of the kleptocratic designs that they have on our Republic.

And God help us if we just stand by and allow it to happen.

So what is their first step in getting that done? The Trump administration is telling civil servants like the people who inspect your food or monitor diseases like bird flu or care for veterans at the VA to accept a meager buyout or risk being fired, all while an unelected billionaire posing as co-President accesses your private data at the Treasury Department.

Russell Vought said in 2023 that he wanted Federal workers ''to be traumatically affected.'' That is what he said about your neighbors, that he wants them to be traumatically affected. And ''when they wake up in the morning,'' he said, ''we want them to not want to go to work because they are increasingly viewed as the villains.''

They are saying the quiet part out loud. Well, I got news for Mr. Vought. The people who staff our VA hospitals are not villains. The people who keep our food safe—so much that we Americans don't even think about it—are not villains. The people who keep our water clean are not villains. The people who keep our military bases operating are not villains.

A couple of days ago, my office started to receive a flood of calls from Federal employees. Friends of mine who do great work at the CDC and other places called me directly. Folks who do noble work every single day, out of a deep sense of patriotism, certainly not pay; out of a deep sense of commitment to the covenant we have with one another, in the wake of this assault, they began to call.

These are folks who, in their moment of finding themselves attacked by dangerous and dystopian designs on our country—folks demanding that the workers just quit—well, to all the Federal workers listening right now, let

me say to you that not only do they want you to quit, more importantly, they want you to surrender. And you must never, ever surrender. You must never give in to the forces that would weaponize despair so that they can have their way and create a country that we will not even recognize.

This is the people's house. This is the people's democracy. And the people have to stand up and say: It belongs to us—even the people with whom we disagree—this is our house.

Democracy is the framework in which we get to fight, in which we get to have the great arguments about guns and butter, about how to spend the budget. We get to have these robust family arguments, and they get rambunctious, from time to time, in order to avoid violence. That is the American way.

What we are seeing over the last 2 weeks is its own kind of violence: the pardoning of those who attacked this house on January 6, the permission structure to do it again, the gaslighting, telling Federal workers who are working hard for you on one day: Don't come to work the next day. That is its own kind of violence, and it must be condemned by all Americans who believe in the covenant we have with one another.

And so when we are talking about Federal workers, we are talking about hard-working folks I know. Don't allow them to turn these people into some vague and nebulous dark picture of somebody you don't recognize. These are your neighbors. These are the folks who are practicing medicine and nursing care in our VA hospitals. These are those who manage our Social Security payments. These are the folks who are keeping our military bases operating safely and efficiently, ensuring folks get their tax returns on time, helping Georgians navigate their student loans, keeping our airports operating safely, providing critical support for our children, assisting farmers with loans, protecting our public health system and our public schools, eradicating diseases that know no borders, protecting our clean air and water.

These are your neighbors. These are your family members. These are not villains.

Always be wary of politicians who tell us to be afraid of each other. They are the ones you should fear and be concerned about.

These are people throughout Georgia, our Nation's Capital, and scattered across the country, dedicated to healthy and safe communities, helping to build that more perfect Union we claim to aspire to.

And so to these public servants who quietly and nobly do the people's work day by day, know this: I appreciate you. We appreciate you. And we have got your back because, in so many ways, you have had ours.

But these tens of thousands of Georgians are now living in fear that their ability to support themselves and their families are at risk. Just today, dozens of Georgians visited my Atlanta office, some of whom have already lost their jobs through the abrupt dismantling of USAID, and they are worried about how they will keep their lights on and take care of their children.

A young woman came to my office yesterday, a single mother who works for USAID, doing noble work. It is indeed a humanitarian cause to care for the sick, the poor, the most marginalized members of the human family.

It is that, to be sure, but it is national security.

It is keeping us safe as Americans, and it is a smart investment. It is less than 1 percent of the budget—one-half of 1 percent. And for that we get programs like PEPFAR, a program that is perhaps the greatest humanitarian relief program in human history, saving millions of lives on the African continent, which pays dividends for us. These diseases know no borders.

This young woman that I met yesterday came to my office, a single mother. She was doing her work one day, and then she went to the doctor, and the doctor saw something in her test that was concerning and said: I need you to come back in a couple of days and get some more tests. And in between those days, she got notice and lost her job and her health insurance.

She deserves better than that. My mama taught me to treat people with respect, with human dignity, to know that when you look in the face of your neighbor, you see the image of God. Surely, people who have been working for us deserve better than that.

So people are anxious. People are concerned. Know that you are valued, and that we will continue to stand and fight on your behalf. But not only are the careers of these Federal workers on the chopping block, so too is the Federal funding that helps all of our communities and local economies run smoothly.

My constituents were deeply shaken by last week's Federal funding freeze. I received thousands of calls and emails, folks afraid of the freeze's unknown harm to their community.

So let's peel back the curtain even more on what happened over the last few days. The Trump administration froze trillions of dollars in government spending to enact massive and disruptive funding cuts. These cuts are being orchestrated in part by Russell Vought, in partnership with the world's richest man, Elon Musk, the co-President—this unelected, unvetted bureaucrat who, by my best guess, appears to think that the livelihood of Georgians and Americans is some kind of startup he can tear apart.

So if you want to get a sense of who President Trump is looking out for, look at who he is surrounding himself with. On that stage, when he was inaugurated, you saw them, some of the richest people in the world. They were the ones who had proximity.

Well, proximity matters. You can tell a whole lot about the character of a person's public service based on the people who can get close to them, the folks who get to speak into their ear.

If you want to know who Donald Trump is working for, look at who he is surrounding himself with, the likes of Elon Musk, the billionaire, the richest man in the world, who is now telling us—the rest of us—that we need to tighten our belts—how quaint.

President Trump isn't serving you; he is serving them. He is serving those in our country who are well-off and who don't play by the rules, and putting at risk basic programs that help folks send their kids to school, keep food affordable, and lower their energy bills.

In fact, the other day, as a member of the Banking Committee, I asked President Trump's nominee for Treasury Secretary, who manages the finances for the entire U.S. Government, if in the administration's supposed quest to cut Federal spending and give it back to the American people, would he agree with allowing the Trump tax cuts to expire for the wealthiest Americans. If you are concerned about the Federal deficit, are you willing to let the tax cuts put in place by Trump during his first term to expire for the wealthiest of Americans? Perhaps, we can return to the tax policies that we had during the Bush administration, even if just by a dollar.

And when I asked the nominee that question, now-Secretary Bessent, he said: No, we can't afford to allow those tax cuts to expire.

I said: What about folks making over $400,000 a year?

He said: No.

I said: What about millionaires?

He said: No.

I said: Well, what about billionaires?

No.

So when Elon Musk and his billionaire buddies go looking for spending cuts, and they are focused on cutting government waste, they start by targeting the working class. They target the people who work the hardest and play by the rules. He said he couldn't cut taxes for billionaires because they are the job creators. What about the folks who just work on the job day-to-day? What about the folks who clean hospitals? who mop floors? who pick up our garbage? who do a day's work for an honest pay?

Why is it that those at the top deserve so much more than those who are working at the bottom? those in the middle? hard-working Americans who play by the rules?

Already we have seen Secretary Bessent give the world's richest man the keys to the kingdom, allowing him to prowl around in the sensitive data and systems of the Treasury Department. Whoever heard of any such thing as this? What is a billionaire doing with access to the system that handles Grandma's Social Security check?

Look, I will work with anyone who is able to have a serious bipartisan conversation about how to best utilize

government resources and taxpayer dollars. Working across the aisle to get good things done for Georgia has been a cornerstone of my service in the Senate over the past 4 years. I am listed as one of the most bipartisan Senators in the Senate. I have worked with Republicans many, many times.

But right now, the playbook is obvious: Cut programs that you rely on and give the richest of the rich the money. Robin Hood in reverse: Steal from the poor; give to the rich.

And as this plan unfolds at a breakneck pace, I think it is important that we remind people that Project 2025 aims, again, to shift our democracy from citizenship to ownership, to shift the President from citizen to owner. Donald Trump the real estate developer and his billionaire friends want to own the country.

Last night, he suggested that we should own Gaza as well. Imagine that.

Here is what else they have in store under Project 2025 and its leader Russell Vought: Increase costs for families by $4,000 a year by slapping a Trump sales tax on goods that families rely on like gas, food, clothing, medicine; cuts to Social Security and Medicare—hurting hundreds of thousands of Georgia seniors; elimination of Federal funding for K–12 education, impacting Georgians from the heart of Atlanta to our rural counties, all across our State; tax breaks for billionaires and big corporations while making working families foot the bill; gutting the Affordable Care Act, which will raise healthcare premiums and threaten coverage for hundreds and thousands of Georgians and millions across the country.

Their program would end student debt relief that assures their student loan payments don't consume the entirety of their paychecks. Their plan would reverse provisions of a law I secured that is capping insulin at $35 for seniors and lowering prescription drug costs.

And their program would eliminate Head Start, which provided me with an early childhood education when I was growing up in public housing in Savannah, GA. I stand tonight on the floor of the U.S. Senate, but I want you to know that you are looking at a Head Start kid. I know it works. This program that gives poor children a chance, which exposes them as preschoolers to literacy and a love of learning, which narrows the word gap between poor children and well-off children, and which puts them on the road to success. Head Start is a worthwhile investment. It is a recognition that God is an equal opportunity employer, that God creates genius and talent and possibility on all sides of the town, on both sides of the track, and you never know where the very person we need to do the work that needs to be done—we never know what ZIP code that kid will grow up in. And so we have to invest in Head Start. To cut it is shortsighted.

But not only that, we have to invest in all of these programs that provide a childcare safety net. So mamas and daddies can go to work and children can be safe and thrive and be exposed to learning and literacy.

And so I was deeply moved when I began to get calls from folks involved in providing childcare to our kids all across our State, childcare centers in neighborhoods—some forgotten—where people get up every day and go to work, and they do their best. I heard from Sweetie Pie's Learning Center in Macon, GA. They rely on Federal funding for childcare services, but this freeze meant that they missed their regular check that covers food costs, which left employees scrambling to make plans on how they could make ends meet while still caring for children in this community.

I am thinking now about the folks I heard from at Learning Hive in Lawrenceville, another childcare center navigating this chaos—delayed payments for childcare and parent services. And if the freeze remained in effect, they would only have enough money to make payroll for 2 weeks—2 weeks until your child is without care.

Think about that. As myself, a working father of two young children, I cannot imagine the stress and the confusion that that would bring to put food on the table, keep a roof over your heads, and make sure that your kids have a safe place to learn and play while you make it happen.

I am thinking about the folks at Easterseals childcare center in Clarkston, who are counting on this funding also for fresh meals for children living at 100 percent below the Federal poverty level. These kids risk going hungry in the wealthiest nation on the planet.

So let me be clear. Project 2025 is no longer theoretical. It is unfolding right before our very eyes in realtime. We are seeing these policies implemented every day, and the President, who claimed to disavow Project 2025, is putting its chief architect in charge of administering the Federal budget.

But we must not give in. We must not give up. We must not let those who would weaponize despair win. For many, it is dark right now. But my faith teaches me that a light shines in the darkness, and the darkness overcomes it not. And so let me say that even in a time like this, I am incredibly and immeasurably blessed because I get to do this work. I get to wake up every single day thinking about what I can do for the people who gave me the great honor of representing them in the Nation's Capital.

It is a great honor when the people of your State say: Since all of us can't go to that crazy place called Washington, DC, we are going to send you. And we are going to trust that in rooms of power where decisions are being made and deals are cut, you are always going to center the concerns of ordinary people. You are not going to forget about us.

And so I am honored that people all across the State of Georgia, from Bartow to Brantley County, when they took stock in the hopes for their families and their children and their grandmothers and grandfathers, they said again and again: We want you to go to Washington to fight for us.

I will tell you that, for me, that is a sacred covenant, not much unlike my first job: pastor. A promise to walk with the people even as you work for the people. And part of the reason that Georgians have again and again voted to send me to Washington is that they know that I will fight for them, but they also know why I will fight for them.

As a pastor in the Senate, Georgians know that I bring the moral lessons from my pastoral work with me to the Capitol every single day.

And so I am going to keep fighting. I am not going to stand by and allow folks to undo what we did to cap the costs of insulin. Why? Because as a pastor, I have spent countless days in hospital rooms. I have seen up close what diabetes untreated can do. I have seen the amputations. I have been there when folks have gotten the news that they have got to go on dialysis. When you need your insulin, you need your insulin. It is not a luxury; it is a requirement.

And so that informs my fight. When I cast my vote to fund programs that range from supporting law enforcement to veterans, from making food and housing more affordable to ensuring every kid has a fair shot at making it on a college campus or a technical college—I see these votes as an extension of my pastoral work, my work to create what Dr. King called ''the Beloved Community,'' a world where everyone is cared for and all of God's children can thrive. It is an honor when the people send you here to represent ordinary people.

And that is why I take such great offense to the illegal and immoral actions that I have seen over the last few days—to try and freeze Federal funds that center the needs of ordinary people for the purpose of enriching our country's wealthiest individuals. I am a Matthew 25 Christian: I was hungry, and you didn't feed me. I was sick and I was in prison, and you didn't visit me. I was a stranger, and you did not welcome me.

And then there are those who will ask the Master: Master, when were you hungry? When were you thirsty? When were you sick with a preexisting condition and nobody came to see about you? When were you in prison? When were you a stranger, an immigrant?

The answer? Matthew 25 says: Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these, you have done it also unto me.

Representing the people is holy work. It is noble work.

I return home to Georgia every weekend. I return to my pulpit every Sunday because I don't want to forget why I came here in the first place—to stand up for the very people Mr. Vought says are villains.

We all know that Donald Trump has a history of bailing on debts and shorting people of what they are owed, but our government is supposed to step in to protect hard-working individuals from bad actors who seek to take advantage of people. Yet we are seeing those bad actors fill our government's most powerful positions, playing fast and loose with taxpayer dollars at the expense of ordinary people. This is not how the most powerful government in the world ought to serve its people.

The reality is, this new level of Washington's dysfunction has real-world consequences that extend beyond Washington politicians. Georgia's economy does not stop just because Washington is exercising a kind of chaos. While we are trying to get our act together up here, guess what, farmers still need crop insurance, childcare workers and community health centers still need to make payroll, and our roads and our bridges and pipes still need repairs. When Federal investments are put in limbo, the stability of our States and local communities is also put in jeopardy.

Let me be clear. The Trump administration has demonstrated that it will try this again and again and again. When they do, the business community will suffer and Georgians will be out of their jobs unless we stand up and say no.

If this Federal funding freeze continues, as Russell Vought hopes, the impact will be felt hardest by those who can least afford it. It is easy in all the bluster of the beltway to forget who is actually bearing the brunt of Donald Trump's actions. Delays in funding are not just inconvenient; they create anxiety, instability, and they cost the jobs of our friends, our families, and our neighbors.

To be very clear, this is all unconstitutional. So why are so many of our colleagues across the aisle surrendering their constitutional responsibility that their voters elected them to carry out? While my colleagues remain silent while this new administration breaks the law, they are sacrificing their duty to their constituents in service to one man occupying 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Well, I don't work for him, and I don't work for some oligarch threatening to run for my seat or run somebody for my seat. I work for the people of Georgia. It is this obsession with power, it is this obsession with the next election that has left us in this place in which we find ourselves tonight.

So it is up to us in this moment to stand up. I am listening to the people who sent me to represent them. I am thinking about those who do the work every single day. It is our job to respond to the call and the urgency of this moment. History will not treat us kindly if we are silent at a time like this.

In closing—and nobody believes a preacher when he says ''in closing,'' but I think my colleague is ready—in closing, Senator, I was thinking the other day about the dark challenges that your people have been through.

During the era of the Third Reich—and I am never quick to raise the specter of that ugly time—there was a pastor by the name of Martin Niemoller who, in the midst of the ugliness of that dark time, said:

> First they came for the Communists and I didn't speak out because I was not a Communist.
>
> Then they came for the socialists and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist.
>
> Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.
>
> Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.
>
> Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me.

When they come for one of us, they come for all of us.

Dr. King said:

> We are tied . . . in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.

Ironically and tragically, we learned from COVID–19—a deadly pandemic, airborne—that if my neighbor is sick, not only is she sick, I potentially am imperiled. That doesn't make my neighbor my enemy; that means that in my enlightened self-interest, I ought to be concerned about her healthcare, that I ought to want her to be covered so I can be covered.

We are all in this together, so we must stand up in this defining moment and resist those who would have us be afraid of one another because of our differences, because of our diversity, and know that we are one people. That is the American way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I have the bad fortune and audacity to follow one of our greatest speakers, one of the Nation's greatest orators and a preacher. I know we all appreciate the old wisdom: Never follow a preacher.

I want to thank Reverend WARNOCK, my great colleague and friend, for that eloquent and powerful speech and particularly the ending of his speech, which evoked a time in our history that many would like to forget. A lot of Americans are forgetting. The world is trying to erase it from its memory. But it is a time evoked by Senator WARNOCK that couldn't be more relevant to this moment in America's history because we face a crisis in governance. It is a moral crisis, not just a political or legal crisis. It is a challenge to us, to our better angels, to our sense of mutual respect and caring, and, as he said so well, quoting Martin Luther King, that web of mutuality that binds us as a nation.

Ultimately, it isn't our wealth, the number of dollars we have in bank accounts, or the economic strength of our corporations. It isn't our might militarily. We have the strongest and best military in the world. It is our common values and our commitment to our faith and our family and to each other, respect for each other even when we differ.

When we come to this body, we all take an oath. I have taken that oath a number of times in my life—when I became a private in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, when I became a U.S. attorney in Connecticut, when I became a State legislator, and then when I became attorney general. Now, as a Senator, I raised my right hand, as did all of us, and we took an oath. It wasn't to a President; it wasn't to a government; it wasn't to a monarch; it was to the Constitution and the laws of this country.

The Constitution stands for something that binds us together, and it is at the core of this great experiment that we call America. The Constitution will be around, I hope—and I am knocking on wood—when these young pages become our age and stand here, perhaps, but it will be around only if we fight to sustain it. It doesn't happen by magic or by inaction; it happens because we come together and we say: Whatever else happens, whatever divides us, whatever natural disasters—tornadoes, floods, hurricanes—befall our great country, we are going to stand together for the rule of law and for each other. We will come to each other's aid, and we will respect each other's rights.

A wonderful professor and friend of mine at Yale, Tim Snyder, wrote a little book, ''On Tyranny.'' That is the name of the book. It is ''On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century.'' The first lesson is, do not obey in advance, which is to say, do not anticipate what a dictator wants and accede to it in advance. Do not acquiesce. Do not obey in advance.

Today, we have to take a stand against a group of people who want to shred our Constitution. They want to light it on fire because they feel there is a higher good. They want to save money or they think we are in the midst of some religious movement or they simply want to get power.

Whatever their motive, and I don't pretend to fully understand it, they have unleashed on our government a group of DOGE technocrats—I use that word advisedly—young people, maybe older people, who think they can simply slash government spending, but more to the point, that they have a right to access information which Americans have been providing in trust to the Department of Treasury, the Labor Department, the Department of Education—private, confidential information about bank accounts, checks that are paid, and veterans' benefits.

That information is supposed to be held in trust, secretly, confidentially, and yet, right now, it is being scanned by Elon Musk and his crew. His henchmen are busy not just reading and

scanning that information but collecting it. That actually serves, potentially, many of Elon Musk's business interests, because on X, for example, he could profit mightily from knowing more information about people who might use Musk in Tesla or SpaceX. Who knows what he might do with that information? And some of his billionaire friends, some of the people who may be provided access to that information could profit even more.

Here is what I have done today as the ranking member of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. I have written to every one of Elon Musk's companies—SpaceX, Tesla, all of them, including his AI company—demanding information about the workings of that company that might benefit from access to that private information.

Now, remember, his access is as a citizen. I am not sure what his status is. The White House says he is a special government employee. He has no security clearance that would entitle him to take that information and use it for his own personal benefits. No security clearance could give him that right to profit from financial information that belongs to you, the taxpayers. It is your data.

And we have nothing that I have seen in writing from the President of the United States that gives him authority to seize and exploit that information. He certainly has nothing under law that would justify his monetizing after purloining that information, the use of it.

I think the American people have a right to know all about the workings of those companies that would be benefited from seizing and exploiting this information. I have written to those companies today, and I am very hopeful that they will explain to me what the facts are, because the American people deserve those facts.

In a sense, what you need to know about this administration and about DOGE and about Elon Musk is to follow the money. Now, he says he is following money that may be wasted or abused. I want to follow the money that will come to him and other billionaires in the government and others who may be made privy to this information and use it for personal benefit and who may profit from it. I want to follow their money, and I want to follow any of the money that comes to other officials in emoluments.

Now, ''emoluments'' is a term in the Constitution, and the reason it is in the Constitution is that our Founders most feared, in addition to tyranny, that leaders of this country—people in public office—would take benefits, gifts, cash from foreign governments. We were a struggling, small country at our very beginning. We were nascent in our weakness. And their fear was that leaders of that small, struggling country might be tempted by one of those big monarchies in Europe—that had the glittering palaces and jewels and riches and colonies around the world—that they could be bought. So they said: No gifts, no benefits—nothing from any foreign source. And they had a domestic emoluments clause, as well, that, in effect, prohibited foreign bribery and that kind of domestic misappropriation as well.

I want to know whether any of these officials in our government are benefiting in any way from advantages, benefits, payments from foreign governments, because we have become a global economy. We know that—just to take one example that comes to mind—one of the President's relatives is planning developments—hotels—all around the world. The President has said he wants to make Gaza into a Middle Eastern riviera. Who is going to build the hotels? Who benefits? Who is going to be paid? We need the facts. So I believe we need to be watchful, vigilant, and wary. Follow the money.

We are here tonight before a vote on someone who is going to be following a lot of money. Russell Vought, if he were to be confirmed as Director of the Office of Management and Budget, would be in charge of all the money spent by the U.S. Government—or almost all of it.

I know most Americans have no clue as to what OMB does. OMB is the Office of Management and Budget, not to be confused with PMB, the Office of Policy, Management and Budget. In the State of Connecticut, we call a similar body the office of policy and management. I suspect that the Presiding Officer's State and all of our States have something equivalent to OMB or to PMB. It is kind of the brain central of the financial nervous system in the government. It controls the flow, the disbursement, and then also the projections for the future about what the government does. It administers the Federal budget, and it is the entity that actually gets that money out the door. After Congress appropriates it, it puts the money into use by portioning it out to various Federal Agencies and programs.

Mr. Vought is no stranger to the OMB because, for 4 years, in the first Trump administration, as both Acting Director and Director, he served that Agency. Unfortunately, for us and for him, his record there ought to be disqualifying. He slashed budgets. He obstructed oversight efforts. He repeatedly violated the law by withholding funding Congress had already appropriated—all of it harming American families, farmers, working people, communities, and in violation of the law.

The OMB Director is very powerful, but do you know? There is this thing—and I keep coming back to it—the Constitution, the Constitution of the United States, which says we have separate branches of government. The Congress is the one that has the power of the purse strings. It authorizes and appropriates money. The executive implements that budget. It executes—as the term ''executive'' implies—on that budget and many other laws. It enforces criminal laws. It implements other statutes. Of course, the judiciary calls them both in to account if they violate the Constitution.

The Congress actually believes maybe there ought to be an additional guarantee of its power to appropriate and the President to faithfully execute laws. So, in addition to the Constitution, it passed a statute known as the Impoundment Control Act, which says—you know, when the Constitution requires that money appropriated by Congress be spent faithfully by the executive branch, the Constitution really means it, and the Impoundment Control Act implements it by saying it must be spent in exactly that way. But in his first service in the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, Mr. Vought really didn't think it was his duty to follow the law and the Constitution, and so he impounded money.

Now, you would think: Well, maybe it was an error. Maybe, it was an oversight. Maybe, it was just, you know, kind of an innocent mistake.

But he came before us in a hearing at the Committee on Homeland Security, and I asked him specifically whether he would follow the law and the Impoundment Control Act. He said that the act was unconstitutional. His theory was that the Constitution doesn't really mean what it says; that the Framers didn't really think that the President had to spend money if he felt it was against the public interest; and that if his intention was good, he didn't have to follow the Constitution.

Well, the Supreme Court has affirmed and lower courts have followed that law again and again and again. So Mr. Vought thinks he is, in effect, above the Supreme Court, above the law, and above the norms that others in his position followed faithfully in executing appropriations bills.

I joined my Democratic colleagues in voting no on Mr. Vought's two previous nominations, and I join my Democratic colleagues in voting no on Mr. Vought's current nomination. In fact, Mr. Vought's record and views are so troubling, he has never received a Democratic vote—never.

I am here to tell you that, if confirmed again, Mr. Vought will be even worse than he was the first time around. He has had practice. He told this body that the one lesson he learned from his previous tenure was the need to act faster. During the confirmation process, he told us that he ''does not intend to do the job differently'' than he did the first time around, and he would apply his experience ''from day one.'' He said he would be acting and taking the helm of OMB at a time when President Trump has thrown that Agency and the country into chaos and confusion with his unconstitutional, illegal funding freeze.

With Mr. Vought in charge, there will be more of the same. He has already proven that he is willing to break the law on behalf of President Trump.

As I mentioned, one of his most concerning beliefs is that the executive branch—the President—in acting through OMB, has the authority to withhold funding that Congress has legally appropriated. Now, this point is fundamental because, if he believes the President doesn't agree with funding already enacted into law, he doesn't need to release that funding, and the President is above the law.

Let's be clear on appropriations bills. As the Presiding Officer and all of our colleagues know, budgets in the U.S. Government are the result of extensive negotiation, leading to compromise and agreements that are then put into writing and incorporated into drafts and then finally into the bills that are voted on in this Chamber and then approved in the House of Representatives. If they are approved, they go to the President of the United States, and he signs them into law. That is kind of high school civics; everybody should know it.

And it becomes a law. The President signs it. These funding withholding decisions that President Trump made during his first term, on the recommendation of Mr. Vought, were a violation of laws that a President—either he or a predecessor—signed. That is why I want to focus on the devastating effects of this wrongheaded, misguided philosophy and approach to law.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, when I questioned him on this very topic, he was clear that he disagreed with it, which is his right to do. He can disagree with the Constitution. Nobody says you have to think the Constitution is perfect. But if you take that oath—it is that oath we all take—it is to follow the Constitution, so help me God.

When he fails to spend money appropriated by Congress, he will be violating that oath, and he has indicated he is ready, able, and willing to do it.

He is unqualified. He is unprepared. He lacks the character and confidence to be OMB Director.

These issues—I know they appear abstract, hypothetical, but they have real consequences for real people in their everyday lives.

As wildfires raged across California, I asked Mr. Vought if he would commit to releasing disaster relief funding promptly and fully—disaster relief funding for the people of California but also for the people of North Carolina, Texas, Florida, and Connecticut. We had floods recently.

My colleagues and I came together in the closing days of the last session to overwhelmingly approve this funding: $110 billion, the disaster supplemental. That is $29 billion for FEMA—the Federal Emergency Management Agency—to help North Carolina to recover from Hurricane Helene, California to recover from wildfires, and my own State of Connecticut to recover from the devastating flooding that occurred last August. That is $21 billion to the Department of Agriculture to support farmers recovering from disasters, and billions of dollars for countless other programs, from small business loans, to fisheries assistance, to roads that have to be repaired, to other kinds of effects of disasters that are the result of the new normal—climate change. The people who are victims of it, who suffered financial losses or the loss of their homes, injury, are not to be blamed simply because they were in the wrong place or their house was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

There are things we can do now in rebuilding that make those homes more resilient, rebuild them in a different place where the risk is lower. But many lack the insurance because they were told they didn't need it by banks that gave them mortgages, because there had never been a storm of any real magnitude before that happened in Connecticut. They were victims of rains or floods or earthquakes or other natural disasters that were not their fault.

That is why we come together. We help people, as I mentioned earlier. We support each other. That is part of the fabric. That is not the legal fabric; it is the social and moral fabric.

But Mr. Vought told me that he was not ''going to get ahead of the policy process of the incoming administration.'' He never committed that he would release the disaster funding. He left himself an out. He might violate the law. And we now know, because of his testimony, that he will likely violate the law.

We also have his past experience to inform our judgment. Under Mr. Vought's past leadership, OMB delayed community development block grant disaster mitigation funding to Puerto Rico that Congress had provided for recovery from Hurricane Maria.

I visited Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria. I saw the devastating destruction to that island—to roads and bridges, to electricity and utilities, to hospitals and clinics, to agricultural areas that were completely isolated, some of them. I flew over them by helicopter and saw the homes that had been leveled or rendered roofless and now isolated, people unable to find food and water without it being dropped from the air sometimes by FEMA. But he withheld the community development block grant disaster mitigation funding provided by Congress for recovery from Hurricane Maria.

The symbol, the visual symbol of that time became President Trump throwing rolls of paper napkins or towels at people in the crowd waiting for food and water. It became emblematic because Mr. Vought withheld that money.

My constituents and all Americans should not have to worry that when disaster next strikes, they may not receive the aid that they need and deserve and that should be forthcoming because of actions by Congress only because a single man, Russell Vought, has taken it on himself to make a decision that it should be withheld, as he did with Puerto Rico.

Natural disasters—all the more frequent and damaging because of climate change—don't discriminate between red States and blue States. Florida, North Carolina, Texas, Connecticut, Oklahoma, California—they have all suffered these natural disasters recently. It doesn't matter whether they are red or blue; they need and deserve help. No administration should withhold it.

Just as troubling is Mr. Vought's track record on Ukraine aid. This issue is especially close to my heart. I am wearing a pin at this very moment that has both the American and Ukraine flags. I wear it always. I have been to Ukraine six times since the beginning of the war. I believe fervently that their fight is our fight and that we have a moral obligation but also a self-interest in supporting them because Vladimir Putin will keep rolling. If he conquers Ukraine, he will keep going.

The first law, first lesson from ''20th century tyranny'': Do not obey in advance.

Tyranny starts abroad sometimes, but it comes for us. Vladimir Putin will come for others if he succeeds in Ukraine, and we will have an obligation under article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to put American soldiers and troops on the ground: airmen, sailors, marines—all of our military. So it is in our interest to stop him where he is right now.

During his first term, Mr. Vought was instrumental in delaying security assistance to Ukraine. We all remember—those who served in this Chamber during those years—that first impeachment of Donald Trump because of that withholding of money and the circumstances surrounding it.

In 2019, under Mr. Vought's leadership, OMB withheld $250 million appropriated to the Department of Defense for security assistance to Ukraine. The Government Accountability Office found that OMB's actions to withhold this funding violated the law. GAO also concluded that OMB's withholding of an additional $141.5 million appropriated to the State Department for Ukraine might be a violation of the law. That is the Government Accountability Office—nonpartisan, impartial, objective, and independent; violated the law by withholding that money. Ultimately, Congress had to pass another law to ensure that our allies in Ukraine receive the funding they needed.

When I asked Mr. Vought if he would release the remaining security assistance now that has been authorized and appropriated for Ukraine, Mr. Vought said that he, again, was not ''going to get ahead of the President on a foreign policy issue of the magnitude of the situation with regard to Ukraine.''

That is astonishing. That is a yes-or-no question. Will I obey the law? Yes.

But he ducked it. He dodged it. It is astonishing. Time and again, Congress has come together on a bipartisan basis and passed vitally needed security assistance to support our allies in Ukraine, and Mr. Vought could not commit to following the law and honoring that promised funding.

I was and remain astonished and aghast that someone in a position of such responsibility that we are considering Mr. Vought to have would, in effect, say: Well, maybe the President would be above the law, so I am going to wait and see whether he chooses to follow it.

Saying he is going to not get ahead of the President on a foreign policy issue—that is not a foreign policy issue; that is an integrity issue. That is whether or not the President is above the law and whether he will follow it.

Legal scholars at the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel and even the Supreme Court have all found again and again and again that the President doesn't have the authority to withhold congressionally appropriated funding, but here we have a nominee in Mr. Vought saying in effect the Supreme Court is entitled to their opinion, but he could still proceed.

It is baffling to me that this man is now before the Senate for a nomination to a post that is one of the most critical in our government at an unprecedented moment of crisis in our history.

I think my colleagues ought to be equally aghast—both Republicans and Democrats—because this issue of the Constitution—I keep coming back to the Constitution—is bigger than any of us here, bigger than Mr. Vought, even bigger than President Trump. It is what sustains us through constitutional crises, as we face right now.

It is bigger than this administration or any other. It is whether the law of the land should prevail, whether it is up for grabs depending on what the President thinks or what Mr. Vought recommends the President should think. It is about the power of the purse being usurped from Congress and put in the hands of unelected bureaucrats, special government employees like Elon Musk. The Constitution provides for nothing like it—nothing close to it. This issue goes to the foundation of our country.

Again, I know these issues seems esoteric and legalistic. I am a lawyer. I understand that making the law real for people is a challenge, and a lot of what I have said, even when it concerns natural disasters, might seem abstract.

But the person who appropriates the money—Congress—makes judgments about where it should go, who it should benefit: childcare; community health centers; the SNAP program, providing aid for the hungry; the military; new weapons platforms; our intelligence community; our national security; all the domestic needs; all of the challenges from abroad. They are not hypotheticals.

And we saw last week how real the threat is, how damaging the effect would be on every single American if Mr. Vought's views prevailed. Last week, the Trump administration swept the country into chaos and confusion. And all of us in this Chamber heard from our constituents loud and clear: What in God's name are you doing? You are disrupting the payrolls of community health centers that provide basic services to patients who need them, children who use them; childcare; Head Start; Medicare; Medicaid—the basic nuts and bolts of our government disrupted.

I know the President wants to be a change agent; he shouldn't be a chaos agent. Disruption shouldn't mean destruction of those basic services, but that is what a delay in funding could mean—or a suspension of financial support.

And that move wasn't approved by Congress. To be clear, it was against the law. They made the unconstitutional and unilateral decision to halt congressionally mandated funding, as a result of that order—chaos and confusion—halted Federal payments to food bank programs, healthcare and nutrition assistance programs, Head Start and childcare programs, housing programs, energy assistance programs, and so much more we heard about.

And throughout the chaos, the administration was utterly unable to communicate to the public. First, there was a vague memo which claimed there were exceptions to the Trump funding freeze, but many of those programs like Medicaid and Head Start remained unable to access funding for extensive periods of time. A Federal court had to step in and halt the order and stop the chaos. And then, in another one-sentence memo, President Trump caved to the public outcry and allegedly rescinded the funding freeze entirely, 24 hours after it went into effect.

Of course, it didn't end there because, right after the funding freeze was supposedly halted, it was put back into place by a tweet. That is the way we govern these days, in the Trump administration, by a tweet from the White House.

Agencies and organizations on the ground were still in chaos solely because of President Trump's incompetence but also advice that he received from people like Mr. Vought who contended he was above the law and he could unilaterally freeze that funding.

But here is where things really get scary. Mr. Vought shares President Trump's ludicrous and unconstitutional views about the executive power over Federal funding; but he, unlike President Trump, is not incompetent. He knows what he is doing. He spent 4 years at OMB carrying out this agenda of withholding funding, and he is primed and ready to continue that mission with all of that experience behind him, as he put it, on day one.

Make no mistake, even though courts have intervened to halt Trump's Federal funding freeze, this fight is not over. It is not even the beginning of the end. It is not even the end of the beginning. We are in the first 2 weeks—or now maybe 3 weeks—of the Trump administration, and I am hearing from constituents that funding has yet to be unlocked, especially from the Inflation Reduction Act.

And even if all the Federal funding taps are turned back on, this administration is not done wreaking havoc in our communities. The President will try again. Only this time, if we let him, he will have Mr. Vought on his side, with all that experience, breaking the law at OMB on the President's behalf. It won't be a vague, several-line memo from OMB imposing the freeze; it will be a well-articulated set of falsehoods designed to confuse and obstruct but still order a freeze in funding.

Let me give you some examples from Connecticut about what the ramifications are in real life. Given the magnitude of the danger facing us, I want to take some time to highlight again the harms that result from a funding freeze.

I have spent the last couple of weeks—the last week particularly—fielding concerns from constituents who are understandably worried and confused and scared about the devastating effects that the freeze has imposed on services they provide to people who need and deserve them.

Let me be clear that congressionally mandated aid this administration has illegally withheld helps families put food on the table and keep their homes heated in the winter. It helps our communities, and particularly farmers, recover from extreme natural disasters. It provides needed support for infrastructure updates in every State across the country.

To every American who is listening: It is your money that President Trump is playing games with. It is your taxpayer dollars that are owed back as investments in your communities. It is not Donald Trump's money. It is not Russell Vought's money. It is your money, taxpayer money.

Let's call the funding freeze what it is: theft. President Trump is stealing money from American taxpayers and citizens and threatening their ability to pay rent, heat homes, and much more. And that money, stolen by Donald Trump, will be used to finance tax cuts for billionaires and the ultrawealthy like himself.

Follow the money. Follow the money when it is illegally impounded to be used to finance tax cuts for the benefit of a tiny slice of the American public: the ultrawealthy, billionaires. There is nothing wrong with being a billionaire. We all can aspire to be a billionaire. It is the favoritism and discriminatory use and effect of our laws benefiting them at the illegal expense of everyday Americans whose taxpayer money has been stolen, grifted, thieved.

I have no doubt that every single one of my colleagues, even on the other

side of the aisle, who have remained silent or complicit have been inundated with requests for help from their constituents. And my Republican colleagues know well, red States and blue States receive funding from the Federal Government.

In fact, I saw a statistic in the New York Times that something like 80 percent of all the infrastructure money has gone to congressional districts represented by Republicans. Don't hold me to the 80 percent number, but that is approximately what it was—which is not to say they shouldn't receive that money. If they are entitled to it under the formula that Congress establishes based on need or other factors, it doesn't matter whether they are red or blue; the law ought to be executed fairly and faithfully, implemented properly.

But then to turn around and say, well, we should impound money that has been lawfully appropriated, affects them as well as the congressional districts represented by Democrats. It is not about Republican or Democrat.

Here are some real stories. During the chaos that overwhelmed Federal Agencies, community health centers were unable to access the Federal funding they rely on to provide critical health services. Many of them were weighing furloughs of their doctors, their nurses, their counselors, their essential providers.

A nonprofit in Connecticut that provides critical mental health services was terrified that they may not be able to pay their staff if the funding freeze continued.

I spoke to the head of the Alliance or Association of Community Health Centers. He told me about one in the northeastern part of the State that had to close its dental services. Medicaid payments are now seemingly back online, but this administration put 1 million Connecticut residents who rely on Medicaid and the Connecticut Children's Health Insurance Program at risk with these needless and reckless theatrics.

Childcare, similarly: Connecticut Head Start was unable to access payments. President Trump jeopardized childcare and early childhood education for 5,000 families in Connecticut.

Connecticut farmers, who just over a week ago were celebrating—and I was there with them—millions of dollars in much-needed disaster assistance from extreme weather events—they weren't sure whether they would ever see that money, or when. You know, farmers really can't wait a few months to plant the seeds or feed their livestock. There are seasons, there are days when obligations have to be met. And they deserved the aid that was coming to them, and they should not be forced to wait for it.

Millions of dollars to the hard-working farmers of Connecticut withheld potentially on that day. We still are unclear whether that freeze for that aid has been unequivocally lifted.

At the outset of the freeze, I spoke to the CEO of Connecticut Foodshare. He expressed to me his deep fears about the potential impact to food assistance like SNAP, the emergency food assistance program. Freezes to these funds could push hundreds of families into poverty and hunger.

Any more politically motivated funding games from the Trump administration would have potentially life-threatening impacts on survivors of domestic violence because they depend on VAWA—Violence Against Women Act—and the money that is appropriated under it for the domestic violence shelters, for the counseling, for the hotlines—all necessary to provide survivors with options rather than just stay in homes where they are victims of abuse. They are survivors if they can get away, and they deserve these services.

The operation of Connecticut's 24/7 domestic violence hotline could be severely impacted by another suspension. Court-based and community-based services for survivors and their children are also on the chopping block. This funding freeze was terrifying to these women and children and potentially tragic—not just for Connecticut but for the whole country—on domestic violence.

Housing: Connecticut organizations that rely on Federal funding from HUD to help families at risk of homelessness, also in jeopardy. Mr. President, 150,000 Connecticut residents depend on federally funded housing programs.

Even a temporary pause puts them at risk because, potentially, it puts them out of their homes. I heard from one organization that can provide permanent supportive housing to over 40 households in Waterbury and Meriden with the help of HUD funding. This housing is for people with disabilities and their families during this chaos and confusion.

They reported that the payment system for HUD was down, and they were unable to access these funds just days before the rent was due on the first of the month.

While the system now seems to be back online, that organization had to live through potentially tragic trauma, and the stress was debilitating for them, and the trauma has lasting effect. It increases the sense of insecurity for people who already feel an anxiety about their future.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP—we all know it because it heats the homes of people on days like this one—cold—here in the District of Columbia, a lot colder in Connecticut and the Northeast and in many of our States. And people need this critical program that provides energy assistance to low-income individuals and households. It was in jeopardy too; over 100,000 households in Connecticut that rely on heat were told: The money has stopped.

Again, it may be back online, but no one knows whether that is for sure because Russell Vought and Donald Trump think they may be above the law. Funding to support critical water infrastructure, brownfields mediation, and clean drinking water also frozen. That move threatened the health of communities everywhere. And I am still hearing from constituents that grants they received under the Inflation Reduction Act are continuing to be frozen.

The city of New Haven received over $10 million from EPA for two grants under the IRA that they say have been blocked, severely disrupting work. Recipients of EPA's Solar for All program, which enables households in low-income and disadvantaged communities to benefit from solar power, are similarly still frozen, including recipients in Connecticut. Make no mistake, the Trump funding freeze continues in effect today.

The courts need to block it, and then they will need to hold in contempt the officials who fail to obey it, whether it is Mr. Vought or the President of the United States, and lawyers will go to court to seek contempt motions to hold them in contempt.

Trump's funding freeze put the future of Connecticut and our Nation's roads and bridges and rail at risk. Amtrak's state of repair backlog for the Northeast corridor is tens of billions of dollars alone. It was estimated at $78.7 billion in 2023. This funding is critical for safety repairs along Amtrak rail lines.

Funding the Connecticut River Bridge Replacement Project and the Gateway Hudson Tunnel replacement project, it will ensure rail passengers can safely enter and move through all of New England. And without this funding from the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail and the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Programs—just naming a few—all of these investments will be at risk because they are all connected. You can't stop work on one part of the line and expect the trains to magically go in the air over that break.

And transportation costs will escalate because construction costs will rise. The interruption itself could be devastating financially.

Last week, I was proud to join the mayor of New Haven and Representative ROSA DELAURO to announce that the city of New Haven was awarded $2 million under the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program to study reuniting the city of New Haven, which was divided by Interstate 91. When that road was built, it split the city. It created a physical barrier. It isolated residents from social and economic opportunities that are critical to thrive. It destroyed city blocks and dozens of homes. And now this grant will help reunite neighborhoods, bring communities closer together, incentivize housing and other important assets.

But right before we made our announcement, DOT pulled down meetings it was supposed to have with grant

recipients because they didn't know whether the award would be granted. This funding freeze means that New Haven will no longer be able to identify ways to make roads safer or safeguard against disaster or encourage construction of new affordable homes and promote new businesses and more for its residents. Just one example of around $1 billion Federal funding—$1 billion—for Connecticut alone that is in jeopardy.

The longer the Trump administration's reckless agenda causes chaos and confusion, the clearer it will become that everyday Americans are suffering from this ill-conceived, wrongly implemented, reckless, and heartless program.

I talk about all these stories concerning my constituents, but every Member of this body could tell the same kinds of stories across our Nation. It bears repeating because the trauma and the hurt and the harm are to our neighbors and communities.

With Russell Vought as Director of OMB, if he is confirmed, he will have President Trump as his leader, who has apparently indicated he will follow recommendations that put him above the law. Russell Vought is the perfect person to help Donald Trump rob the American people—

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL.—and carry out his agenda of theft. He has proven he is willing and able to break the law for President Trump in his first term, illegally withholding disaster aid—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time is expired.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL.—and security assistance, and he will do it again. I recommend that my colleagues say no to this nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield 120 minutes of my postcloture debate time on the vote nomination to Senator MURPHY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, well, we are in interesting times, and we are beginning to see the corporate and billionaire takeover of the U.S. Government.

And in that corporate and billionaire takeover of the U.S. Government, the nominee Russ Vought to run OMB has a key role, and that key role—to do the work for the billionaires and the big corporations—is what makes him unfit and dangerous and what compels us to come to the floor tonight to warn the American people of what this guy will do and who he is.

Let's start with a little history. This is the guy who violated the Impoundment Control Act by withholding 214 million appropriated dollars from the soldiers fighting and dying in the trenches of Ukraine against Putin's thug army. It was that stunt that led to the impeachment of President Trump.

This is the guy who caused lives to be lost in those Ukrainian trenches by withholding funding they needed desperately, withholding the funding they desperately needed illegally, and withholding that desperately needed funding illegally in order to support a scheme by President Trump to put pressure on the Ukrainians to give him dirt on his political opponent. That is a little bit of history of where this guy will go.

The OMB is the nerve center of the Federal Government, and to have someone there of that character is dangerous.

Vought is also lawless. The Impoundment Control Act that he violated, the Government Accountability Office said this:

> Faithful execution of the law does not permit the President to substitute his own policy priorities for those that Congress has enacted into law.

He violated that, and they specifically find:

> . . . therefore, we conclude that OMB violated the [Impoundment Control] Act.

Is he repentant about that now that the Government Accountability Office has called it out as being illegal? Never mind the Ukrainian lives that he caused to be lost. No. He continues to say the Impoundment Control Act is unconstitutional, even though no court has ever said so.

He was pressed on this question in the Budget Committee and answering the Appropriations Ranking Member Senator MURRAY's questions about this, he said:

> President Trump has stated that the [Impoundment Control Act] is unconstitutional . . . I agree with the President's position.

Again, no court has said this. He said:

> If I am confirmed as the Director of OMB, I will follow the advice of legal counsel, and ultimately the President, with respect to the implementation of the [Impoundment Control Act].

Pay attention.

> I will follow the advice of legal counsel, and ultimately the President.

Not ''I will follow the law,'' not ''I will follow court decisions that say what the law is.'' No. ''I will follow the advice of legal counsel, and ultimately the President.''

So let's just have a quick look at who his legal counsel is. People may remember this. This is a painting that was commissioned by this guy, the billionaire Harlan Crow. As you may remember, the billionaire Harlan Crow has been funding the lifestyle of the next person over—Justice Clarence Thomas. Millions of dollars in secret gifts to the Thomas family.

And the next guy over in the painting—by the way, if you saw Kristi Noem sworn in by Justice Thomas, he has a picture of this right behind them. He is so pleased with it that he has got his own version of it, him with his billionaire sugar daddy, and with Mark Paoletta. This is the guy who is going to be the legal counsel whose advice Vought is going to listen to.

This guy is neck-deep in the billionaire court capture scheme; of course, his advice is going to be what the billionaires say.

The next guy over is Leonard Leo, the court-fixer. This is basically a panorama of the corruption of the Supreme Court: the billionaire who funds it, the Justice who secretly accepts millions of dollars in billionaire gifts, the guy who cooks up the whole scheme and travels with Justices on these billionaire-funded trips and is here at the billionaire's estate in the Adirondacks with them, and, of course, Mark Paoletta.

That is whose advice he is going to take. Again, he was careful to say: not the courts, not the law—the billionaire court-fixer guy who is now his counsel and the President, who has already said he thinks the law is unconstitutional.

This guy, on this question of the Impoundment Control Act, he hasn't said he is going to follow the law either. In fact, he said the Impoundment Control Act is a stupid law, and he tweeted at Russell Vought: ''Impound, baby, impound.''

Yes, you are going to get sober legal advice from a guy who says, ''Impound, baby, impound,'' and hangs out with billionaires who fund the capture of the Supreme Court as part of Leonard Leo's scheme.

This is an illustration of how this guy, Russell Vought, is a creature of the far-right, billionaire dark money world. Before he went to OMB the first time, he worked as vice president of Heritage Action.

What is Heritage Action? Heritage Action is a billionaire-funded dark money group that advocates for the things that dark money billionaires want, and he, for years, worked for them.

Then he went into OMB. And I submit, he still worked for them, although they weren't paying his paycheck at the time.

He gets back out after Trump won, and he sets up something called the Center for Renewing America—again, a billionaire-funded, dark money enterprise whose purpose is to advocate for the things that the dark money billionaires want.

It also, by the way, took care of the refugees from the first Trump administration—that creepy character Jeffrey Clark, who was in the Department of Justice and tried to wrangle his way into the Attorney Generalship by proposing that he would put the Department of Justice into the election fixing scheme that President Trump was running down in Georgia—that guy? Where did he land? Right, at the Center for Renewing America, courtesy of Russ Vought.

Who else is a senior fellow there, funded by the billionaires? Oh, Mark Paoletta, the guy who is going to be his legal counsel and was chumming it up with the billionaire and the Justice.

Who else? Kash Patel, the guy who has threatened publicly, over and over again, to turn the FBI into a political weapon for Donald Trump against his adversaries. He went so far as to repost a tweet of himself chainsawing the heads off members of his enemies list.

Yes, this is the guy who published an enemies list of who he was going to get in what he called a manhunt. ''The manhunt begins now,'' he said, of his enemies list.

And Trump wants to put him in charge of the FBI so it becomes his personal, political weapon. And Kash Patel has shown, time after time, instance after instance, that he is all too willing to do that.

And where did he land? Yes, right, at Vought's Center for Renewing America.

So this guy Vought is neck deep in the billionaire, dark money operation that is working right now to take over the U.S. Government and run it its own way.

The way it wanted to do this is through a plan that it cooked up and paid for called Project 2025. And if you look at the first couple of weeks of the Trump administration, you see Project 2025 playing out again and again and again and again. And who was the central architect of the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025? Oh, yes, Russell Vought. Paid for with $120 million—you know, in Rhode Island, that is still a pretty big number—$120 million from a couple of rightwing billionaire families to cook up a scheme to run the government. And Vought both writes it and now goes in to implement Project 2025.

If you want to look at the guy's lawlessness from another angle, he doesn't believe in independent government Agencies. So the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, for instance, that is an independent government Agency because it adjudicates disputes in the energy sector and because it makes policy and has to do a number of things, but it has to be independent to have this adjudicative function, or the Securities and Exchange Commission or the Federal Reserve—he doesn't believe that any of them should be independent. He says:

What we're trying to do is identify the pockets of independence and seize them—

''Seize them''—for the corporate and billionaire takeover, they want to seize the independent Agencies in government so that they are under the control of the big donors who put this administration in.

He said specifically about the Federal Reserve:

It's very hard to square the Fed's independence with the Constitution.

Except that the Supreme Court of the United States has squared the Fed's independence with the Constitution for decades. The decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court supporting the existence of independent Agencies goes back to the Humphrey's Executor case in 1935. This has been a long run of Supreme Court precedent in which literally dozens of cases involving independent Agencies have come before the Court, and it has never said that it is hard to square the independence of Agencies Congress has deemed to be independent with the Constitution.

This is an eccentric and illegal lawless view, and they intend to impose it, notwithstanding the law.

There are—''Number one'' he says, ''is going after this whole notion of independence. There are no independent agencies. . . . [The] SEC, or the FCC, CFPB . . . that is not something that the Constitution understands.''

Oh, yes, except for those 90 years of Supreme Court precedent interpreting the Constitution to understand exactly that.

In addition to the billionaire ''stoogery'' that he has been involved in for decades, in addition to his penchant for lawlessness where there is clear Supreme Court precedent, he is just a little bit strange. Here is what he has said about the men and women who work in the Federal Government. ''We want'' them, he said, ''to be traumatically affected. When they wake up in the morning, we want them to not want to go to work because they are increasingly viewed as the villains''—your postman, the villain; the meat inspector who makes your steak safe at the USDA, the villain; the health inspector; the people who do the tests on pharmaceutical drugs; the people who do brain cancer research—yes, we definitely want them to be viewed as the villains and to not want to go to work.

He goes on. ''We want their funding to be shut down so that''—and, of course, he picks the EPA because we are dealing with mostly polluter billionaires—''so that the EPA can't do all of the rules against our energy industry because they have no bandwidth financially to do so. We want to put them in trauma.''

If you think that is normal, you might want to go have just a little look in the mirror.

He wants mass firings, which we are already seeing threatened. He wants to eliminate the civil service, fire staffers so that they can be replaced with loyal partisans.

So let's say you are a big polluter. Let's say you are a big oil company. Let's say you are not cleaning up your methane leaks. You are spewing waste methane into the atmosphere for everybody else to breathe, and the Environmental Protection Agency or perhaps the Department of the Interior, who may be your landlord, comes to you and says: You know, you have got to clean up your mess here. You are spilling methane into the atmosphere. It is poisoning people. You have got to knock it off.

Nope. Out you go. Bring in the sycophants. Bring in the loyal partisans. Bring in people who will tell the corporate and billionaire takeover artists that are at work now: Never mind. We got your back here. You just keep leaking that methane.

And here is one that kind of stunned me, a pretty simple question. I ask him:

Did Joe Biden win the 2020 Presidential election?

What was his answer?

I believe that the 2020 election was rigged.

No court has ever believed that. People got their bar ticket removed for telling courts falsehoods that the election was rigged. This was the first big lie of the Trump administration, and he is not over it, and he wants to go and run the nerve center of OMB.

He even wants to invoke The Insurrection Act, bring in the U.S. military onto domestic soil, to break up people who are protesting the Trump administration.

This is not a normal guy. This is not a guy who respects the law and the Constitution. This is a tool of a very small, rightwing billionaire elite, and he has proven himself with his participation in the Trump scheme to hold back urgently needed money from Ukrainian warriors trying to defend their country against Putin so that he could put pressure on Zelenskyy to develop dirt on Trump's political opponent. He was part of that scheme—what a guy.

The last thing that I will mention is that he has described Joe Biden and his administration as having engaged in climate fanaticism—climate fanaticism—this from the slow, cautious, temperate, noncombative Biden administration. I wish they had been a little bit more fanatic, but they sure weren't. They were slow. They were cautious. They were temperate. They were noncombative. And he found that to be fanatic.

Well, I will close with what is coming because what is coming from climate change is a beginning meltdown in property insurance markets all around the country, which is going to cascade into a problem in mortgage markets around the country because you can't get a mortgage if you can't get property insurance. And unless you are selling billionaire-to-billionaire Palm Beach estates, if you want to sell your home, you have got to find somebody who can get a mortgage. If your home can't get a mortgage because it can't get insurance, you can't find a buyer, and so your property values crash.

And the chief economist for Freddie Mac has warned that this ''insurance to mortgage to property values'' crash is going to happen, and it is going to hit the U.S. economy as hard as the 2008 mortgage meltdown. So somebody who takes this not seriously at all is the wrong person to lead us as we head toward disaster.

Here is some of the work that we have been doing on this out of the

Budget Committee. Here is where we are seeing massive non-renewal rate increases. That is the insurance companies telling people who have paid their premiums for years: You are fired. We don't want you anymore; we are not going to insure your property any longer; you are done—or jacking up the rates. You can see where the high-percentage places are; they are in coastal and wildfire areas.

Here is another one. This followed our Budget Committee report that I just referenced. This is where home insurance premiums are predicted to go because of climate change—up to a 300-percent increase. That is quadrupling. If you have a $6,000 home insurance policy, that is $24,000.

It is all over. It is in the hot spots for wildfire, and it is in the hot spots for coastal property damage from storms and sea level rise.

When you raise home insurance premiums by that much, what do you do? You knock down the value of the home because when you buy a home, if you are buying into a let's say $24,000 expense every year, the present value of $24,000 out of your pocket year after year after year comes off the value of the house. So it will knock down property values.

Indeed, it is predicted that in many of these areas, homes are going to lose as much as 100 percent of their value. A home that people have invested in—purchased, loved, raised their children in—will lose its value in some places completely because you can't get insurance, you can't get a mortgage, and you can't find a buyer. The place is going to burn. The place is going to flood.

It is not just me warning of these things. Here is an article from The Economist magazine—not exactly a liberal, green publication—predicting globally that the next housing disaster is going to come from climate change.

Severe weather brought about by greenhouse gas emissions is shaking the foundations of the world's most important asset class . . . real estate.

The world is facing roughly a $25 trillion—trillion—hit.

The impending bill is so huge, in fact, that it will have grim applications, not just for personal prosperity, but also for the financial system. Climate change [in short] could prompt the next global property crash.

If you look back here to Florida, you see how acute the trouble is as that insurance market melts down. Home insurance in Florida—the average annual premium for a typical single-family home in the State is likely to hit nearly $12,000 this year, says The Economist magazine.

Citizens Property Insurance Corporation has become Florida's largest home insurer. Its exposure is now $423 billion, much more than the state's public debt.

This is a high-risk situation.

The Financial Times report says that billion dollar-plus disasters occur once every 3 weeks now on average, compared with every 4 months for equivalent events in the eighties. As insuring high-risk homes becomes increasingly hard and costly, cracks in the U.S. housing market will widen.

This danger of housing value collapse is already underway. Residential properties in the United States are overvalued by $121 billion to $237 billion for flood risks alone—not for wildfire risks out West, the flood risks alone. That is the Financial Times.

The New York Times:

Without insurance, [it is impossible] to get a mortgage; without a mortgage, most Americans can't buy a home.

Headline: ''Insurers Are Deserting Homeowners as Climate Shocks Worsen.''

Bloomberg News: ''US Home Insurance, Real Estate markets Teeter on Financial Crisis.''

Here is what they say: It is hard to overstate the role that insurance plays in the modern economy. Banks won't make mortgage loans for uninsurable properties. Without those loans, the real estate market slows to a crawl, which in turn eats away household wealth and the tax revenue that State and local governments rely on. For insurers to play their part, they have to feel confident predicting how much damage they might have to cover. To do that, they build models of the future based on what has happened in the past. They don't have to be right all the time, just enough to win by more than they lose.

Climate change has made that much harder. A warming world is more dangerous and unpredictable. In the eighties, the United States experienced roughly three disasters a year that did at least $1 billion in damage. Now the annual occurrence is closer to 18.

It is not just news reports. Here is the Congressional Budget Office analysis:

The Risks of Climate Change to the United States in the 21st Century.

As emissions of greenhouse gases of human activities accumulate in the atmosphere and oceans, climate conditions are changing throughout the world. In the United States, those changes will have consequences for economic activity, real estate, and financial markets.

Here is the Financial Stability Board. It is the global board that advises banks on how to stay sound.

Climate-related vulnerabilities in the financial system, when triggered by climate shocks, could threaten financial stability. . . . Climate shocks can interact with existing [financial] vulnerabilities in the real economy or in the financial system . . . [and lead to financial losses]. Climate shocks could also affect the real economy through damage to real assets or the creation of stranded assets or disruption to economic activity that can feed back to the financial system.

I will cut to one of the end points here: The projected physical risk impact from climate change could cause global GDP to decline versus the baseline by 5.3 percent by 2030 and by up to 15 percent by 2050.

That is a global recession, folks, driven by climate change, pounding insurance markets, which pound mortgage markets. And this guy thinks that taking climate science seriously is fanaticism.

Here is what the American people think about some of this stuff. Penalties on high-pollution imports—letting high-pollution Chinese products into our country, putting a penalty on that: 12 percent oppose, 74 percent support—a 62-percent positive swing.

Carbon pollution limits on big companies: 12 percent disapprove, 72 percent support.

Impose a fee on big polluters: 10 percent oppose, 74 percent support—a 64-percent swing.

The American public wants to solve this climate problem, which is why the billionaires need to come in and take over the government from the inside with people like Russell Vought, so they can defeat the American people, continue to pollute, and let the economic mayhem ensue.

I will close with this last image just because I really love it. Here are the MAGA guys standing outside the wall of Trump's Mar-a-Lago palace:

We sure showed those elites who's in charge.

Meantime, inside are the helicopters from Wall Street, Big Tech, Bezos, pharma, Big Ag, Musk, coal, Big Oil, crypto bros.

This is what is happening. MAGA may have thought it won the election, but here is who really won the election: the looters and the polluters; the Musks, who are running into our information systems, looting data out of them for their own purposes; and the polluters, who want to pretend that this climate change threat is not real.

Russ Vought is dangerous because he won't face the facts on these things because he belongs to the billionaire looters and polluters.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to continue the discussion about Russell Vought, the President's nominee to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Before I do, I thought I would just share with my colleagues and all who are in the Chamber a vigil that I just attended.

There was a vigil at a riverfront park in Alexandria near the site where the flight went down a week ago, killing 67 people on the American Airlines flight and the Army helicopter that had deployed out of Fort Belvoir.

It was a simple, moving candlelight vigil that was organized by my friend DON BEYER in the House of Representatives. It was attended by a few hundred people, mostly residents of Alexandria and Arlington, nearby communities. There was a heavy representation of law enforcement there because the Alexandria Police and Fire Departments were very integral to the rescue and recovery operations that were ongoing.

It was somber. It was somber. You struggle for words at a time like that.

I couldn't think of any of my own that really were that enlightening, so I fell back on Psalm 90:

Teach us how short our lives are, so that we may become wise.

Thinking about the children, the ice skaters and their friends and families who were killed, but, frankly, all of us have short lives, even the oldest of those who died that day. The mother who was celebrating her birthday, a wife who was on her way home whose husband was waiting for her in the airport, these coaches, folks who were in Wichita doing a pipefitter training program, and, frankly, all of the attendees—our lives are all short.

So what is the wisdom if you follow the logic in Psalm 90, ''Teach us how short our lives are, so that we may become wise''? What is the wisdom we are to gain if we understand our lives are short?

Well, the Psalm doesn't really say. The Psalm kind of leads us to conclude for ourselves what is the wisdom we are to gain out of such situations and out of the realization of the temporal nature of human life.

But what I said to people there is, if there is one bit of wisdom you should gain when you realize how mortal we all are, it is probably wisdom about the value of community, that we link arms and we support each other. Certainly, if we are celebrating positives, we ought to do that, but particularly when we are mourning and we are thinking about lives lost and lives and futures cut short, our wisdom should compel us to find solace and comfort in each other's company.

This vigil lasted about half an hour. We had candles. After Representative BEYER spoke and I spoke and the mayor of Alexandria, Alyia Gaskins, spoke, the chaplain of the Alexander Police Department gave a prayer, and the vigil was over. But we stayed. We stayed to visit each other and comfort one another.

I was struck because I was coming here to speak tonight. I met a guy from DHS who was involved in the recovery effort in frigid waters out on the Potomac. I met a key official from Fort Belvoir, where the three soldiers had deployed from in the training flight who were killed that night. I met other people who are part of the Federal family, you know, who work in air traffic control, who work in the FAA.

Alexandria is pretty close to the Pentagon. I met people who work at the Pentagon or whose family members do. I met some folks who weren't Federal employees, but they talked to me about—one woman talked about her son, who is a Federal employee currently stationed in Tennessee. I took that to mean a member of the armed services.

This was the random community that gathered to commemorate the 67 lost lives and comfort one another.

While we were there to focus on the tragic accident, most wanted to talk to me about their own fears for their careers and for their families and for others who are feeling confused and afraid right now because of actions that are being taken against Federal employees.

That brings me to Russell Vought. My colleagues have spoken on the floor about a particular statement of Mr. Vought's that I examined him about fairly aggressively during the Budget Committee hearing. In the course of a speech, he said: I want Federal employees to be traumatized. I want to put them in trauma. I want them to not want to come to work because they know that they are increasingly viewed as the villain.

Now, who talks like that? I mean, who talks like that? Is there a single manager or leader or organizational chief that we admire who believes that their mission, their happiness, their glee, their purpose is to make their workforce feel traumatized? No. We would never celebrate a leader of that kind. Yet that is precisely what Russell Vought said.

I asked him: Do you really mean that? Do you really want air traffic controllers to come to work traumatized?

Well, no, no, I didn't mean that.

Do you want people who inspect our food to come to work traumatized?

No, I didn't mean that.

Well, how about people at OMB? You ran it before, and you are running it again. A lot of folks might call OMB staffers—do you want them to come in to work traumatized?

No, I don't like that.

But that is what he said.

When he was not in front of the Senate Budget panel and he was speaking candidly—and there is a beautiful Biblical phrase that, I think, is from the Gospel of Luke that says: From the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaks.

When he was speaking directly from the heart, what he said is, I want Federal employees to be traumatized.

What I want to do in my time on the floor tonight is talk a little bit about these Federal employees and what having a traumatized workforce means. Then, for a few minutes, I want to focus upon not the Federal workforce but on others who were affected by the Russell Vought strategy on the Federal budget.

This is what I have heard from Virginians just in the week since the funding pause order went into place, which I will agree was something that was masterminded by Russell Vought.

Federal employees: Yesterday, I decided, after hearing stories from Federal employees, to launch on the website a resource where Federal employees could share their stories if they chose to, with anonymity guaranteed, because so many are afraid.

Some will remember that I took to the floor yesterday, and I read an open letter to Federal employees. There are 140,000, give or take, in Virginia. I read an open letter, offering them a bit of a pep talk, encouraging them to keep doing what you are doing—serving your fellow Americans. Just do that. You signed up for the job to do that. Don't pay attention to all of these things and all of this trauma. I know that is such hard advice to give to somebody. Just keep serving your fellow Americans every day, and if you have a problem, call our office, and we will try to be helpful if we can. There is no guarantee that we will be able to avert this, but just do what you have a passion to do, and we will try to help you if we can.

But also, in delivering that letter to Federal employees, we launched a website in my office, and we encouraged people to share their stories. Within 3 hours, we had about 400 stories of Federal employees who had reached out and shared, and those stories keep coming in. Some are asking us to give them a call and probe further details. Some are giving us their names and the Agencies where they work, and some are too afraid to give us those.

What I thought I would do tonight is I would just take 18 of these stories from the Federal employees—that had just come in, in less than 24 hours—of the hundreds that have been submitted, and I just want to read some to you to tell you about who these people are who Mr. Vought believes need to be traumatized, who these people are that Mr. Vought wants to personally make feel as if they are the villains.

The first is a Federal employee who works at USAID:

After two extremely painful miscarriages, I am now 34-weeks pregnant with my first child. Since my husband works as a lawyer for the EPA, what should have been a joyful time in our life now feels like a dystopian hellscape, and we are very afraid for our future and our financial security. We are just hoping to have health insurance at this point for when I give birth, but . . . that feels uncertain. I swore an oath, and [I] believe in the work that USAID does. I believe that it makes America stronger, safer, and more prosperous [just] as Secretary Rubio is calling for, and I will support the Agency until they boot me from the system. God help us all.

She is 34-weeks pregnant after two extremely painful miscarriages and is just hoping that she will not lose her job and her health insurance.

The second story is of a Federal employee working for the National Science Foundation, headquartered in Virginia:

NSF funding supported my undergraduate summer research experiences, my Ph.D. project, and my previous job. The opportunity to give back and support the next generation of U.S.-based scientists was a dream fulfilled, and I am terrified that I will be fired as soon as Friday, with no protections or severance. The fair compensation and flexible schedule let's my spouse work as a teacher, and she is so great at her job. But that will not pay [our] mortgage. We simply never accounted for a scenario like this.

A third story from a Federal employee working at USAID:

I have worked for USAID for 12 years, including in Bosnia, Rwanda, and now Washington . . . Our work is and has always been

critical to advancing democracy, American interests, and the prosperity, safety, and strength of Americans. We will continue this work. The attack on USAID lacks intelligence and foresight. China and Russia are filling the vacuum, outspending the U.S. and deepening partnerships with our allies, who feel abandoned. This is creating permanent damage and undoing decades of progress in a few days. This does the opposite of making America stronger, safer, and more prosperous.

These are the direct words of Virginians who have shared their stories with me.

A fourth story is of a Federal employee working at the U.S. Department of Agriculture:

I'm a young person working in the federal government. I graduated from college 4 years ago, and since then, I have committed my time to serving the public and helping the environment. I've served two AmeriCorps terms and worked two seasonal federal jobs before finally landing a permanent federal job last November. These last few weeks have been a hell for us federal workers. I come to work with a pit in my stomach. I am a probationary employee, so will probably be the first to go during a RIF. They have left us in the dark while constantly terrorizing us with threatening, passive-aggressive messages, and half legal deals to resign. I fear for my job, but I fear more for my country.

A Federal employee who works for the Department of Transportation:

I am frightened about my position. I'm a single-income household, and [I] am convinced no one has my back. Congress has been pretty much silent, and the news has gained very little traction nationwide. We need people to tell the story about what government workers do. Thank you for providing the platform to connect. We are [only] in this to serve the American public.

A Federal employee working for the Department of Defense:

It's hard to even know where to start. As soon as this administration took office, it felt like federal workers were under siege. They began with their flurry of executive orders and memos. They put Elon Musk (whom no one elected, who is not a Federal employee but yet has huge contracts for other areas with the government) in charge of ''handling'' the potential mass layoffs of federal workers. His fingerprints were all over these actions, from insecure servers being jammed into OPM to poorly crafted mass emails meant to stir chaos and bypass all chains of command, to then bragging about it on social media and insulting and belittling every one of the millions of federal workers as ''unproductive,'' also laughing at people in his giant social media platform who mock us and call us stupid. No one knows what their job security looks like. No one trusts anything these people are saying to us, especially with these ''deferred resignation'' mass emails. The entirety of OPM, once a solid standard for human resources in the United States, is now a total joke. Agencies are left scrambling because they've been given zero guidance and have no serious leadership coming from the administration. . . . All of this is frightening, anxiety-inducing, depressing, and wrong. It's so difficult to fight the misinformation because, if you ''out'' yourself as a fed, you'll be piled upon. . . . We're middle-class workers with burdens and families and debt just like everyone else. We need our jobs, and we will fight for them. I take my oath to the Constitution seriously. . . . Please, anyone with power, exercise [that power] and serve justice.

A Federal employee at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, headquartered in Alexandria:

I have served the American [public] for the last 10 years at different positions at the USPTO. The USPTO's mission is [actually] outlined in the Constitution: ''to promote the progress of science and the useful arts.'' To that end, the USPTO uses telework to attract and retain highly qualified people. These people work hard [every day in and out] to serve the American people. As a result, the United States has been the beacon of innovation for much of the world. In fact, so many inventors come to the U.S. to secure intellectual property. Let me be clear: The people at the USPTO are incredibly talented, hard-working people. They are not the ''opposing team'' or ''low productivity.'' The constant harassment from the current administration underscores the diligent efforts of over 14,000 people that keep this economy moving forward.

Another story from a Federal employee working for the General Services Administration:

[Thanks] for the opportunity to share my story. The ongoing threats of job losses due to a reduction in force have been deeply demoralizing. As you know, federal employees already earn, on average, 25 percent less than our private sector counterparts . . . The disregard for union contracts is deeply concerning and undermines the commitments made to the workforce.

Many of my talented and hard-working colleagues have been living in fear for weeks, facing uncertainty they [don't] deserve. This unlawful [treatment] not only undermines their dedication but also creates an environment of instability and anxiety that no employee should have to endure.

Here is a story from a Virginia Federal employee working for the Department of Homeland Security, and this is a pretty common one:

My husband and I are both federal employees, and we are both on probation.

Meaning they are relatively new employees.

We also have student loan debts and under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.

If we lose our jobs because we are on probation, we will lose the ability to have our payments to Public Service Loan Forgiveness counted. We will not be able to pay for childcare, and we will lose our apartment. Furthermore, the [DC area] will be flooded with [fired] federal workers, and we won't be able to find jobs easily. Our future is [increasingly] bleak. Please [please] stop them.

Another employee working for the Department of Homeland Security:

I have worked for DHS for 15 years . . . I truly believe a strong, healthy workforce of civilian servants is vital for a strong, healthy America. Our government has a duty to protect its citizens. This, to me, includes making sure people's basic needs are met, be it healthcare, food, housing, education. . . . The private sector [isn't] taking on this obligation.

The federal government [isn't] profit-driven, which is partly why our jobs are . . . secure. . . . My worth as an employee is not tied up in how much product I sell. . . . My worth depends on doing my best to improve the lives of the American people.

A Federal employee who didn't feel comfortable even sharing the Agency that he or she works for:

[It is] impossible to get our . . . work done under these conditions. It has been a constant assault on us federal workers, who are all serving our country faithfully and to the best of our abilities. I've served under different administrations—Republican and Democrat—and [have] been proud to do so. As a family, we are canceling our vacations for the year, any unnecessary subscription or expense, and tightening [our] belt because I don't know if I will have a job by the end of the year. While I could be comfortably making double my salary in the private sector, I chose the federal service out of a sense of duty to my country and to use my skills to better the lives of my fellow Americans. Now it feels as if the federal government is not holding [its] end of the bargain. The last 2 weeks have been a nightmare.

A Federal employee who works for the Defense Health Agency:

Senator KAINE, I am a DHA healthcare civilian worker. I worked for 12 years for the Army at Keller Army Community Hospital at the U.S. [Military Academy] in New York, and for the last 4-plus years at the medical clinic on the Dahlgren Base in Virginia—

Which is a little bit east of Fredericksburg.

I am so upset. Our local commander, my supervising commander, and the lieutenant general heading DHA have all emailed us since the famous HR/OPM ''Fork in the Road'' email came out. They all said the same thing. They don't have any information or clarification for us but will reach out to us when they do. I check daily and, to date, no information.

Stop and think about that for a minute. This DHA employee received a ''Fork in the Road'' letter, drafted by Elon Musk. This is somebody who has worked for the DHA for many, many years.

The DHA employee reaches out to their own direct supervisor. ''We don't have any information for you. We can't clarify what this letter means.''

They reach out to the base commander. ''We don't have any information. We can't clarify what the letter means.''

He even reaches out to the very head—the lieutenant general, the head of the Defense Health Agency, asking: What does this mean?

''We don't have any information for you. We can't clarify what this letter means.''

Just imagine that. The entire chain of command in this Agency, responsible for providing healthcare to our troops, is unable to tell the medical professionals who are providing service to our Active-Duty military every day what this ''Fork in the Road'' letter even means. It is shocking.

I check daily and, to date, no information.

Another Federal employee who did not feel comfortable sharing the Agency where he or she works:

Since inauguration, times have been hell for us because every day is loaded with uncertainty regarding the future state of our contract work and our Federal counterparts we work with daily. To this day, every work day is filled with dread and anxiety. Our firm has begun cutting staff already because there is simply no funding. This is also becoming the norm across other areas within our company.

This, clearly, must be from an individual who works with a Federal contractor. I suspect probably with USAID.

It is unfortunate because many are new or young people just trying to earn a living—

And starting off public service careers and now—

Getting stuck dealing with the mess everything is in now.

Here is another letter from a Federal contractor working for USAID:

I work as a USAID contractor. In the past week, I have experienced near everyone in my company getting placed on furlough. Beyond the fact that we are all working to make international development more impactful, and the fact that the US Company we have invested so much time in may never come back from this, we are all without salary and uncertain for the future. We are applying for jobs but acknowledge that with so many also furloughed or terminated, there is extremely [challenging] competition. Do we move away from [our home in] DC? [Do we] leave the industry which we made our careers, [so] that we could see making the world a better place and the US a better place?

Here is a Federal employee working for a small independent Agency. Again, the employee didn't feel comfortable identifying it.

It has always been my dream to be a federal employee. Ever since civics class in grade school, I saw what the government and feds could do for people and realized I wanted to pour my heart and soul into doing just that.

But the wind has been taken out of my sails. I am a probationary employee, meaning my name is on the short list to fire. I was hired under Schedule A—persons with disabilities, so my name is on [that] list [too]. I feel like I am being threatened by the very institutions that were created to safeguard the principles of truth, compassion, and respect . . .

I have lived my life placing others' needs . . . in front of mine. Trying to practice what I preach, but I am being forced to remove protected classes from our website, take down reports on DEIA—

It is interesting. The Trump Executive order tried to kill DEI—diversity, equity, inclusion—but in many of the documents that are being sent to Agencies, they are adding an ''A'' at the end. I never had seen that before, DEIA. What is the ''A''? ''Accessibility.'' Even though the Executive order signed by the President did not specifically attack accessibility programs for those with disabilities, the implementation documents that are going out from the administration are adding accessibility as a negative that needs to be rooted out of the Federal workplace. Could anybody be crueler than that?

Being forced to take down these reports on things, including accessibility, the writer says:

I feel as though there is blood on my hands [doing this]. It breaks my heart.

Finally, one last story, and then I will say a word about Federal funding to programs around Virginia, moving on from just sharing the stories of Federal employees.

This is another Federal employee who doesn't feel comfortable—actually, not one less story. I have three more. This is from a Federal employee who doesn't feel comfortable revealing the Agency where he or she works.

Today, I woke up to an email saying we had a restraining order, tied to Trump's [Executive orders], that would limit how we'd disperse our grants. Since the EOs were [so] vaguely defined to begin with, this could be a witch hunt for all kinds of programs and grants we give out.

A Federal employee from an Agency:

I'm a senior human resource professional in the Department of the Interior. I'm on daily calls with Departmental HR leaders who receive direction from OPM. Today leadership mentioned that their coordination was with DOGE ''employees'' rather than with actual OPM employees. These DOGE employees have full access to our USA Staffing hiring system, which includes personally identifiable information for ALL applicants—

Not all employees, for all applicants—

To any position in the [Federal Government]. It is unclear what kind of clearance these individuals have, if any, and what authority they even have to access this system.

Finally, we are beginning to work on identifying employees for transfer to Schedule F with short response times of less than 90 days. STOPPING SCHEDULE F MUST BE YOUR TOP PRIORITY.

Finally, the last story I will read before saying a word about Federal funding, this is from a Federal employee who works for HHS, Health and Human Services.

After working first as a contractor, I transitioned to a Competitive Career Permanent Position [that has taken me] years to get to this point. After graduating with my bachelors and masters degree, I faced competition from people returning to work after having been laid off during the recession.

I am married and pregnant. I am the breadwinner. A woman. . . . a homeowner. I pay taxes. I took an oath and I love my job. The daily fear tactics and targeting of federal employees has uprooted my life. I no longer feel safe going on [a] vacation, making . . . big purchases or doing anything because everyday I wonder [if I will] have a job.

What is happening is wrong. I am pregnant with my first child. I didn't do anything wrong. I . . . would have to separate from my husband weekly to keep my job if forced into [a particular location]. I can't make long drives due to sickness . . .

What did I do wrong to deserve this? Working for the federal government is [a] dream. I was sold an American dream! Graduate from high school, go to college, get an advanced degree, get married, buy a home . . . have a baby. All in that order. I did everything I was supposed to do and now myself and over a million other people are caught up in a political firestorm that we didn't ask for.

Tell me, why am I being punished? What did I do wrong? When will they be satisfied? When we kill ourselves from [depression for] not being able to provide for our families? I suffer from anxiety and depression already. I can tell you, this is enough to push a regular person over the edge. What more for someone who battles with their mental health? Why does no one care? Why should what I earned be ripped away from me? Why do millions deserve for our worlds to fall apart? Everyday my mind goes through what is happening and all the consequences that could fall upon me. It's unsafe for my health, my baby's [health] and my family. I ask for compassion and I want people to know that we are hardworkers. We are regular people. We are humans [who are] employed by the Federal Government. Please. Do something!

An intentional strategy of traumatizing Federal workers produces stories just like these, now in the hundreds. And by tomorrow, I will have hundreds more. And that is just one State. That is just Virginia. I know my colleagues are receiving these as well.

I see my colleague Senator BALDWIN is here and will take the floor in just a few minutes, but I do want to turn to not just Federal employees but the Federal funding that is coming to Virginia and Virginia organizations. It has been hard to get the sense of this because, of course, the administration didn't share anything with us. They didn't tell us what they were going to do. And my Governor, frankly, hasn't been sharing with us either.

The analogy I have been using is this funding order. When it came out, I feel like a jigsaw puzzle was dumped in front of me on a desk upside down, and all I could see was the cardboard on the back of all the pieces. Nobody gave me the box with the picture on it, so I didn't even know what the jigsaw puzzle was supposed to be.

I am getting no information from the Trump administration. I am getting no information from my Governor about what this plan is, what is going on. But every time somebody shares a story like these and every time someone calls me office and every time a mayor talks to me about an infrastructure project or something, I turn over one of those pieces. I have been turning over pieces for the last 10 days, and the picture is starting to emerge.

Let me tell you what people in Virginia are telling me. I met today with the—''today.'' My days are running together. I met yesterday with the Virginia Association of Community Health Centers.

Mr. President, you know these. Senator BALDWIN from Wisconsin has been very active in this space on the HELP Committee. These are the federally qualified health centers, chartered and funded pursuant to congressional appropriations to be the safety net for Americans' primary care.

In Virginia, there are 29 federally qualified health centers that serve hundreds of thousands of individuals. They are talented and focused in their localities and regions. These centers are particularly important in rural America that tends to have a shortage of primary healthcare providers.

On Monday, when I came into the office, I had an outreach from one of our largest FQHCs in the Hampton Roads area, the second largest metro area in Virginia, 1.6 million people.

Here is what they said. They are used to getting a payment for their congressional appropriation at the end of every month. It would have come in on January 29. President Trump's Executive order paused Federal funding that happened a few days before, but that order was enjoined.

The Trump administration was ordered to continue to make payments and not pause Federal payments. But

this very large health clinic in Hampton Roads had not received their monthly payment on January 29. And when they called to ask at their Federal contact what about the payment, they weren't given any answer about the January payment or about the February payment or about any payment. They couldn't get an answer.

I had the entire association, coincidentally, in my office yesterday with representatives from virtually all of these, and I asked them what was going on. They said, well, more than half of the FQHCs in Virginia had not received their January payment. They had submitted to receive it under normal course of business at the end of January but hadn't gotten it and couldn't get an answer about when or whether they could get it.

This is frontline healthcare for low-income people. If they are not getting primary healthcare, they are still going to get sick, and then they are going to be in emergency rooms, which is the worst place to get healthcare, creating long lines and congestion that will make it harder for everybody else to get the treatment they need in emergency rooms. It will make people sicker. It will make hospitals more crowded for everybody who needs hospitals.

You know, the thing about it is Russell Vought was not only the architect of the funding freeze, but now he and others are responsible for following the court order, for God's sake. The court order said they had to resume payments.

My FQHCs are not getting paid. They are not getting paid. My Commonwealth attorneys, my prosecutors around Virginia, they all get funding through various programs that come to our State's department of criminal justice services. They use that Federal grant funding to hire victim witness coordinators.

I had the organization of prosecutors from Virginia in my office today. They talked about how they rely on Federal funding to hire victim witness advocates in their offices. That is not funded by the State. It is funded through the Federal grant program. They don't know whether they are going to get the funding for that.

So compounding these concerns from Federal employees, I have Head Start programs, I have healthcare clinics, I have Commonwealth attorneys, I have sheriff's offices who get Federal funding to provide mental health services for people who need mental health services in jails and in the community—they are not sure they are going to get them.

The compounding of confusion and fear is sharp and unnecessary and illegal. These are appropriated funds. I don't need to repeat everything that Senator WHITEHOUSE said. Congress has appropriated these funds. A Democrat and Republican House reached budgets together, signed by the President. The President is under an obligation to implement those funds. There is no legal authority for him to hold them back. Why is he holding them back? What did the patients at the health clinic in Hampton Roads do to get punished?

One of the health clinics is called the Capital Area Health clinic in Richmond. They have six clinics around the Richmond metropolitan area. They have closed three of them. They have closed three of the six. Other of the health clinics around the State are reducing the services, trying to keep the doors open but reducing services.

There is a court order that says they are supposed to be paid, but they are shutting the doors of their clinics, and they are reducing services because the administration won't even follow a court order. It is my hope that they will.

I don't think this is a glitch. I think this is an intentional effort to thwart a court order in order to hurt people who don't deserve to be hurt.

So under these circumstances, there is no way that I or any of my colleagues can stand here and cast a ''yes'' vote for somebody who has declared their intention is to traumatize Federal employees.

I will finish as I started: Who talks like that? Who talks like that? That is the professed goal of this individual who has been nominated for this most important post, and there is no circumstance under which I could cast a ''yes'' vote for someone harboring that kind of resentment.

Finally, I asked Mr. Vought in the confirmation hearing to tell me who his favorite Presidents are. He is a Republican, so I felt like I had a pretty good sense of it. I asked him, Do you admire Abraham Lincoln? He said very much. I said, I do too. I do too.

''With malice toward none, with charity toward all''—that is what Lincoln said to a divided nation during the Civil War. He spoke to the South. He spoke to Confederates. He spoke to those who were waging war to try to destroy the Union.

What he said to them was:

With malice toward none, with charity toward all.

Mr. Vought told me he admires Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln would never have thought to say: I want to traumatize you. I want you to not want to go to work because you are viewed as the villain.

How far this Grand Old Party has come from the lofty and noble sentiments of its founder when it is putting at the head of the Federal workforce somebody whose desire is to traumatize Federal workers.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, like my colleague Senator KAINE, I will be uplifting the words of some of my constituents who have been contacting me in a panic, really, over the last several days. But I want to remind folks why we come here at this hour to speak on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

We are here today to consider President Trump's nominee for the Office of Management and Budget, Russell Vought. Many Americans may not be familiar with Mr. Vought; however, you may be familiar with his most infamous work: Project 2025. That is right. President Trump's nominee for the Office of Management and Budget was one of the lead authors of Project 2025. It is a document which President Trump repeatedly denied having anything to do with during his campaign.

First, I think it is important to break down the responsibilities of the Office of Management and Budget, or OMB. What does it really do? OMB oversees the preparation of the President's budget request. This is a budget proposal that they send to Congress. OMB evaluates the effectiveness of Agency programs, policies, and procedures. OMB oversees and implements the appropriations bills and mandatory spending programs enacted by laws we pass in Congress.

The Office does not have a magic wand that allows it to create new laws, fund only programs they want and slash others that they don't, except through specific authorities that Congress provides. The Director of OMB is not, in fact, the 101st Senator, nor the 436th Member of the House of Representatives or even a second President. The operative word here is ''implement.''

A second stated mission of OMB is called the open government directive, which emphasizes the importance of disclosing information that the public can readily find and use.

Folks, the good news about Mr. Vought is that he has been clear from the start on his goals. Case in point: Project 2025. For those who didn't read that 922-page document, I can share some of the lowlights.

For economic policy, Project 2025 further shifts the tax burden from the wealthy onto the middle class, while giving American households with $10 million in annual income an average tax cut of $1.5 million per year.

It seeks to raise the retirement age, when Americans can receive Social Security benefits, from 67 to 69.

It also proposes limits or lifetime caps on Medicaid benefits. In Wisconsin, 595,300 Medicaid enrollees would be at risk of losing coverage because they are low-income and lack access to alternative affordable coverage.

Project 2025 aims to further impede on a woman's right to make her own decisions about her body, calling to eliminate emergency contraception and safe, effective abortion medications like mifepristone. Mr. Vought himself called on Congress to outlaw that medication.

The document also calls for the Department of Education to be abolished, which can only, by the way, be done by the Congress of the United States. But

the Department of Education is already clearly a target of this administration.

Important for our discussion here today with regard to education is that Project 2025 outlined a plan to take a hacksaw to the services and programs that families rely on the Federal Government to provide, slashing essential programs like title I grants that go to more than 80 percent of public school districts around the Nation. That includes sending about $227 million to Wisconsin in the current school year.

These chapters in Project 2025 were primarily authored by none other than OMB nominee Russell Vought.

Now, I would be the last to say that our Federal Government is perfect. It is not. But the career civil servants who have served under Republicans and Democrats are essential to ensuring that services Americans rely on run smoothly—from Medicare and Social Security, to Head Start and childcare, to making sure that folks get their tax refunds from the IRS. These are essential services that hundreds of millions of Americans rely on every year.

Getting rid of the people who are working for working families will not fix our Federal Government. The doctors of the VA and staff sending out Social Security checks—they are not the enemy.

By confirming Russell Vought as Director of OMB, we would be putting one of the chief architects of Project 2025 in charge of an Agency that is tasked with getting critical funding out the door that our communities depend upon. And I hate to use this idiom, but we are, in fact, asking the fox to guard the henhouse.

We don't need to guess whether Russell Vought will turn to his Project 2025 playbook if confirmed as OMB Director. We are already seeing the destruction of his extreme views and how they are causing problems with allocation of Federal funding.

Before last week, I am sure that most Americans had never heard of the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, let alone what role it played in their lives, but all that changed last Monday night when OMB sent a 2-page memo on the President's plan to cut virtually all Federal grants and loans. This is tantamount to stopping Wisconsin taxpayer money from going back into the very services they rely on. The Trump administration is trying to steal from Wisconsinites to implement its own agenda. More on that later.

This messy, haphazard, and frankly illegal action immediately started causing chaos and confusion in my home State. Our phones were ringing off the hook from constituents and organizations worried about what this would mean for them. Was the funding for childcare centers impacted? Was the Medicaid coverage they relied on in jeopardy? What about nutrition programs that keep food on the table? What about rental assistance or funding to help pay for heat in the winter?

Sadly, my office didn't have answers for these folks due to the chaos that President Trump has created. All these essential programs that they rely on for healthcare, safety, and food on the table—they were all on the chopping block.

I even had a constituent write in asking these exact questions. She wrote to my office:

> Do what you can to stop this freeze because both short- and long-run impacts are dire. Will rural hospitals get Medicaid reimbursements for the services they provide? Will nursing homes receive payments for care they're providing to elders? Will schools bounce checks and be charged late fees because Title I grants that finance ongoing operations are disrupted? The long-term consequences would be catastrophic—causing a steep recession—the Federal government gives $1 trillion in grants to State and local governments alone, and removing any significant portion out of local economies will create a huge economic shock, fatally harming the valuable resources these governments provide to citizens, many of whom voted for Trump.

With a 2-page memo, the Trump White House unleashed a wave of chaos as folks in my State and across the country worried whether this freeze would impact the programs that they rely on. I would like to share some of the stories I have heard from folks in my State about how these cuts impact real people in a very real way.

I heard from a single mom who lives paycheck to paycheck. She was laid off because Federal funding was paused for the National Science Foundation, a grant that pays her salary. She wrote to me to say:

> I have enough money to pay February rent, but I'm going to stop paying credit card bills and other loans. I'm not sure I'll even be able to afford to pay my WiFi and phone bills—things crucial in finding a new job. But I can do without as long as I have rent, heat and electric paid, and groceries in the fridge.

I also heard from a deputy fire chief in Central Wisconsin. Without Federal grant funding, he would have to lay off as many as nine officers—nine firefighters. Would this mean a longer wait for a resident if their house was on fire?

Another fire chief in Northern Wisconsin called me to ask whether his volunteer department could go ahead with needed upgrades for their equipment. Without their Federal grant, which was more than half of their operating budget, they would not be able to purchase new equipment that the department desperately needed.

From Western Wisconsin, a local mayor reached out to share that a pause in Federal funding would be catastrophic for their ability to make timely payments on a loan they took out to make necessary renovations to their fire department.

I heard from an administrator at a women's shelter for survivors of domestic abuse based in Southwest Wisconsin. Without Federal funding, they would have to turn away women looking for a safe place away from their abusers for themselves and sometimes their children too.

As communities across Wisconsin continue to battle the opioid and fentanyl crisis, a community organization specializing in drug prevention told me that they would not be able to pay their staff and continue their vital work if funding was cut.

Another organization that provides supervised visitation and safe exchange services between kids and parents who are separated due to court orders reached out, worried about whether they would be able to continue to serve their community. They employ a staff of therapists who supervise the visitations and ensure that kids are able to safely see their parents again.

I heard from a community dental center in Southeastern Wisconsin that serves thousands of patients every year, the vast majority of whom are children. They told me that without their Federal funding, they would be at ''significant risk of closing within a matter of a few short months, and as a result, thousands of children would have nowhere to go to receive dental care, and 45 individuals would be out of employment.''

They wrote to me:

> We understand with each administration comes change and different priorities, however, these orders to freeze federal funds have very real implications for communities we live, work, and play in.

I have heard from so many Wisconsinites confused by this chaos, wondering whether their childcare center is about to close, their Head Start—many did close.

So, Mr. Vought, will you be willing to fill in as a mentor for all the kids who lose their mentors from Big Brothers Big Sisters or will you help pitch in as a firefighter at some stations in Wisconsin that might have to lay people off? Will you be a substitute Head Start teacher in a classroom to ensure that parents have the childcare and early education they are counting on?

If there is one word we can use to describe the first 2 weeks of this administration, it would certainly be ''chaos.'' While the White House seems to be contradicting itself and putting out mixed signals on these drastic cuts, the level of panic and chaos it has created should be upsetting to every American.

There are so many other programs where Americans are unsure if they should anticipate cuts.

Community health centers, which I am a proud champion of, were awarded $48 million grants across Wisconsin in the year 2023, largely in the form of Federal grants designed to help these health centers provide medical care and other services to communities traditionally located in healthcare deserts.

Wisconsin has 17 federally qualified healthcare centers located around the State, whose funding could be in jeopardy. There is also funding for law enforcement that could face cuts, including community-oriented police grants that go towards Tribal law enforcement assistance, hiring mental health

training, school violence prevention training and technology and commitment upgrades.

Wisconsin receives $17.5 million in funding for counties, Tribes, and cities across the State to fund community-oriented policing practices.

You know, small businesses could also be harmed if loans for entrepreneurs are impacted. In fiscal year 2024, small businesses received nearly $237 million in small business loans for projects in Wisconsin. These are businesses that just need a little support to get their idea off the ground, or maybe they are loans for those impacted by a national disaster. Cutting off this funding would mean fewer businesses and fewer jobs.

President Trump's egregious overreach of his Presidential power is plainly unconstitutional and a power grab. It is illegal to withhold this funding from the American people. This is their money, and these are the programs they rely on. Period.

This funding was provided in bipartisan laws, and I remind my colleagues of that. On a bipartisan basis, we passed the laws and budgets and appropriation bills. And I hope my Republican colleagues are just as angry at President Trump for this confusion his administration has created as I am. But I fear they are not.

This directive has put real people in real distress, and it begs the question of why. I will tell you why: They want to claw back taxpayer money supporting programs that serve taxpayers to ensure that they can give their tax breaks to the biggest corporations and billionaire friends.

This is not the first time the Trump administration has done this. And this is their plan: cut programs Wisconsinites rely on and give tax breaks to billionaires and multinational corporations. It certainly doesn't help that while my constituents were wondering if they would be able to put food on the table, keep a roof over their heads, and drop their kids off at childcare, the richest man in the world—worth nearly $500 billion—was handed access to our Nation's checkbook and to Americans' most sensitive information.

First, it was shutting the doors, literally, to the United States Agency for International Development, USAID, an Agency that keeps Americans safe, protects people worldwide from disease and famine, and stands up to our adversaries like China and Russia.

But their next target is reported to be a shutdown of the Department of Education, the very Agency that ensures all kids across America get a good public education and young people are set up with the skills to land a good-paying job. It ensures that schools serving low-income students receive the high-quality education they deserve and students with disabilities get the services that they are required to receive and have the opportunity to thrive.

And we are watching, before our very eyes, Russell Vought and Elon Musk illegally trying to shut it down. And if that wasn't enough, reporting today shows that the DOGE is coming after the Department of Labor, the Agency that supports apprenticeship programs so people can earn while they learn and land good- paying jobs. It is the Agency that makes sure that big corporations are held accountable for stealing wages from workers. It is the Agency that ensures workers on factory floors are safe on the job.

Again, this is what we are watching Russell Vought and his billionaire pals put in jeopardy.

Donald Trump has, apparently, given an unelected billionaire, Elon Musk, who is, again, literally the richest man in the world, free reign to run roughshod through Americans' most sensitive information. He has the ability to put programs people need on the chopping block with absolutely no transparency or accountability for what he is doing, much less any legal authority.

The President claimed he would lower prices for families on day one, if elected. But how does taking childcare away lower prices for families? Does taking away people's treatment for opioid use disorder help their lives? How about cutting firefighters, will that lower costs for families and keep them safe?

Raising costs on families all while Republicans work to jam through big tax breaks for billionaires is not what Wisconsinites want. Billions in tax cuts for the ultrawealthy in exchange for programs that my constituents need to feed their families, pay their rent, and stay healthy is not a good deal.

I have always said that I will work with anyone to deliver for Wisconsin and invest in the programs that my constituents rely on. But bipartisanship is a two-way street. We have to be able to trust one another that what gets signed into law is actually going to get implemented.

And right now, we are watching Elon Musk, Trump's billionaire Cabinet, and Donald Trump himself flout the law and cut funding from bipartisan programs that my constituents rely on.

And all this brings us back to President Trump's nominee to run OMB who has openly called for the President to defy Congress and take control of Federal funding decisions that are constitutionally vested in the legislative branch.

He said he supports the illegal practice of impoundment, a strategy to circumvent the checks and balances that are baked into the fabric of our Constitution. Mr. Vought even said during his confirmation hearing last week that President Trump believes the Impoundment Control Act is unconstitutional. And he agrees with that assessment.

What that means is he thinks the President is free to withhold appropriated funding without limitation. And let me be clear, everything that we have seen in the last two weeks, including examples that I provided about the chaos and confusion across Wisconsin—this is just the first step. It is the tip of the iceberg. But in the future, Russell Vought will just withhold funding at the beginning for anything that he doesn't like or that Elon Musk posts about on X.

What this means is Congress could pass an annual funding bill that, maybe, increases funding for Head Start, which we actually pretty routinely do. Russell Vought thinks he can say to Congress: Thanks, but no thanks. I am going to eliminate Head Start and not allow any future grants to Head Start programs. Maybe Russell Vought will ignore Congress and the laws we pass and eliminate or significantly reduce funding for opioid treatment programs or the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline or whatever he feels like opposing that day.

Even setting aside the very real impact I think cutting funding for programs like these would have on families and communities across the country, I hope my Republican colleagues will stand up against this blatant disregard for this body. How are we supposed to negotiate annual appropriations bills when an administration is saying it can just ignore what we do?

If confirmed, Russell Vought would be the tip of the spear in his fight to take away funding for programs families rely on and give it to billionaires as a tax cut.

We know that this administration intends to make every effort to override Congress's power of the purse. We have already seen Mr. Vought do it. During Mr. Vought's time as OMB director during President Trump's first term, the Agency withheld roughly $214 million in security assistance to Ukraine, which the Government Accountability Office later found violated the Impoundment Control Act.

I know it can be difficult to flout the party line, but we are not just talking about party politics anymore; we are talking about our Constitution. So many of my Republican colleagues declare themselves to be originalists when it comes to our Constitution, sworn supporters of interpreting this document as our Founders intended when it was written.

Well, I can tell you, if there is one thing that was crystal clear when our Founders conceived this Nation, it is that no one person should have absolute power. The repeated brazen power grabs that we have seen by this administration could not be more out of step with the foundational checks and balances laid out in our Constitution.

And while my words might not matter to you, I hope the voices of your constituents, who I know are being adversely impacted by this administration's actions, will.

I, for one, will not sit idly by as President Trump forfeits control of our government to billionaires. I will stand up for Wisconsin workers and families,

and push back on policies that are hurting the people I represent. And I am calling on my colleagues to do the same and oppose Russell Vought's nomination.

Otherwise, we could be running headlong towards a constitutional crisis. And it is up to all of us to make sure that the people come out on top in that fight. In times of conflict and hardship, the Senate has served as the conscience of this Nation. Now is our chance to stand up to this administration and show that we are here to represent the American people and not billionaires.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, it is getting late, too late for some of the people we serve to even be awake—though I imagine many are. Not by choice, a mother in the Central Valley is awake, staring at her kitchen table, trying to work out where her sick child can receive the medical care that child needs now that a Federal grant supporting the only rural healthcare center in her community is in limbo.

A Federal employee is awake trying to figure out how they will make the rent next month if they are laid off. Maybe they spent a few decades serving this country overseas and were just called back home. Now what?

People around the world are awake watching humanitarian help that means their next meal or safe harbor from disease has disappeared, wondering why, in their time of most need, their longtime ally has decided to abandon them, because the Trump administration has turned their lives, turned so many of our lives, into a series of question marks, because this President and his cronies like Elon Musk and Russ Vought are putting politics and profits over people's lives, over people's livelihoods, over lives.

They are creating chaos, and then, somehow, worst of all, they are gloating about it. Imagine gloating about acts so callous. ''Chaos'' seems to be the watchword of this administration, but the chaos is not a consequence of this. The chaos is the goal. The chaos is the purpose. By throwing everything at the wall, they can create confusion. They hope to muddy the waters while opening the floodgates: unconstitutional Executive orders, illegal memos, illegally accessing private citizens' data. The scope and the speed of these actions are almost impossible to comprehend, and the impact is incalculable.

This is all part of a larger effort to consolidate power, every possible power, in the control of one man—well, maybe two men—so they can plunder the country to benefit themselves and their billionaire buddies.

What is this all about, what we have witnessed in the first couple weeks of this administration? What do these disparate acts have in common? What is the through line? What is it that the seizure of data belonging to millions and millions of Americans by Elon Musk—what does that have in common with the efforts to shutter American development assistance around the world through USAID? What does that have in common with efforts to fire top prosecutors at the Justice Department and purge FBI agents at the Federal Bureau of Investigation? What does this have in common, too, with pardoning violent criminals who attacked this building? What does it have in common with a funding freeze and then a memorandum to implement the funding freeze and then the repeal of the memorandum and all the confusion that has caused? What does the mass deportation order have in common with all of this? What is the story of what they are doing here? How does this all fit together?

It fits together in this way: This is an effort to try to consolidate power—all of the power of this government—in the hands of Donald Trump and a few of his handpicked, very wealthy, billionaire friends. It is designed to consolidate that power to essentially take the resources of this country and enrich themselves and their friends—an effort to enrich themselves which would not be possible, will not be possible, if our system of checks and balances work. But if they can somehow take apart these institutions; if they can somehow persuade or demand or cow the people in this institution and the House of Representatives and the courts and the Supreme Court; if they can prevent us from playing our institutional role as a check and balance, then what is left between them and the Treasury? Nothing. Nothing.

So this is the goal: Discredit the government, dismember the government, dismember checks and balances so they can raid the till. Make government purposefully dysfunctional, discredit every institution so that all that is left is the power of the strongman, and the wealth of this country can be stripped away.

Checks and balances be damned. Congressional authority be damned. The President wants to steamroll all of that, and at the moment, it appears he is succeeding. But Donald Trump can't do this on his own. He needs enablers—enablers to subvert our laws, enablers to divert congressionally approved funds.

Sure, everyone knows Elon Musk, but it is not just Elon Musk. And today, we consider the nomination of the system's engineer to lead the Office of Management and Budget—probably the most important Agency no one has heard of. That engineer, that architect of this effort to strip the country of its resources so they can be plundered by the President and his wealthy friends; the architect, the engineer of this, the one who will make the trains run on time, the guy that stops the train to allow the highway robbery of that train, is a man named Russ Vought.

We all recall Project 2025. Project 2025—Russ Vought helped to write it. That funding freeze? Vought helped orchestrate the plan for it. And the slew of outrageous, dangerous actions taken by this administration over the past several weeks were in many ways a direct result of Vought and his plan to dismantle and destroy the government in the service of Donald Trump and his wealthy friends.

One analysis found that two-thirds of the Executive orders that Trump has signed come from—that is right—Project 2025.

Russ Vought doesn't believe in government except as a vehicle to take from the poor and take from the middle class and give to the wealthy people, who should be running everything. He doesn't believe in the simple idea that we the people compose our institutions; we the people are the government—a government that is supposed to be for the people, not for a handful of very wealthy people. No, Russ Vought believes in dismantling that government of the people piece by piece, brick by brick, until what remains is a hollowed-out bureaucracy that serves the interests of the wealthy and abandons everyone else, to make it so small they can drown it in a bathtub, because that is what this is all about.

This is all about taking the Nation's resources for themselves. It is about using the infrastructure, the architecture of the government to enrich themselves. This is about plunder. That is what they are trying to do.

The last few weeks are not incompetence. It isn't mismanagement, although there is plenty of that. No. This is a deliberate effort to break the Federal Government so completely that people lose faith in its ability to function at all. When people lose faith in the government of the people, when they stop believing it is for the people, that is when the real damage begins. That is when they can dismantle the safety net program by program. That is when they can make the people beholden to the strongman. That is when Federal workers—scientists, economists, social workers, public health experts—are replaced by unqualified ideologues or driven out entirely. Turn the Federal workforce—or what is left of it—into an arm of the President, beholden only to the President. No more oath to the Constitution but an oath to the person of the President, a loyalty oath demanded of our Federal employees.

That is when the next disaster—whether it is a pandemic, a financial collapse, or a natural disaster—becomes unmanageable, because the very institutions designed to respond have been gutted, because that is their end goal—not just to shrink the government of the people but to sabotage it, to make it dysfunctional, to make it ineffective, to paralyze it, and then to turn around and say ''Hey, see, it doesn't work. The government of the people doesn't work'' because of course they don't want it to work except to

the degree that it can be used to take the resources of the American people and give them to their wealthy friends and to large corporations, to distribute every possible dime amongst the privileged few and not working families.

This is why they are elevating Russ Vought, because when you need someone to dismantle the very machinery of governance, to turn the government of the people into an engine of destruction rather than an agency of stewardship, Russ Vought is your guy. And now he has a second chance—a second chance to make sure that when that mother in the Central Valley reaches for help, there is nothing there.

We are seeing, of course, Head Starts around the country—the Head Start Program—wonder whether they are going to be able to open their doors the next day, wondering what is going to happen to—if they are supported. Of course, all the parents that have their kids in Head Start are wondering what the future holds for their kids. But the view of this administration is, hey, that Head Start is getting valuable money they would rather give to themselves and to their wealthy friends. If it means the sacrifice of those kids in the Head Start, well, that is just the price you have to pay for oligarchy.

Russ Vought is your guy.

A second chance—he has a second chance now to turn Social Security and Medicare into bargaining chips in a political game that none of us have agreed to play, keeping seniors up at night worrying whether a Social Security check might not make it to them after all.

He has a second chance to rewrite the rules in a way that ensures that the wealthy and well connected are taken care of while everyone else is left behind.

We should be clear about what this nomination represents. Russ Vought wants to oversee the erosion of the very services that millions of Americans rely on every day—every single day; to lead the charge to remake the United States into a country where people are left to fend for themselves, where the government doesn't work because they don't mean it to. They don't want it to. They don't want a government of the people or a government by the people or government for the people; they want a government of them, they want a government by them, and they want a government for them.

But let's be very clear. It does not have to be this way. We can reject this vision. We can reject this nominee. We can reject the idea that our government exists only to serve the powerful or to punish the vulnerable. And we will reject it because if we do nothing, if we simply sit back and let Russ Vought take the reins of OMB once again, then we will be complicit in the destruction that follows.

So let's take a closer look at the last few weeks. Let's take a closer look at Donald Trump and Elon Musk's hostile takeover of the Federal Government and the targeting of our institutions one after another, over and over again. Let's take a closer look at this effort to gut critical programs to pay for their enormous tax breaks and what that means for all of us. Let's start with access to your personal data.

As of today, Elon Musk, an unelected billionaire—I think maybe the wealthiest man in the world—with a vested financial interest in this administration's success—you would think that being the wealthiest man in the world or one of the top wealthiest people in the world would be enough, but no. He has a vested interest in the administration's success and billions in government contracts—because apparently the billions he has already are not enough.

He has deployed a team of loyalists who infiltrate government Agencies to help with the plunder of the public fisc. So let's think about that for a moment. Let's try to take this in. The world's richest man has brought in his loyalists—some of them apparently just teenagers—to breach Federal Departments to access sensitive data, classified information, and who knows what. Are we supposed to think that is OK? Are we supposed to pretend this is normal, to have the wealthiest man in the world run roughshod over private data, over our Agencies? Are we supposed to act like this is anything other than what it is—a blatant and unconstitutional grab of power and our personal data, a takeover of government by a billionaire who has decided that the rules and laws don't apply to him and our national security doesn't matter?

But why? Why go to these lengths? Again, we have to follow the money. Trump's 2017 billionaire tax cuts—the ones that handed corporations and the ultrawealthy an unfathomable windfall while exploding the deficit—are set to expire this year, and Elon Musk and his buddies want to keep these tax cuts in place. If they are going to do that, then Donald Trump and Elon Musk—Donald and Elon—have to find $4 trillion somewhere. So where do they look? Not to the billionaires who profited from these tax cuts, not to the corporations that benefited the most—no. They are going to go after money where the cuts will hurt the most. They are going to go after what they consider low-hanging fruit. After all, what is the power of the poor, what is the power of even the middle class compared to the power of the oligarchs?

They are going to go after where the money is easiest to grab. So they are going to go after Medicaid.

They are going to go after Medicaid.

After all, it is just seniors or folks who are disabled or folks who are working class or struggling to get by and reliant on it for their healthcare. What is that weighed against more money for Elon Musk and his friends? What is that in the balance with Donald Trump and his desire to enrich himself?

There was a press conference about a week and a half ago. It kind of got lost in the blizzard of everything happening. But I found it very striking at this press conference. The President was asked by a reporter whether he was going to stop trading in his own personal interests and his meme coin.

What followed was this discussion between the President and this reporter while the cameras were rolling where the reporter says: You are making a lot of money.

And the President asked: How much money am I making from this meme coin?

Well, a lot.

I don't know what the exact language of this dialogue was, but it was blatant. It was so out in the open. I mean, it takes your breath away.

I remember, because it seems quaint, the beginning of the first Trump administration, when you remember he had that press conference and he was talking about how he was—I don't know—going to make sure that his business interests were somehow separated from his interest as President or the country's interest. And he had those stacks of—I don't know—binders or white paper. I don't think anybody knew what was in those stacks of paper or whether it was blank paper. But at least there was a superficial effort to suggest that he was going to have some walling off of his personal financial interests.

Of course, what we saw of those 4 years was there was none of that walling off. There were Gulf nations that were essentially paying tribute by staying in his hotels and all kinds of other graft going on.

But now, there is no effort to even hide the profit-taking with this meme coin or the distribution from his social media platform to people like Kash Patel. I mean, the grift is out there right in the open.

But that is really still small potatoes compared to the ability to raid the Treasury, compared to the ability to take all the money that goes into providing healthcare for sick people and Medicaid and using that to enrich yourself. Now, that is where the money is.

Part of what they are targeting is also USAID, and they are targeting Federal workers. They want Federal workers to resign. They sent Federal workers a letter that says, basically: Hey, you can reply to this message and say you quit and have basically a paid vacation until September.

Of course, there is no money to pay for that. It is unlawful what they are offering. But if people respond to that message, then they are on a list.

Why do Elon Musk and Donald Trump want all these Federal workers to quit? That is more money for them. That is more money for those tax cuts. They have to find those trillions somewhere. Let's see if we can push people who work for the government out the door.

Education of our kids—let's close down the Department of Education. OK, comparatively, you look at the Department of Education and you look at the Department of Defense. There is not a whole lot of money already in the Department of Education, but, hey, if it helps to pay for one more of those tax cuts, let's do away with the Department of Education.

Essential public services. OK, Federal grants for firefighters or firefighting equipment—what is that in the scale of things when we are talking about another tax cut for very wealthy folks? Take it from those who need it to fund giveaways for those who need it least.

It is kind of your reverse Robin Hood.

And who is leading the charge? A billionaire with billions in government contracts who stands to benefit financially if this administration stays in power and these cuts go through. That is what is happening.

That is what they are trying to do. That is what this is about. This is about consolidating power, doing away with the checks and the balances, consolidating power so that you can raid the Treasury. If we saw it during the financial collapse, banks that were too big to fail, this is a caper too big to stop—but only if we don't do our jobs in this building.

Strip government to the bone, funnel money to people who already have more than they could ever spend—how many lifetimes would it take to spend all those billions—and use the Federal Government as an instrument of personal gain, without accountability and without justice.

And, tragically, one of the things that makes this whole caper so possible now was something that took place in the building just across the street from here, when the Supreme Court of the United States said to the President of the United States: You can commit criminal acts while you are President and they can't touch you. If you use the Justice Department, you have absolute immunity. If you use other Departments, your immunity is so strong, you can argue the presumption is pretty much irrebuttable. They gave the President immunity to commit crimes.

His pardoning of all these violent criminals that attacked this building is a message that says: Hey, can't hold the President accountable—not anymore, not after this Supreme Court gave him that ''get out of jail free'' card. You do things for me that are unlawful; you do things for me that are unethical—I have your back. There is a pardon waiting for you at the end of all this.

Let's turn to USAID. What is the deal with USAID? USAID has been kind of a favorite issue Agency—idea, theme—that conservatives have loved to attack for a long time. And why? Because I think, reflexively, the idea of providing assistance around the world isn't the highest priority for many people. I totally get that. Of course, what we don't realize, unless we dig into what that money goes for, is a couple of things.

One, the money we invest in development around the world ultimately helps the United States a great deal. If we are looking at this just from a fairly selfish point of view, the money we invest in USAID helps us a great deal. Why is that? Well, if there are diseases halfway around the world like Ebola, like other potential dangers to the United States if they were to get to our shores, if we can work with our friends overseas and we can stop these viruses where they are, it means we don't have to deal with them here. If we can stop the instability in places around the world, it means less fertile soil for terrorism and terrorists who might attack us here. It improves our security. It improves our health. It wins friends for the United States around the world.

Now, I realize the administration has an America-first policy, which I think the way they are executing it means everyone else last. Of course, not a policy ''everyone else last'' that is doubly endearing to your allies, but this administration doesn't seem to think we need any friends around the world.

But even as we, through this administration, decide, well, we are done with development around the world, guess who stands to benefit. Certainly not the people around the world, not the people fighting HIV/AIDS, not the people fighting malaria, not the people fighting poverty, not the people fighting starvation. No, our adversaries benefit. Probably the biggest beneficiary is China.

Why does China benefit from our abandoning the field? Because it opens the field for China. China is already around the world investing in other countries and doing so with strings attached. It is making debtor nations of other countries. It is making them obligated to China—countries that are rich in rare minerals. It is giving China the foothold or, even more explicitly, giving China military bases and naval bases. And they are using development systems to leverage other countries.

These other countries, so many of them will tell us: We don't want to work with China. They are not doing this for altruistic reasons. We know what China is all about. But if America is going to abandon the field, if we have no choice but to seek friends elsewhere, we will do what is necessary to feed our people. We will go to where we need to go to get help when we confront disease. And if America abandons the field, we will go to China.

China is winning so much in these last 2 weeks, it is getting tired of winning.

Just today, we learned that, apparently, some list, according to public reports, of officers at the CIA was sent to the White House in an unclassified email. Now, I remember a time that seems very quaint, when Donald Trump was always talking about Hillary's emails. What about this email that potentially exposes the identity of people who are working at the CIA, who want to work at the CIA, and according to public reports, the administration response is: Don't worry. That unclassified email only contained their first name and the first initial of their last name.

Well, I am sure that China, with all of its big data analytics will have no trouble with that at all. With an answer like that, the administration may think they can pull the wool over our eyes, but they can't. What is more, they cannot pull the wool over the prying eyes of our competitors, our adversaries around the world.

So USAID. First of all, let's start with a rather mundane point, it would appear, in this administration. What they are doing is illegal. I guess if you have absolute immunity, you don't worry about those things. But we in this body should worry about that. We should worry about whether the President and some wealthy billionaire are violating the law. We are in the business of making laws. We used to cherish our institutional prerogative. We used to think it was valuable in the scheme of things. We used to believe the Founders were quite brilliant in how they established each institution as a check on the other so none would have absolute power. But here we are faced with something which I think we have to acknowledge is plainly unlawful, and not a peep—not a peep—about that by those who could most strongly resist this.

It is harder for us in the minority. We don't control anything in the Senate. We don't control anything in the House. If this administration succeeds in neutering the Congress of the United States, there is little we in the minority alone can do without the help of others who cherish this institution. We just cannot do that alone.

We will do all that we can. We are here all night. We will be here as many nights as it takes. We will raise public awareness of this unlawful scheme. We will use litigation, and we are. We will use every tool at our disposal. But it shouldn't be just us. It shouldn't be just us.

I think a lot of Americans are wondering now whether the Constitution is so brilliant after all, whether it is adequate to meet this moment—a moment that our Founders really anticipated when we would have a demagogue who would ride the whirlwind of the confusion that he sows. Well, I think it is a brilliant Constitution. I think it is the best in the world, but it is not self-effectuating; it depends on all of us. To work, it depends on all of us.

The genius of the Constitution is not that we are today where we are, where we have a Supreme Court that said the President is above the law; where we have a President acting like he is above the law; where we have the administration bringing in unelected billionaires to take data and who knows what else; where we have terrible national security breaches and not a murmur of dissent about them. The genius

of the Constitution is not that this is happening but that it was forestalled until now; that we have gone through these more than two centuries without confronting this. But this is where we are, and this will be the real test of our Constitution—what it will mean in this moment when the President and a wealthy billionaire—the world's richest man—are engaged in things that are plainly unlawful. Doing away with an Agency like USAID is plainly unlawful.

Even if you don't care about what USAID does, even if you are content to let China take over development around the world and win over friends and mineral rights and turn our allies into debtor nations, even if you are OK ceding global leadership to China—which I am most certainly not—the moment you say it is OK for them to violate the law—to shut down this one Agency—you have said it is OK for them to violate the law and shut down anything—anything.

If they can do this with USAID, they can do this with the Department of Ed. If they can do it with the Department of Ed, they can do it with Head Start. If they can do it with Head Start, they can do it with Medicaid. If they can do it with Medicaid, they can do it with Social Security. They can do anything.

The USAID was established by the U.S. Congress. It cannot and should not be eliminated on the whims of a President or his unelected billionaire friend. Shutting down USAID or pausing its work will have devastating global and potentially irreversible consequences, but the biggest consequence will be to us. It is the world's largest provider of humanitarian aid, and through it, the United States saves countless lives every year.

I have to say, as I have had the opportunity as chair of the Intelligence Committee, and even prior to that position in the House, to travel to some of the most dangerous parts of the world—to Iraq, to Afghanistan, to Pakistan, to Yemen—you name it—I have met these USAID employees, the ones who just got this order: You need to get on a plane and come back. You are on leave whether you like it or not. I have met these folks. They are so patriotic and passionate about their work and such dedicated public servants.

I remember being in Afghanistan fairly early in the war, and I met this young man with USAID. He looked to me to be in his early twenties. His deployment was for 1 year in Afghanistan. He had only been there for a few months. These folks were operating without much of a safety net, and in order to be effective, they needed to be out in the villages. They couldn't just stay on their base. They had to be out, exposed. This USAID worker—this young man—had been there only for a few months of a 1-year deployment, and he told me he had already signed up for his second year.

I remember saying: Wow, that is pretty impressive. You like it here? You like your work that much where you have only been here for a few months and you have already decided you are going to re-up for another year?

And he said: No. It is not that. We are in the development business. You really can't see the fruits of your labor in a single year. I want to be here long enough where I can see the results of the projects that I am working on, where I can see them come to fruition.

This was the kind of public servant who populates USAID all over the world. This is the kind of public servant—I don't know if this young man is still with the USAID, but if he is—wherever he is in whatever part of the world where he is doing God's work—he just got an email saying: You are on involuntary leave. Thank you for nothing. Don't let the door hit you on the backside on the way out. Sincerely, Uncle Sam.

What a hell of a way to treat people.

These folks at USAID are stopping diseases from spreading. They are helping to feed communities that are starving. They are showing the United States cares about people around the world; that it cares about others; that the most powerful Nation in the world hasn't forgotten about the most powerless communities in the world. USAID represents decades of soft power that the United States has built. It has shown allies in developing nations that we stand by them in crises; building partnerships that last; protecting our national security.

I remember visiting Pakistan. Now, Pakistan probably doesn't have a lot of great things to say about the United States much of the time, which I think and I recognize is frustrating—when you are trying to help and it doesn't seem like anything you do is enough. I get that. I totally get that. But I remember when an earthquake struck northwest Pakistan, and American helicopters were helicoptering in relief, and a toy became very popular in Pakistan. It was a replica of an American helicopter because we suddenly became associated with helping people in their time of need. It was probably the single most valuable diplomacy we had done in years. I guess we are not going to do that anymore.

All of that—all of that effort—to show that the United States is concerned about the well-being not just of ourselves but of others all over the world—all of that is at risk. Well, there are champagne bottles being popped right now in Beijing—and probably quite a few in Moscow—at the idea tonight that we are abandoning the field and that we are poised to confirm the architect of that abandonment—an otherwise obscure man named Russ Vought.

Alliances and decades of work are going out the window. Russia's and China's influence are on the rise. And for what? USAID represents less than 1 percent of the Federal budget, but that 1 percent gets Elon Musk and Donald Trump closer to the $4 trillion hole they need to fill to give another tax cut to the wealthy; so it is on the chopping block, plain and simple.

Let's look at some of the other events of the last couple of weeks and put them in perspective. Let's look at the firing of these top Department of Justice officials.

Within hours of Donald Trump's order, the Justice Department fired more than a dozen prosecutors—many career public servants—who had worked on criminal cases involving the people who attacked this building or maybe they worked on criminal cases involving the one who incited the attack on this building. They weren't removed for incompetence, and they weren't removed for corruption. They were removed because they did their jobs patriotically. They were removed because they had the audacity to try to hold a powerful man accountable.

The official justification for their firing was that these prosecutors—many of whom had worked under Special Counsel Jack Smith—could not be trusted to implement Trump's agenda.

Let's think about that.

A President of the United States who spent years railing against the so-called weaponization of the government, which is the expression he would use for holding him accountable for law-breaking—that President who railed against the Department for weaponizing government has now purged his own Justice Department of the very people who investigated his many crimes. This purge was a product of the White House. The order came from Donald Trump himself. The firings were executed by his appointed allies in the Justice Department.

When it was done, his administration made the end game clear: The Justice Department no longer represents the American people. It no longer enforces the law. It enforces Donald Trump's will. This is not a Department that can be counted on anymore to investigate corruption but to defend Donald Trump. It is a Justice Department that doesn't prosecute certain criminals. It protects them as long as they serve the President's interests or are the President himself. This is the new normal in Donald Trump's second term—a government that exists not as a check on his power but as an extension of it.

The message was unmistakable to prosecutors, to judges, and to anyone working in law enforcement who still believes in the rule of law or an idea now which seems quaint—that no one is above the law. Do your job. Protect the person of the President, not the people of the country or you and your job may be next because, in Trump's America, there is only loyalty—not to Constitution, not to country, but to the person of the President.

Now with the firings complete, the vacancies will be filled not with independent prosecutors but with loyalists; with lawyers who will spend the next 4 years reshaping the very foundation of the Justice Department, ensuring that

the next time Donald Trump or anyone like him breaks the law, there won't be anyone left to prosecute. They will be there to go after Trump's enemies whether they are real or just perceived.

We are not inevitably headed toward authoritarianism or one-man rule, but firing these top prosecutors takes us one step closer. If we don't stop it now, if we don't draw a line here, there will be little justice left in the Department to save.

I spent almost 6 years with that Department. I was an assistant U.S. attorney in Los Angeles—one of the best jobs I ever had. I worked with a cadre of prosecutors who was just top notch, some of the brightest lawyers in Los Angeles. They gravitated to that office. They were some of the most capable and idealistic young lawyers who wanted to do justice. The office was completely apolitical. I had no idea whether my fellow prosecutors were Democrats or Republicans. And, yes, when U.S. attorneys changed and Presidents changed, there might be different priorities in the office, but they were broad policy priorities. There might be more of an emphasis on drug cases or there might be more of an emphasis on white-collar crime cases, but it was a difference of policy; it was never about the politics of vengeance or retribution. No one in that office had any misunderstanding or misapprehension of what their role was, and their role was to do justice.

Now, I think the Department made a mistake after this building was attacked, after our police officers were savagely beaten, after our President—this President—sat in that White House dining room and watched that violence occur, I think the Department of Justice made a mistake—not by investigating that massive crime on this building, on our police, on the peaceful transfer of power, on our democracy, but in taking so long. I think they made a mistake in focusing on the foot soldiers of that attack who broke into this building rather than those who incited it and organized it.

But I understand why that mistake was made. That mistake was made because there was a desire, after the first 4 years of Donald Trump and the terrible politicization of that Department by Bill Barr, there was a desire to restore the independence of the Department. There was a reluctance to follow the evidence where it would lead. That reluctance, that desire to insulate the Department from criticism resulted in justice being delayed and ultimately justice being denied.

One of the biggest culprits in that failure of the justice system was that building across the street and, indeed, the entire court system because that court system, and most particularly the High Court, understood what was happening, understood the endless delays in bringing to justice the ones who incited those attacks. They understood exactly what was happening, and they permitted it to happen.

More than that, the High Court not only permitted it to happen, but by countenancing these endless delays by letting the President play rope-a-dope in the courts, they ensured that justice would be delayed so that justice might be denied. And in fact, it was denied. That was the mistake of the Department: excessive caution. And that mistake means that a court that has become a partisan court could use delay as a weapon to defeat justice, and it did.

But in this Alice in Wonderland world in which we live, Donald Trump would make that desire to move the Department away from the politicization of Bill Barr, restore a reputation for independence, that laudable goal, would turn that in some Alice in Wonderland way into a weaponization of the government.

Why? Because it believed that the rule of law applies to everyone, even the most powerful man in the world.

So why get rid of these prosecutors? Why purge the FBI agents? Why after promising in their nominees—Pam Bondi, Kash Patel—we have learned how much we can rely on the promises, the commitments they made in their confirmation: zero.

But why is this firing the FBI agents such an important piece of this whole effort by Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and their enablers? Because if they are going to take money from the public fisc, if they are going to enrich themselves with their meme coins, if they are going to raid the Treasury, if they are going to take people's private data, if they are going to try to illegally shut down Agencies, they don't want a Department, God forbid, to say no, that violates the law. They don't want an FBI that is going to examine anything they are doing. So stripping the Department of its independence, instilling fear in thousands and thousands of FBI agents, telling them you are just one wrong step away from being fired, this is the way to ensure that when they raid the Treasury, there is no one there to call out what they are doing.

This is also part and parcel of what these pardons were all about. What role did these pardons play in this effort to bring about one-man rule and to enable that one man to raid the public fisc?

So on his first day and with the stroke of a pen pardoning 1,550 people—people who violently beat law enforcement—the President wished to make something abundantly clear: If you use violence in my service, I will have your back.

So people who came in through these doors and bear-sprayed police officers and beat them with flagpoles, took apart metal barricades and beat them with that, crushed them in the doors—Officer Daniel Hodges, I will never forget the images of him being crushed in that revolving door.

The people who did that, they got a pardon. He pardoned the ring leaders or gave them clemency, leaders of the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers, violent, unrepentant White nationalists who conspired to overthrow the peaceful transfer of power. I mean, how did we get here, where a President of the United States would pardon people for doing that?

Some were convicted of seditious conspiracy, one of the most serious crimes in our legal system. Others were convicted of dragging police officers into violent crowds and of beating them, of bear-spraying them, of crushing them. We witnessed it. We were here. I was here, not on this side of the Capitol, but on the other side. I was here. I was here when they were breaking windows to get in. I was here on the House floor with one of the floor managers that day, opposing the efforts to overturn the election. I was here when the Speaker was whisked out of her chair. I was here when the Capitol Police first informed us there were rioters in the building.

I was here when the Capitol Police told us that we needed to get our gas masks out. I was here when we struggled to open the damn things that were in these steel plastic pouches. I was here when those masks were deployed. It was a polyurethane bag you were supposed to pull over your head with an elastic band around your neck. I was here when the fan that circulates the air in those masks so that you don't asphyxiate, when the sound of those fans was everywhere on the House floor and in the Gallery.

I was here when the Capitol Police told us that we needed to get out, that they cleared an exit route and we needed to get out. I was here when some of my Republican colleagues in the House—as I waited on the House floor, we could really hear those people banging on the doors to get in—said: You can't let them see you.

One of them said: I know these people. I can talk to these people. I can talk my way through these people. You are in a whole different category.

I have to say, at first, I was oddly touched by their evident concern for my safety. But my next impression was, if they hadn't been lying about the election, I wouldn't need to worry about my safety. None of us would.

Donald Trump pardoning the folks who were attacking police officers that day, this wasn't about mercy. This wasn't about justice. These people hadn't made restitution or shown any—far from it. This was about power. This was about a hope to erase the crimes that they committed in his name. This was a message to his supporters that the violence and illegal acts aren't just to be tolerated; they are to be rewarded because that is what this was.

This was a message—a message that if you fight for him, if you storm the Capitol, if you brutalize police officers, if you try to overthrow an election, you will be protected; you will be hailed, even. They will make choirs with you, like Kash Patel. You will be absolved because he, the President, so desperately wants to be absolved. He

wants to somehow remove the stain of his impeachments, of the violent attack in his name.

So what has happened to some of these criminals since they have been pardoned by Donald Trump? One of those pardoned was killed in a shootout with police in Indiana—a model citizen, I am sure.

One of them was arrested four times between storming the Capitol and being pardoned by Donald Trump. Another was rearrested for unlawfully possessing a gun as a felon. That was for his 2017 conviction for a domestic violence battery by strangulation. Seems like a worthy candidate for a pardon by Donald Trump.

One rioter who attacked police with bear spray and a metal whip on January 6 is now grappling with unresolved charges of soliciting a minor—a third-degree felony carrying up to 10 years in prison. Maybe he will be pardoned for that.

These are the people whom Donald Trump pardoned, that he celebrated because they showed loyalty to him; and in Trump's world, nothing else matters.

In order to carry out this plunder of the Treasury, to make the whole of government the vehicle for his self-enrichment and self-aggrandizement, he must have a loyal cadre willing to do even the most violent acts in his service.

''Stand back and stand by.''

So let's turn quickly to the funding freeze. How does that fit into this effort?

There was a memo, as we know, to freeze all Federal funding, Federal loans, and assistance. We saw the reports, the days of chaos. We saw hospitals wondering whether they would get funding to keep their clinic doors open. We saw parents wondering whether their childcare would be available, seniors wondering whether they would have the services that they needed. And for what?

Once again, this is an effort to prepare to raid the Treasury, to take the resources that belong to the American people and use them to fund a massive tax cut for those who don't need it.

I represent a State that has been battered by natural disaster, so I take this very personally, this freeze on Federal funding, because my constituents need the help of FEMA. They need the help of the SBA. They need to know that as the government has been there for every other State in a natural disaster, it will be there for us.

The idea of freezing that funding and inhibiting that recovery so that there can be just a bit more money for Donald Trump and Elon Musk and his allies is anathema to my constituents, and it should be unacceptable for all the rest of us.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM D. COBETTO

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, there are some Americans who go above and beyond in service to our Nation. Major General William D. Cobetto, chief of staff for the Illinois Department of Military Affairs, is one of those individuals, and he recently retired after a decades-long career of dedicated service to Illinois. Our State and our Nation are better because of him.

General Cobetto is Illinois through and through, and he represents the very best of us. He was born in Hillsboro, IL; grew up in Taylor Springs, IL; attended Hillsboro High School; and holds a bachelor of science in aeronautical administration from Saint Louis University. In 1985, he received his commission from the Academy of Military Science in Knoxville, TN, but it did not take him long to return to serve the State he loves.

He spent the next 30 years with the Illinois Air National Guard, including serving as commander of the 183rd Mission Support Group from 2004 to 2007, and eventually providing leadership across the State as the Assistant Adjutant General-Air beginning in 2011. General Cobetto also attended the Air War College, and in 2003, he served at the Pentagon in support of the Air Force Crisis Action Team, as well as the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller.

In 2015, General Cobetto retired from military service with several awards and decorations under his belt, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and several Illinois National Guard awards.

Despite his military retirement, General Cobetto was not ready to stop serving Illinois. Seemingly not satisfied with only 30 years of service, he returned to the Illinois National Guard in a civilian capacity, serving first as legislative liaison and later as chief of staff for the Illinois Department of Military Affairs. In these roles, he continued to remain an incredible leader and advocate for our National Guardsmen and their families. He was always a reliable resource to my office and a trusted partner.

I know General Cobetto is now looking forward to spending more time with his family, including his wife Kelly, their children Ashley, Jacob, Adam, and Emily, and their two grandchildren Adeline and Mason.

I am forever grateful for General Cobetto's invaluable contributions to the great State of Illinois. My wife Loretta and I wish him all the best in this next, well-deserved chapter of his life.

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS RULES OF PROCEDURE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Rules for the 119th Congress be printed in the RECORD.

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS—119TH CONGRESS COMMITTEE RULES

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS RULES OF PROCEDURE

Rule 1. The Standing Rules of the Senate, Senate Resolution 4, and the provisions of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended by the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, as supplemented by these rules, are adopted as the rules of the Committee to the extent the provisions of such Rules, Resolution, and Acts are applicable to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 2. The Committee shall meet on Wednesday while the Congress is in session for the purpose of conducting business, unless for the convenience of the Members, the Chairman shall set some other day for a meeting. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairman as he or she may deem necessary.

OPEN HEARINGS AND MEETINGS

Rule 3(a). Hearings and business meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public except when the Chairman by a majority vote orders a closed hearing or meeting.

(b). Except as otherwise provided in the Rules of the Senate, a transcript or electronic recording shall be kept of each hearing and business meeting of the Committee.

HEARING PROCEDURE

Rule 4(a). Public notice, including notice to Members of the Committee, shall be given of the date, place, and subject matter of any hearing to be held by the Committee at least one week in advance of such hearing unless the Chairman of the Committee, with the concurrence of the Vice Chairman, determines that holding the hearing would be non-controversial or that special circumstances require expedited procedures and a majority of the Committee Members attending concur. In no case shall a hearing be conducted within less than 24 hours' notice.

(b). Each witness who is to appear before the Committee shall submit his or her testimony by way of electronic mail, at least two (2) business days prior to a hearing, in a format determined by the Committee and sent to an electronic mail address specified by the Committee. In the event a federal witness fails to timely file the written statement in accordance with this rule, the federal witness shall testify as to the reason the testimony is late.

(c). Each Member shall be limited to five (5) minutes of questioning of any witness until such time as all Members attending who so desire have had an opportunity to question the witness unless the Committee shall decide otherwise.

(d) The Chairman, in consultation with the Vice Chairman, may authorize remote hearings via video conference.

BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

Rule 5(a). A legislative measure or subject shall be included in the agenda of the next following business meeting of the Committee if a written request by a Member for consideration of such measure or subject has been filed with the Chairman of the Committee at

least one week prior to such meeting. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to limit the authority of the Chairman of the Committee to include legislative measures or subjects on the Committee agenda in the absence of such request.

(b). Any bill, resolution, or other matter to be considered by the Committee at a business meeting shall be filed with the Clerk of the Committee. Notice of, and the agenda for, any business meeting of the Committee, and a copy of any bill, resolution, or other matter to be considered at the meeting, shall be provided to each Member and made available to the public at least three (3) business days prior to such meeting, and no new items may be added after the agenda is published, except by the approval of the Chairman with the concurrence of the Vice Chairman or by a majority of the Members of the Committee. The notice and agenda of any business meeting may be provided to the Members by electronic mail, provided that a paper copy will be provided to any Member upon request. The Clerk shall promptly notify absent Members of any action taken by the Committee on matters not included in the published agenda.

(c). Any amendment(s) to any bill or resolution to be considered shall be filed by a Member of the Committee with the Clerk not less than 48 hours in advance of the scheduled business meeting. This rule may be waived by the Chairman with the concurrence of the Vice Chairman.

QUORUM

Rule 6(a). Except as provided in subsection (b), a majority of the Members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business of the Committee. Except as provided in Senate Rule XXVI 7(a), a quorum is presumed to be present unless a Committee Member notes the absence of a quorum.

(b). One Member shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting a hearing or taking testimony on any measure or matter before the Committee.

VOTING

Rule 7(a). A recorded vote of the Members shall be taken upon the request of any Member.

(b). A measure may be reported without a recorded vote from the Committee unless an objection is made by any Member, in which case a recorded vote by the Members shall be required. A Member shall have the right to have his or her additional views included in the Committee report on the measure in accordance with Senate Rule XXVI 10.

(c). A Committee vote to report a measure to the Senate shall also authorize the staff of the Committee to make necessary technical and conforming changes to the measure.

(d). Proxy voting shall be permitted on all matters, except that proxies may not be counted for the purpose of determining the presence of a quorum. Unless further limited, a proxy shall be exercised only for the date for which it is given and upon the terms published in the agenda for that date.

SWORN TESTIMONY AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Rule 8(a). Witnesses in Committee hearings who are required to give testimony shall be deemed under oath.

(b). At any hearing to confirm a Presidential nomination, the testimony of the nominee and, at the request of any Member, any other witnesses that come before the Committee shall also be under oath. Every nominee shall submit a questionnaire on forms to be provided by the Committee, ethics agreement, and public financial disclosure report, (OGE Form 278 or a successor form) which shall be sworn to by the nominee as to its completeness and accuracy and be accompanied by a letter issued by the nominee within five (5) days immediately preceding the hearing affirming that nothing has changed in their financial status or documents since the documents were originally filed with the Committee. The public financial disclosure report and ethics agreement shall be made available to the public by the Committee unless the Committee, in executive session, determines that special circumstances require a full or partial exception to this rule.

CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY

Rule 9. No confidential testimony taken by, or confidential material presented to the Committee, or any report of the proceedings of a closed Committee hearing or business meeting shall be made public in whole or in part, or by way of summary, unless authorized by a majority of the Members of the Committee at a business meeting called for the purpose of making such a determination.

DEFAMATORY STATEMENTS

Rule 10. Any person whose name is mentioned or who is specifically identified in, or who believes that testimony or other evidence presented at, an open Committee hearing tends to defame him or her or otherwise adversely affects his or her reputation may file with the Committee for its consideration and action a sworn statement of facts relevant to such testimony of evidence.

BROADCASTING OF HEARINGS OR MEETINGS

Rule 11. Any meeting or hearing by the Committee which is open to the public may be covered in whole or in part by television, Internet, radio broadcast, or still photography. Photographers and reporters using mechanical recording, filming, or broadcasting devices shall position their equipment so as not to interfere with the sight, vision, and hearing of Members and staff on the dais or with the orderly process of the meeting or hearing.

AUTHORIZING SUBPOENAS

Rule 12. The Chairman may, with the agreement of the Vice Chairman, or the Committee may, by majority vote, authorize the issuance of subpoenas.

AMENDING THE RULES

Rule 13. These rules may be amended only by a vote of a majority of all the Members of the Committee in a business meeting of the Committee: Provided, that no vote may be taken on any proposed amendment unless such amendment is reproduced in full in the Committee agenda for such meeting at least seven (7) days in advance of such meeting.

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 119th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, on behalf of myself and Senator KLOBUCHAR, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the RECORD.

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

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY—119TH CONGRESS

RULE I—MEETINGS

1.1 Regular Meetings.—Regular meetings shall be held on the first and third Wednesday of each month when Congress is in session.

1.2 Additional Meetings.—The Chairman, in consultation with the ranking minority member, may call such additional meetings as he deems necessary.

1.3 Notification.—In the case of any meeting of the committee, other than a regularly scheduled meeting, the clerk of the committee shall notify every member of the committee of the time and place of the meeting and shall give reasonable notice which, except in extraordinary circumstances, shall be at least 24 hours in advance of any meeting held in Washington, DC, and at least 48 hours in the case of any meeting held outside Washington, DC.

1.4 Called Meeting.—If three members of the committee have made a request in writing to the Chairman to call a meeting of the committee, and the Chairman fails to call such a meeting within 7 calendar days thereafter, including the day on which the written notice is submitted, a majority of the members may call a meeting by filing a written notice with the clerk of the committee who shall promptly notify each member of the committee in writing of the date and time of the meeting.

1.5 Adjournment of Meetings.—The Chairman of the committee or a subcommittee shall be empowered to adjourn any meeting of the committee or a subcommittee if a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the time scheduled for such meeting.

RULE 2—MEETINGS AND HEARINGS IN GENERAL

2.1 Open Sessions.—Business meetings and hearings held by the committee or any subcommittee shall be open to the public except as otherwise provided for in Senate Rule XXVI, paragraph 5.

2.2 Transcripts.—A transcript shall be kept of each business meeting and hearing of the committee or any subcommittee unless a majority of the committee or the subcommittee agrees that some other form of permanent record is preferable.

2.3 Reports.—An appropriate opportunity shall be given the Minority to examine the proposed text of committee reports prior to their filing or publication. In the event there are supplemental, minority, or additional views, an appropriate opportunity shall be given the Majority to examine the proposed text prior to filing or publication.

2.4 Attendance.—Official attendance of all hearings and business meetings of the committee or any subcommittee shall be kept by the committee clerk.

RULE 3—HEARING PROCEDURES

3.1 Notice.—Public notice shall be given of the date, place, and subject matter of any hearing to be held by the committee or any subcommittee at least 1 week in advance of such hearing unless the Chairman of the full committee or the subcommittee determines that the hearing is noncontroversial or that special circumstances require expedited procedures and a majority of the committee or the subcommittee involved concurs. In no case shall a hearing be conducted with less than 24 hours notice.

3.2 Witness Statements.—Each witness who is to appear before the committee or any subcommittee shall file with the committee or subcommittee, at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing, a written statement of his or her testimony and as many copies as the Chairman of the committee or subcommittee prescribes.

3.3 Minority Witnesses.—In any hearing conducted by the committee, or any subcommittee thereof, the minority members of the committee or subcommittee shall be entitled, upon request to the Chairman by the ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee to call witnesses of their selection during at least 1 day of such hearing pertaining to the matter or matters heard by the committee or subcommittee.

3.4 Swearing in of Witnesses.—Witnesses in committee or subcommittee hearings may be required to give testimony under oath whenever the Chairman or ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee deems such to be necessary.

3.5 Limitation.—Each member shall be limited to 5 minutes in the questioning of any witness until such time as all members who so desire have had an opportunity to question a witness. Questions from members shall rotate from majority to minority members in order of seniority or in order of arrival at the hearing.

RULE 4—NOMINATIONS

4.1 Assignment.—All nominations shall be considered by the full committee.

4.2 Standards.—In considering a nomination, the committee shall inquire into the nominee's experience, qualifications, suitability, and integrity to serve in the position to which he or she has been nominated.

4.3 Information.—Each nominee shall submit in response to questions prepared by the committee the following information:

(1) A detailed biographical resume which contains information relating to education, employment, and achievements;

(2) Financial information, including a financial statement which lists assets and liabilities of the nominee; and

(3) Copies of other relevant documents requested by the committee. Information received pursuant to this subsection shall be available for public inspection except as specifically designated confidential by the committee.

4.4 Hearings.—The committee shall conduct a public hearing during which the nominee shall be called to testify under oath on all matters relating to his or her suitability for office. No hearing shall be held until at least 48 hours after the nominee has responded to a prehearing questionnaire submitted by the committee.

4.5 Action on Confirmation.—A business meeting to consider a nomination shall not occur on the same day that the hearing on the nominee is held. The Chairman, with the agreement of the ranking minority member, may waive this requirement.

RULE 5—QUORUMS

5.1 Testimony.—For the purpose of receiving evidence, the swearing of witnesses, and the taking of sworn or unsworn testimony at any duly scheduled hearing, a quorum of the committee and the subcommittee thereof shall consist of one member.

5.2 Business.—A quorum for the transaction of committee or subcommittee business, other than for reporting a measure or recommendation to the Senate or the taking of testimony, shall consist of one-third of the members of the committee or subcommittee, including at least one member from each party.

5.3 Reporting.—A majority of the membership of the committee shall constitute a quorum for reporting bills, nominations, matters, or recommendations to the Senate. No measure or recommendation shall be ordered reported from the committee unless a majority of the committee members are physically present. The vote of the committee to report a measure or matter shall require the concurrence of a majority of those members who are physically present at the time the vote is taken.

RULE 6—VOTING

6.1 Rollcalls.—A roll call vote of the members shall be taken upon the request of any member.

6.2 Proxies.—Voting by proxy as authorized by the Senate rules for specific bills or subjects shall be allowed whenever a quorum of the committee is actually present.

6.3 Polling.—The committee may poll any matters of committee business, other than a vote on reporting to the Senate any measures, matters or recommendations or a vote on closing a meeting or hearing to the public, provided that every member is polled and every poll consists of the following two questions:

(1) Do you agree or disagree to poll the proposal; and

(2) Do you favor or oppose the proposal.

If any member requests, any matter to be polled shall be held for meeting rather than being polled. The chief clerk of the committee shall keep a record of all polls.

RULE 7—SUBCOMMITTEES

7.1 Assignments.—To assure the equitable assignment of members to subcommittees, no member of the committee will receive assignment to a second subcommittee until, in order of seniority, all members of the committee have chosen assignments to one subcommittee, and no member shall receive assignment to a third subcommittee until, in order of seniority, all members have chosen assignments to two subcommittees.

7.2 Attendance.—Any member of the committee may sit with any subcommittee during a hearing or meeting but shall not have the authority to vote on any matter before the subcommittee unless he or she is a member of such subcommittee.

7.3 Ex Officio Members.—The Chairman and ranking minority member shall serve as nonvoting ex officio members of the subcommittees on which they do not serve as voting members. The Chairman and ranking minority member may not be counted toward a quorum.

7.4 Scheduling.—No subcommittee may schedule a meeting or hearing at a time designated for a hearing or meeting of the full committee. No more than one subcommittee business meeting may be held at the same time.

7.5 Discharge.—Should a subcommittee fail to report back to the full committee on any measure within a reasonable time, the Chairman may withdraw the measure from such subcommittee and report that fact to the full committee for further disposition. The full committee may at any time, by majority vote of those members present, discharge a subcommittee from further consideration of a specific piece of legislation.

7.6 Application of Committee Rules to Subcommittees.—The proceedings of each subcommittee shall be governed by the rules of the full committee, subject to such authorizations or limitations as the committee may from time to time prescribe.

RULE 8—INVESTIGATIONS, SUBPOENAS AND DEPOSITIONS

8.1 Investigations.—Any investigation undertaken by the committee or a subcommittee in which depositions are taken or subpoenas issued, must be authorized by a majority of the members of the committee voting for approval to conduct such investigation at a business meeting of the committee convened in accordance with Rule 1.

8.2 Subpoenas.—The Chairman, with the approval of the ranking minority member of the committee, is delegated the authority to subpoena the attendance of witnesses or the production of memoranda, documents, records, or any other materials at a hearing of the committee or a subcommittee or in connection with the conduct of an investigation authorized in accordance with paragraph 8.1. The Chairman may subpoena attendance or production without the approval of the ranking minority member when the Chairman has not received notification from the ranking minority member of disapproval of the subpoena within 72 hours, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, of being notified of the subpoena. If a subpoena is disapproved by the ranking minority member as provided in this paragraph the subpoena may be authorized by vote of the members of the committee. When the committee or Chairman authorizes subpoenas, subpoenas may be issued upon the signature of the Chairman or any other member of the committee designated by the Chairman.

8.3 Notice for Taking Depositions.—Notices for the taking of depositions, in an investigation authorized by the committee, shall be authorized and be issued by the Chairman or by a staff officer designated by him. Such notices shall specify a time and place for examination, and the name of the Senator, staff officer or officers who will take the deposition. Unless otherwise specified, the deposition shall be in private. The committee shall not initiate procedures leading to criminal or civil enforcement proceedings for a witness' failure to appear unless the deposition notice was accompanied by a committee subpoena.

8.4 Procedure for Taking Depositions.—Witnesses shall be examined upon oath administered by an individual authorized by local law to administer oaths. The Chairman will rule, by telephone or otherwise, on any objection by a witness. The transcript of a deposition shall be filed with the committee clerk.

RULE 9—AMENDING THE RULES

These rules shall become effective upon publication in the Congressional Record. These rules may be modified, amended, or repealed by the committee, provided that all members are present or provide proxies or if a notice in writing of the proposed changes has been given to each member at least 48 hours prior to the meeting at which action thereon is to be taken. The changes shall become effective immediately upon publication of the changed rule or rules in the Congressional Record, or immediately upon approval of the changes if so resolved by the committee as long as any witnesses who may be affected by the change in rules are provided with them.

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Environment and Public Works Committee Rules of Procedure, approved in the Committee Business Meeting on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

EPW COMMITTEE RULES OF PROCEDURE

RULE 1. COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN GENERAL

(a) Regular Meeting Days: For purposes of complying with paragraph 3 of Senate Rule XXVI, the regular meeting day of the Committee is the first and third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. If there is no business before the committee, the regular meeting shall be omitted.

(b) The Committee Chairman (Chair) may call additional meetings, after consulting with the Ranking Minority Member. Subcommittee chairs may call meetings, with the concurrence of the Chair, after consulting with the ranking minority members of the subcommittee and the Committee.

(c) Presiding Officer:

(1) The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Committee. If the Chair is not present, the ranking member of the majority party who is present shall preside at that meeting.

(2) Subcommittee Chairs shall preside at all meetings of their subcommittees. If the Subcommittee Chair is not present, the ranking member of the majority party who is present of the subcommittee shall preside at that meeting.

(3) Notwithstanding the rule prescribed by paragraphs (1) and (2), any member of the Committee may preside at a hearing as designated by the Chair or presiding officer.

(d) Open Meetings: Meetings of the Committee and subcommittees, including hearings and business meetings, are open to the public. A portion of a meeting may be closed to the public if the Committee determines by roll call vote of a majority of the members present that the matters to be discussed or the testimony to be taken—

(1) will disclose matters necessary to be kept secret in the interests of national defense or the confidential conduct of the foreign relations of the United States;

(2) relate solely to matters of Committee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure; or

(3) constitute any other grounds for closure under paragraph 5(b) of Senate Rule XXVI.

(e) Broadcasting:

(1) Public meetings of the Committee or a subcommittee may be televised, broadcast, or recorded by a member of the Senate press gallery or a Senate employee.

(2) Any member of the Senate Press Gallery, or any Senate employee, wishing to televise, broadcast, or record a Committee or subcommittee meeting must notify the Majority Staff Director or the Majority Staff Director's designee by 5:00 p.m. the day before the meeting.

(3) During public meetings, any person using a camera, microphone, or other electronic equipment may not position or use the equipment in a way that interferes with the seating, vision, or hearing of Committee members or staff on the dais, or with the orderly process of the meeting.

RULE 2. QUORUMS

(a) Business Meetings: At Committee business meetings, and for the purpose of approving the issuance of a subpoena by a vote of the Committee or approving a Committee resolution, seven members of the Committee, at least two of whom are members of the minority party, constitute a quorum, except as provided in subsection (d).

(b) Subcommittee Meetings: At subcommittee business meetings, a majority of the subcommittee members, at least one of whom is a member of the minority party, constitutes a quorum for conducting business.

(c) Continuing Quorum: Once a quorum as prescribed in subsections (a) and (b) has been established, the Committee or Subcommittee may continue to conduct business.

(d) Reporting: No measure or matter may be reported to the Senate by the Committee, unless a majority of committee members cast votes in person.

(e) Hearings: One member constitutes a quorum for conducting a hearing.

RULE 3. HEARINGS

(a) Announcements: Before the Committee or a subcommittee holds a hearing, the Chair or Subcommittee Chair shall make a public announcement and provide notice to members of the date, place, time, and subject matter of the hearing. The announcement and notice shall be issued at least one week in advance of the hearing, unless the Chair or Subcommittee Chair, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or Subcommittee, determines that there is good cause to provide a shorter period, in which event the announcement and notice shall be issued at least twenty-four hours in advance of the hearing.

(b) Statements of Witnesses:

(1) A witness who is scheduled to testify at a hearing of the Committee or a subcommittee shall submit the written testimony by electronic mail at least 48 hours before the hearing. If a witness fails to comply with this requirement, the presiding officer may preclude the witness' testimony. This rule may be waived for field hearings, except for witnesses from the Federal Government.

(2) Any witness planning to use any exhibit such as a chart, graph, diagram, photo, map, slide, video, or model must submit by electronic mail, an attachment or link to download, an identical copy of each exhibit (or representation of the exhibit in the case of a model) at least 48 hours before the hearing. Any exhibit described above that is not provided to the Committee at least 48 hours prior to the hearing cannot be used for purpose of presenting testimony to the Committee and will not be included in the hearing record.

(3) The presiding officer at a hearing may have a witness confine the oral presentation to a summary of the written testimony.

(4) Notwithstanding a request that a document be embargoed, any document that is to be discussed at a hearing, including, but not limited to, those produced by the General Accounting Office, Congressional Budget Office, Congressional Research Service, a Federal agency, an Inspector General, or a nongovernmental entity, shall be provided to all members of the committee at least 72 hours before the hearing.

(c) Sworn Testimony: Witnesses in Committee or subcommittee hearings shall be required to give testimony under oath at all nomination, oversight, investigative, and budget hearings. Witnesses at other Committee or subcommittee hearings may be required to give testimony under oath at the discretion of the Chair or Ranking Minority Member. If any witness at a hearing is required to testify under oath, all witnesses at that hearing shall be required to testify under oath.

(d) Transcripts: Transcripts shall be kept of each hearing of the Committee and each subcommittee.

RULE 4. BUSINESS MEETINGS: NOTICE AND FILING REQUIREMENTS

(a) Notice: The Chair or Subcommittee Chair shall provide notice, the agenda of business to be discussed, and the text of agenda items to members of the Committee or subcommittee at least 72 hours before a business meeting. If the 72 hours falls over a weekend, all materials will be provided by close of business on Friday.

(b) Amendments: First-degree amendments must be filed with the Chair or the Subcommittee Chair at least 24 hours before a business meeting. After the filing deadline, the Chair or Subcommittee Chair shall promptly distribute all filed amendments to the members of the Committee or subcommittee.

(c) Modifications: The Chair or Subcommittee Chair may modify the notice and filing requirements to meet special circumstances, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or subcommittee.

RULE 5. BUSINESS MEETINGS

(a) Proxy Voting:

(1) Proxy voting is allowed on all measures, amendments, resolutions, or other matters before the committee or a subcommittee, subject to Rule 2(d).

(2) A member who is unable to attend a business meeting may submit a proxy vote on any matter, in writing, orally, or through personal instructions.

(3) A proxy given in writing is valid until revoked. A proxy given orally or by personal instructions is valid only on the day given.

(b) Late Voting: Members who were not present at a business meeting and were unable to cast their votes by proxy may record their votes later, so long as they do so that same business day and their vote does not change the outcome.

(c) Public Announcement:

(1) Whenever the committee conducts a rollcall vote, the chair shall announce the results of the vote, including a tabulation of the votes cast in favor and the votes cast against the proposition by each member of the committee.

(2) Whenever the committee reports any measure or matter by rollcall vote, the report shall include a tabulation of the votes cast in favor of and the votes cast in opposition to the measure or matter by each member of the committee.

(d) Transcripts: A transcript shall be kept of each business meeting of the Committee, unless a majority of all members of the Committee or subcommittee agree that some other form of permanent record is preferable.

RULE 6. SUBCOMMITTEES

(a) Regularly Established Subcommittees: The committee has four subcommittees: Transportation and Infrastructure; Clean Air, Climate, and Nuclear Innovation and Safety; Chemical Safety, Waste Management, Environmental Justice, and Regulatory Oversight; and Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife.

(b) Membership: The Chair, after consulting with the Ranking Minority Member, shall select members of the subcommittees.

RULE 7. STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER MATTERS

(a) Environmental Impact Statements: No project or legislation proposed by any executive branch agency may be approved, or otherwise acted upon, unless the committee has received a final environmental impact statement relative to it, in accordance with section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act, and the written comments of the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, in accordance with section 309 of the Clean Air Act. This rule does not modify the class of projects or legislative proposals for which environmental impact statements are required under section 102(2)(C).

(b) Project Approvals:

(1) Whenever the Committee authorizes a project under: Public Law 89–298, the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1965, as amended; Public Law 83–566, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, as amended; or Public Law 86–249, the Public Buildings Act of 1959, as amended; the Chair shall submit for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and the Committee shall publish periodically as a committee print, a report that describes the project and the reasons for its approval, together with any dissenting or individual views.

(2) Proponents of a committee resolution shall submit appropriate supporting evidence.

(c) Building Prospectuses:

(1) When the General Services Administration submits a prospectus, pursuant to section 7(a) of the Public Buildings Act of 1959, as amended, for construction (including construction of buildings for lease by the government), alteration and repair, or acquisition, the Committee shall act with respect to the prospectus during the same session of Congress in which the prospectus is submitted. A prospectus rejected by majority vote of the Committee, or not reported to the Senate during the session in which it was submitted, shall be returned to the General

Services Administration and must be resubmitted in order to be considered by the Committee during the next session of Congress.

(2) A report of a building project survey submitted by the General Services Administration to the committee under section 11(b) of the Public Buildings Act of 1959, as amended, may not be considered by the committee as being a prospectus subject to approval by committee resolution in accordance with section 7(a) of that Act. A project described in the report may be considered for committee action only if it is submitted as a prospectus in accordance with section 7(a) and is subject to the provisions of paragraph (1) of this rule.

(d) Naming Public Facilities: The Committee may not name a building, structure or facility for any living person, except: former Presidents or former Vice Presidents of the United States; former Members of Congress over 70 years of age; former Justices of the United States Supreme Court over 70 years of age; or Federal judges over 75 years of age who are fully retired or have taken senior status.

RULE 8. SUBPOENAS

The Chair, with the agreement of the Ranking Minority Member or by a vote of the Committee, may subpoena the attendance of a witness at a hearing or deposition, or the production of memoranda, documents, records, or any other materials.

RULE 9. AMENDING THE RULES

The rules may be amended or suspended by vote of a majority of committee members at a business meeting, if a quorum is present.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING CARL WESLEY MOORE

● Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor and commemorate the extraordinary life of Carl Wesley Moore, who sadly passed away on January 27, 2025. Carl was a dedicated family man, a devoted man of faith, and a proud veteran who honorably served his country.

Born on February 10, 1960, Carl grew up in Chicago, IL, where he attended Chicago Public Schools and graduated from Chicago Vocational High School before enlisting in the U.S. Navy. After his service, Carl pursued his passion for theology, earning degrees in biblical studies and theology from the Chicagoland Christian Center Bible Institute, as well as many academic awards for excellence and leadership.

Carl had a deep devotion to his faith. He was baptized at the Third Baptist Church in Chicago and later attended the First Corinthian Church and Chicagoland Christian Center, where he served as a deacon for over 5 years. He could quote scripture effortlessly, often engaging family and friends in Bible trivia, and would sing ''Order My Steps in your World'' every day.

Carl was also a technology expert. He worked as an operations analyst and computer hardware engineer at the Chicago Stock Exchange for 25 years. Carl had a huge heart and was always willing to help anyone needing computer repairs.

He was a loving family man and a constant reminder that family is the most important thing in life. Carl had an enduring partnership with his best friend and the love of his life Lawanda, with whom he shared a beautiful daughter Corionna and bonus daughter Sierra. His sisters, my dear friend Minyon and Diane, stood close by Carl during his hospital and long-term healthcare facility stays and provided a great deal of comfort to him through their caregiving.

Carl was always grateful for his family's strong, loving bond. He is survived by Lawanda, daughter Corionna Moore-Clayton, Matthew, bonus daughter Sierra Williams, Jerome, stepdaughter Shawna Howard, uncle Dennis Moore, sisters Diane Cottrell, Warren, and Minyon Moore, grandchildren London, Layla, Legend, and Lyric, nephew Christopher, Jamille, great-nephew Xavier, aunt Loretta, cousins LaShonn, Trizel, Dennis Jr., Shahari, Devin, and Devin Jr., along with many other friends and extended family.

Carl's passing at the age of 64 marks the end of a life filled with love, passion, and dedication. His legacy lives on through his family, friends, and the countless lives he touched.

I ask my colleagues in the Senate to join me in honoring the life and legacy of Carl Wesley Moore for his unwavering love and his lifelong commitment to his family and faith. His story is one of love and compassion that we can all strive towards.●

TRIBUTE TO JEFF HILBORN

● Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Jeff Hilborn, who is retiring after a long and distinguished career in radio broadcasting.

For more than 30 years, anyone who has tuned in to a radio station in the Brainerd Lakes area has benefited from Jeff's behind-the-scenes work, even if they have never heard his voice.

Jeff is proud of his North Dakota roots, but after he moved to Brainerd, Minnesota became his home. He started out at KLIZ-FM-The Power Loon, and for years, he has managed Hubbard Broadcasting's entire six radio station group that also includes WJJY-FM, KBLB-FM, KULO-FM, KVBR-AM, and KLIZ-AM.

Jeff is known for his integrity, for being candid and kind. Under his leadership, WJJY-FM won five National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) Crystal Radio Awards for community service, earning the station the NAB Crystal Heritage Award next month. Jeff is an enthusiastic supporter of Hubbard's annual Radiothon to End Child Abuse, raising over a million dollars for Morrison, Cass, Aitkin, and Crow Wing Counties.

Jeff's contributions to the community go beyond the radio. He served on the board of directors for the Brainerd Sports Boosters and the Sunrise Sertoma Club. He was a committee member for the Brainerd Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Destination Downtown initiative and served on the boards of directors for the Minnesota Broadcasters Association and Randall State Bank, and as a council member for First Lutheran Church.

So today, I celebrate Jeff Hilborn's long career and contributions to Brainerd Lakes.

Jeff, we have been lucky to have you enlivening the airwaves in Minnesota for so many years. Our State and country are better because of you. I wish you all the best.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:36 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 42. An act to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to exclude certain payments to aged, blind, or disabled Alaska Natives or descendants of Alaska Natives from being used to determine eligibility for certain programs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 43. An act to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Village Corporations shall not be required to convey land in trust to the State of Alaska for the establishment of Municipal Corporations, and for other purposes.

H.R. 226. An act to take certain Federal lands in Tennessee into trust for the benefit of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

H.R. 776. An act to reauthorize the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003.

H.R. 835. An act to provide a one-time grant for the operation, security, and maintenance of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center to commemorate the events, and honor the victims, of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 803(a) of the Congressional Recognition for Excellence in Arts Education Act (2 U.S.C. 803(a)), and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, the Minority Leader reappoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Congressional Award Board: Ms. Nichelle D. Schoultz of Bethesda, Maryland.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 226. An act to take certain Federal lands in Tennessee into trust for the benefit of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

H.R. 776. An act to reauthorize the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 835. An act to provide a one-time grant for the operation, security, and maintenance of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center to commemorate the events, and honor the victims, of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BOOZMAN, from the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, without amendment:

S. Res. 57. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. SCOTT, of South Carolina, from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, without amendment:

S. Res. 58. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. CAPITO, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment:

S. Res. 59. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, without amendment:

S. Res. 60. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mrs. CAPITO, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment:

S. 347. A bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to reauthorize brownfields revitalization funding, and for other purposes.

S. 351. A bill to establish a pilot grant program to improve recycling accessibility, to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to carry out certain activities to collect and disseminate data on recycling and composting programs in the United States, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CRUZ for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*Howard Lutnick, of New York, to be Secretary of Commerce.

By Ms. ERNST for the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

*Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 402. A bill to amend title 11, District of Columbia Official Code, to revise references in such title to individuals with intellectual disabilities; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 403. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish an Office of Rural Health, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. KELLY):

S. 404. A bill to direct the Surgeon General to conduct a study regarding the use of mobile devices in elementary and secondary schools, and to establish a pilot program of awarding grants to enable certain schools to create a school environment free of mobile devices; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TUBERVILLE:

S. 405. A bill to modify eligibility requirements for amateur sports governing organizations; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. CURTIS):

S. 406. A bill to authorize an exception to the prohibition on the construction of naval vessels in foreign shipyards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. CURTIS):

S. 407. A bill to authorize an exception to the prohibition on the construction of Coast Guard vessels in foreign shipyards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. PADILLA, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 408. A bill to expand employees eligible for leave and employers subject to leave requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. REED, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. SMITH, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 409. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for current year inclusion of net CFC tested income, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. KING, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. COONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 410. A bill to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve benefits and services for surviving spouses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 411. A bill to develop a database of members of the Armed Forces who died in noncombat military plane crashes and to provide support to the families of such members, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 412. A bill to prescribe requirements relating to the management of the consolidated Federal asset commonly known as Plum Island, New York, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 413. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of Plum Island; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 414. A bill to require covered digital advertising platforms to report their public service advertisements; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. LUJÁN:

S. 415. A bill to establish the position of National Roadway Safety Advocate within the Department of Transportation; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WELCH (for himself and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 416. A bill to amend the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park Establishment Act to expand the boundary of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in the State of Vermont, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 417. A bill to develop a strategy for increasing access to independent information for Chinese citizens, to establish an interagency task force to carry out such strategy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BANKS:

S. 418. A bill to prohibit contracts between certain foreign entities and institutions of higher education conducting Department of Defense-funded research and to impose post-employment restrictions for participants in certain research funded by the Department, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. HAWLEY (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COONS, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. WELCH):

S. 419. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to reauthorize grants to support law enforcement officers and families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 420. A bill to amend the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 to reauthorize the dairy business innovation initiatives; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 421. A bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to establish country of origin labeling requirements for beef, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. GALLEGO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KIM, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SLOTKIN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. FETTERMAN):

S. 422. A bill to protect an individual's ability to access contraceptives and to engage in contraception and to protect a health care provider's ability to provide contraceptives, contraception, and information related to contraception; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. BUDD, Mr. WICKER,

Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. DAINES, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. TILLIS, and Ms. ERNST):

S. 423. A bill to protect regular order for budgeting for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. BRITT (for herself, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 424. A bill to amend the Federal securities laws to enhance 403(b) plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. JUSTICE, and Mr. SHEEHY):

S. 425. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the carbon oxide sequestration credit to ensure parity for different uses and utilizations of qualified carbon oxide; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 426. A bill to provide for modifications to ending trafficking in government contracting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. ROUNDS (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. HAGERTY, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 427. A bill to require the Federal financial institutions regulatory agencies to take risk profiles and business models of institutions into account when taking regulatory actions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. KELLY, Mr. SCHMITT, and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 428. A bill to promote space situational awareness and space traffic coordination and to modify the functions and leadership of the Office of Space Commerce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. HICKENLOOPER):

S. 429. A bill to enhance the economic and national security of the United States by securing a reliable supply of critical minerals and rare earth elements through trade agreements and strategic partnerships; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 430. A bill to require sellers of event tickets to disclose comprehensive information to consumers about ticket prices and related fees; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. ROUNDS (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 431. A bill to amend section 1030 of title 18, United States Code, to include conspiracy in the offenses and penalties relating to computer fraud; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 432. A bill to establish the Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter National Historical Park in the State of New York as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 433. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the National Manufacturing Advisory Council within the Department of Commerce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. WICKER):

S. 434. A bill to establish the Commercial Space Activity Advisory Committee, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 435. A bill to improve the missile defense capabilities of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. SULLIVAN:

S. 436. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to modify the organization and authorities of the Assistant Secretaries of Defense with duties relating to industrial base policy and homeland defense; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WELCH, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PADILLA, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 437. A bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and title 5, United States Code, to permit leave to care for a domestic partner, parent-in-law, or adult child, or another related individual, who has a serious health condition, and to allow employees to take, as additional leave, parental involvement and family wellness leave to participate in or attend their children's and grand children's educational and extracurricular activities or meet family care needs; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. ROUNDS (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 438. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for education and training programs and resources of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MARSHALL:

S.J. Res. 14. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to ''Phasedown of Hydrofluorocarbons: Management of Certain Hydrofluorocarbons and Substitutes Under the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act of 2020''; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LEE:

S.J. Res. 15. A joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network relating to ''Anti-Money Laundering Regulations for Residential Real Estate Transfers''; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. BOOZMAN:

S. Res. 57. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; from the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina:

S. Res. 58. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mrs. CAPITO:

S. Res. 59. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Environment and Public Works; from the Committee on Environment and Public Works; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. Res. 60. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Indian Affairs; from the Committee on Indian Affairs; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. Res. 61. A resolution expressing support for the continued value of arms control agreements and negotiated constraints on Russian and Chinese strategic nuclear forces; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 107

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 107, a bill to amend the Lumbee Act of 1956.

S. 146

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 146, a bill to require covered platforms to remove nonconsensual intimate visual depictions, and for other purposes.

S. 187

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 187, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently allow a tax deduction at the time an investment in qualified property is made.

S. 315

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 315, a bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in passenger motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

S. 317

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 317, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify and extend the deduction for charitable contributions for individuals not itemizing deductions.

S. 339

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) were added as cosponsors of S. 339, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of multi-cancer early detection screening tests.

S. 396

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 396, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to impose limitations on the provision of critical skill incentives to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Senior

Executive Services positions, and for other purposes.

S. 398

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 398, a bill to transfer and limit Executive Branch authority to suspend or restrict the entry of a class of aliens.

S.J. RES. 10

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 10, a joint resolution terminating the national emergency declared with respect to energy.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 421. A bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to establish country of origin labeling requirements for beef, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 421

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''American Beef Labeling Act of 2025''.

SEC. 2. COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING FOR BEEF.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 281 of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1638) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (7) as paragraphs (2) through (8), respectively;

(2) by inserting before paragraph (2) (as so redesignated) the following:

''(1) BEEF.—The term 'beef' means meat produced from cattle (including veal).''; and

(3) in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2) (as so redesignated)—

(A) in clause (i), by inserting '', beef,'' after ''lamb''; and

(B) in clause (ii), by inserting '', ground beef,'' after ''lamb''.

(b) NOTICE OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.—Section 282(a)(2) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1638a(a)(2)) is amended—

(1) in the paragraph heading, by inserting ''BEEF,'' after ''FOR'';

(2) in each of subparagraphs (A) through (D), by inserting ''beef,'' before ''lamb'' each place it appears; and

(3) in subparagraph (E)—

(A) in the subparagraph heading, by inserting ''BEEF,'' after ''GROUND''; and

(B) by inserting ''ground beef,'' before ''ground lamb'' each place it appears.

(c) MEANS OF REINSTATING MCOOL FOR BEEF.—

(1) DETERMINATION OF MEANS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the United States Trade Representative, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, shall determine a means of reinstating mandatory country of origin labeling for beef in accordance with the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) that is in compliance with all applicable rules of the World Trade Organization.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION OF MEANS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the United States Trade Representative and the Secretary of Agriculture shall implement the means determined under paragraph (1).

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) take effect on the earlier of—

(1) the date on which the Secretary of Agriculture publishes a determination in the Federal Register that the means determined under paragraph (1) of subsection (c) have been implemented under paragraph (2) of that subsection; and

(2) the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. JUSTICE, and Mr. SHEEHY):

S. 425. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the carbon oxide sequestration credit to ensure parity for different uses and utilizations of qualified carbon oxide; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 425

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Enhancing Energy Recovery Act''.

SEC. 2. PARITY FOR DIFFERENT USES AND UTILIZATIONS OF QUALIFIED CARBON OXIDE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 45Q of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(B)(ii), by adding ''and'' at the end,

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

''(B)(i) disposed of by the taxpayer in secure geological storage and not used by the taxpayer as described in clause (ii) or (iii),

''(ii) used by the taxpayer as a tertiary injectant in a qualified enhanced oil or natural gas recovery project and disposed of by the taxpayer in secure geological storage, or

''(iii) utilized by the taxpayer in a manner described in subsection (f)(5).'', and

(C) by striking paragraph (4), and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following:

''(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) or (C), the applicable dollar amount shall be an amount equal to—

''(i) for any taxable year beginning in a calendar year after 2024 and before 2027, $17, and

''(ii) for any taxable year beginning in a calendar year after 2026, an amount equal to the product of $17 and the inflation adjustment factor for such calendar year determined under section 43(b)(3)(B) for such calendar year, determined by substituting '2025' for '1990'.'', and

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''shall be applied'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''shall be applied by substituting '$36' for '$17' each place it appears.'',

(B) in paragraph (2)(B), by striking ''paragraphs (3)(A) and (4)(A)'' and inserting ''paragraph (3)(A)'', and

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking ''the dollar amounts applicable under paragraph (3) or (4)'' and inserting ''the dollar amount applicable under paragraph (3)'',

(3) in subsection (f)—

(A) in paragraph (5)(B)(i), by striking ''(4)(B)(ii)'' and inserting ''(3)(B)(iii)'', and

(B) in paragraph (9), by striking ''paragraphs (3) and (4) of subsection (a)'' and inserting ''subsection (a)(3)'', and

(4) in subsection (h)(3)(A)(ii), by striking ''paragraph (3)(A) or (4)(A) of subsection (a)'' and inserting ''subsection (a)(3)(A)''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 6417(d)(3)(C)(i)(II)(bb) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''paragraph (3)(A) or (4)(A) of section 45Q(a)'' and inserting ''section 45Q(a)(3)(A)''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2024.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WELCH, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PADILLA, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 437. A bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and title 5, United States Code, to permit leave to care for a domestic partner, parent-in-law, or adult child, or another related individual, who has a serious health condition, and to allow employees to take, as additional leave, parental involvement and family wellness leave to participate in or attend their children's and grand children's educational and extracurricular activities or meet family care needs; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 437

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Caring for All Families Act''.

SEC. 2. LEAVE TO CARE FOR A DOMESTIC PARTNER, SON-IN-LAW, DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, PARENT-IN-LAW, ADULT CHILD, GRANDPARENT, GRANDCHILD, OR SIBLING OF THE EMPLOYEE, OR ANOTHER RELATED INDIVIDUAL.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—

(1) INCLUSION OF RELATED INDIVIDUALS.—Section 101 of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2611) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(20) ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL WHOSE CLOSE ASSOCIATION IS THE EQUIVALENT OF A FAMILY RELATIONSHIP.—The term 'any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means any person with whom the employee or covered servicemember, as the case may be, has a significant personal bond that is or is like a family relationship, regardless of biological or legal relationship.

''(21) DOMESTIC PARTNER.—The term 'domestic partner', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means—

''(A) the person recognized as the domestic partner of the employee or covered servicemember under any domestic partnership or civil union law of a State or political subdivision of a State; or

''(B) in the case of an unmarried employee or covered servicemember, an unmarried adult person who is in a committed, personal relationship with the employee or covered servicemember, is not a domestic partner as described in subparagraph (A) to or in such a relationship with any other person, and who is designated to the employer by such employee or covered service member as the domestic partner of that employee or covered servicemember.

''(22) GRANDCHILD.—The term 'grandchild', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means the son or daughter of a son or daughter of the employee or covered service member.

''(23) GRANDPARENT.—The term 'grandparent', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means a parent of a parent of the employee or covered service member.

''(24) NEPHEW; NIECE.—The terms 'nephew' and 'niece', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, mean a son or daughter of the sibling of the employee or covered service member.

''(25) PARENT-IN-LAW.— The term 'parent-in-law', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means a parent of the spouse or domestic partner of the employee or covered service member.

''(26) SIBLING.—The term 'sibling', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means any person who is a son or daughter of parent of the employee or covered service member (other than the employee or covered servicemember).

''(27) SON-IN-LAW; DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.—The terms 'son-in-law' and 'daughter-in-law', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, mean any person who is a spouse or domestic partner of a son or daughter, as the case may be, of the employee or covered service member.

''(28) UNCLE; AUNT.—The terms 'uncle' and 'aunt', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, mean the son or daughter, as the case may be, of the grandparent of the employee or covered servicemember (other than the parent of the employee or covered service member).''.

(2) INCLUSION OF ADULT CHILDREN AND CHILDREN OF A DOMESTIC PARTNER.—Section 101(12) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2611(12)) is amended—

(A) by inserting ''a child of an individual's domestic partner,'' after ''a legal ward,''; and

(B) by striking ''who is—'' and all that follows and inserting ''and includes an adult child.''.

(b) LEAVE REQUIREMENT.—Section 102 of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2612) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent, of the employee, if such spouse, son, daughter, or parent'' and inserting ''spouse or domestic partner, or a son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece of the employee, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee, if such spouse, domestic partner, son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece, or such other individual''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (E), by striking ''spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent of the employee'' and inserting ''spouse or domestic partner, or a son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, parent, parent-in-law, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece of the employee, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee''; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking ''spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered servicemember'' and inserting ''spouse or domestic partner, son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, sibling, uncle or aunt, nephew or niece, or next of kin of a covered servicemember, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the covered servicemember'';

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking ''son, daughter, spouse, parent, or covered servicemember of the employee, as appropriate'' and inserting ''son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, spouse or domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, nephew or niece, or covered servicemember of the employee, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee, as appropriate''; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking ''spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent, of the employee'' and inserting ''spouse or domestic partner, or a son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, parent, parent-in-law, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece of the employee, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee, as appropriate,''; and

(3) in subsection (f)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting '', or domestic partners,'' after ''husband and wife''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by inserting ''or parent-in-law'' after ''parent''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting '', or those domestic partners,'' after ''husband and wife'' each place it appears.

(c) CERTIFICATION.—Section 103 of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2613) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''son, daughter, spouse, or parent of the employee, or of the next of kin of an individual in the case of leave taken under such paragraph (3), as appropriate'' and inserting ''son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, spouse or domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece of the employee, or the next of kin of an individual, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee, as appropriate''; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (4)(A), by striking ''son, daughter, spouse, or parent and an estimate of the amount of time that such employee is needed to care for the son, daughter, spouse, or parent'' and inserting ''son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, spouse or domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece of the employee, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee, as appropriate, and an estimate of the amount of time that such employee is needed to care for such son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, spouse or domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece, or such other individual''; and

(B) in paragraph (7), by striking ''son, daughter, parent, or spouse who has a serious health condition, or will assist in their recovery,'' and inserting ''son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, spouse or domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece, with a serious health condition, of the employee, or an individual, with a serious health condition, who is any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee, as appropriate, or will assist in the recovery,''.

(d) EMPLOYMENT AND BENEFITS PROTECTION.—Section 104(c)(3) of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2614(c)(3)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)(i), by striking ''son, daughter, spouse, or parent of the employee, as appropriate,'' and inserting ''son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, spouse or domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece of the employee, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee, as appropriate,''; and

(2) in subparagraph (C)(ii), by striking ''son, daughter, spouse, or parent'' and inserting ''employee's son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, spouse or domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece, or (with relation to the employee) any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship, as appropriate,''.

SEC. 3. LEAVE TO CARE FOR A DOMESTIC PARTNER, SON-IN-LAW, DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, PARENT-IN-LAW, ADULT CHILD, GRANDPARENT, GRANDCHILD, OR SIBLING OF THE EMPLOYEE, OR ANOTHER RELATED INDIVIDUAL FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—

(1) INCLUSION OF A DOMESTIC PARTNER, SON-IN-LAW, DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, PARENT-IN-LAW, ADULT CHILD, GRANDPARENT, GRANDCHILD, OR SIBLING OF THE EMPLOYEE, OR ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL WHOSE CLOSE ASSOCIATION IS THE EQUIVALENT OF A FAMILY RELATIONSHIP.—Section 6381 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in paragraph (11) by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(B) in paragraph (12), by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(13) the term 'any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means any person with whom the employee or covered servicemember, as the case may be, has a significant personal bond that is or is like a family relationship, regardless of biological or legal relationship;

''(14) the term 'domestic partner', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means—

''(A) the person recognized as the domestic partner of the employee or covered servicemember under any domestic partnership or civil union law of a State or political subdivision of a State; or

''(B) in the case of an unmarried employee or covered servicemember, an unmarried adult person who is in a committed, personal relationship with the employee or covered servicemember, is not a domestic partner as described in subparagraph (A) to or in such a relationship with any other person, and who

is designated to the employing agency by such employee or covered service member as the domestic partner of that employee or covered servicemember;

''(15) the term 'grandchild', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means the son or daughter of a son or daughter of the employee or covered service member;

''(16) the term 'grandparent', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means a parent of a parent of the employee or covered service member;

''(17) the terms 'nephew' and 'niece', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, mean a son or daughter of the sibling of the employee or covered service member;

''(18) the term 'parent-in-law', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means a parent of the spouse or domestic partner of the employee or covered service member;

''(19) the term 'sibling', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, means any person who is a son or daughter of parent of the employee or covered service member (other than the employee or covered servicemember);

''(20) the terms 'son-in-law' and 'daughter-in-law', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, mean any person who is a spouse or domestic partner of a son or daughter, as the case may be, of the employee or covered service member;

''(21) the term 'State' has the same meaning given the term in section 3 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 203); and

''(22) terms 'uncle' and 'aunt', used with respect to an employee or a covered servicemember, mean the son or daughter, as the case may be, of the grandparent of the employee or covered servicemember (other than the parent of the employee or covered service member).''.

(2) INCLUSION OF ADULT CHILDREN AND CHILDREN OF A DOMESTIC PARTNER.—Section 6381(6) of such title is amended—

(A) by inserting ''a child of an individual's domestic partner,'' after ''a legal ward,''; and

(B) by striking ''who is—'' and all that follows and inserting ''and includes an adult child''.

(b) LEAVE REQUIREMENT.—Section 6382 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent, of the employee, if such spouse, son, daughter, or parent'' and inserting ''spouse or domestic partner, or a son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece of the employee, or any other individual whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship, if such spouse, domestic partner, son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece, or such other individual''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (E), by striking ''spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent of the employee'' and inserting ''spouse or domestic partner, or a son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, parent, parent-in-law, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece of the employee, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee''; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking ''spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered servicemember'' and inserting ''spouse or domestic partner, son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, sibling, uncle or aunt, nephew or niece, or next of kin of a covered servicemember, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the covered servicemember''; and

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking ''son, daughter, spouse, parent, or covered servicemember of the employee, as appropriate'' and inserting ''son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, spouse or domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, nephew or niece, or covered servicemember of the employee, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee, as appropriate''; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking ''spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent, of the employee'' and inserting ''spouse or domestic partner, or a son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, parent, parent-in-law, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece of the employee, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee, as appropriate,''.

(c) CERTIFICATION.—Section 6383 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''son, daughter, spouse, or parent of the employee, as appropriate'' and inserting ''son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, spouse or domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece of the employee, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee, as appropriate''; and

(2) in subsection (b)(4)(A), by striking ''son, daughter, spouse, or parent, and an estimate of the amount of time that such employee is needed to care for such son, daughter, spouse, or parent'' and inserting ''son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, spouse or domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece of the employee, or any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee, as appropriate, and an estimate of the amount of time that such employee is needed to care for such son or daughter, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, spouse or domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle or aunt, or nephew or niece, or such other individual''.

SEC. 4. ENTITLEMENT TO ADDITIONAL LEAVE UNDER THE FMLA FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND FAMILY WELLNESS.

(a) LEAVE REQUIREMENT.—Section 102(a) of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2612(a)), as amended by section 2(b), is further amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph:

''(5) ENTITLEMENT TO ADDITIONAL LEAVE FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND FAMILY WELLNESS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B) and section 103(g), an eligible employee shall be entitled to leave under this paragraph to—

''(i) participate in or attend an activity that is sponsored by a school or community organization and relates to a program of the school or organization that is attended by a son or daughter or a grandchild of the employee; or

''(ii) meet routine family medical care needs (including by attending medical and dental appointments of the employee or a son or daughter, spouse or domestic partner, or grandchild of the employee) or attend to the care needs of an elderly individual who is any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee (including by making visits to nursing homes or group homes).

''(B) LIMITATIONS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—An eligible employee shall be entitled to—

''(I) not to exceed 4 hours of leave under this paragraph during any 30-day period; and

''(II) not to exceed 24 hours of leave under this paragraph during any 12-month period described in paragraph (4).

''(ii) COORDINATION RULE.—Leave under this paragraph shall be in addition to any leave provided under any other paragraph of this subsection.

''(C) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this paragraph:

''(i) COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION.—The term 'community organization' means a private nonprofit organization that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and provides activities for individuals described in section 101(12), such as a scouting or sports organization.

''(ii) SCHOOL.—The term 'school' means an elementary school or secondary school (as such terms are defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801)), a Head Start program assisted under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.), and a child care facility licensed under State law.''.

(b) SCHEDULE.—Section 102(b)(1) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2612(b)(1)) is amended by inserting after the third sentence the following new sentence: ''Subject to subsection (e)(4) and section 103(g), leave under subsection (a)(5) may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule.''.

(c) SUBSTITUTION OF PAID LEAVE.—Section 102(d)(2) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2612(d)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT LEAVE AND FAMILY WELLNESS LEAVE.—

''(i) VACATION LEAVE; PERSONAL LEAVE; FAMILY LEAVE.—An eligible employee may elect, or an employer may require the employee, to substitute any of the accrued paid vacation leave, personal leave, or family leave of the employee for any part of the period of leave under subsection (a)(5).

''(ii) MEDICAL OR SICK LEAVE.—An eligible employee may elect, or an employer may require the employee, to substitute any of the accrued paid medical or sick leave of the employee for any part of the period of leave provided under clause (ii) of subsection (a)(5)(A), except that nothing in this title shall require an employer to provide paid sick leave or paid medical leave in any situation in which such employer would not normally provide any such paid leave.

''(iii) PROHIBITION ON RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS.—If the employee elects or the employer requires the substitution of accrued paid leave for leave under subsection (a)(5), the employer shall not restrict or limit the leave that may be substituted or impose any additional terms and conditions on the substitution of such leave that are more stringent for the employee than the terms and conditions set forth in this Act.''.

(d) NOTICE.—Section 102(e) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2612(e)), as amended by section 2(b), is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) NOTICE RELATING TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND FAMILY WELLNESS LEAVE.—In any case in which an employee requests leave under paragraph (5) of subsection (a), the employee shall—

''(A) provide the employer with not less than 7 days' notice, or (if such notice is impracticable) such notice as is practicable, before the date the leave is to begin, of the employee's intention to take leave under such paragraph; and

''(B) in the case of leave to be taken under subsection (a)(5)(A)(ii), make a reasonable effort to schedule the activity or care involved so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the employer, subject to the approval of the health care provider involved (if any).''.

(e) CERTIFICATION.—Section 103 of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2613) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(g) CERTIFICATION RELATED TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND FAMILY WELLNESS LEAVE.—An employer may require that a request for leave under section 102(a)(5) be supported by a certification issued at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may by regulation prescribe.''.

SEC. 5. ENTITLEMENT OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES TO LEAVE FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND FAMILY WELLNESS.

(a) LEAVE REQUIREMENT.—Section 6382(a) of title 5, United States Code, as amended by section 3(b), is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5)(A) Subject to subparagraph (B) and section 6383(f), an employee shall be entitled to leave under this paragraph to—

''(i) participate in or attend an activity that is sponsored by a school or community organization and relates to a program of the school or organization that is attended by a son or daughter or a grandchild of the employee; or

''(ii) meet routine family medical care needs (including by attending medical and dental appointments of the employee or a son or daughter, spouse or domestic partner, or grandchild of the employee) or to attend to the care needs of an elderly individual who is any other individual whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship with the employee (including by making visits to nursing homes and group homes).

''(B)(i) An employee is entitled to—

''(I) not to exceed 4 hours of leave under this paragraph during any 30-day period; and

''(II) not to exceed 24 hours of leave under this paragraph during any 12-month period described in paragraph (4).

''(ii) Leave under this paragraph shall be in addition to any leave provided under any other paragraph of this subsection.

''(C) For the purpose of this paragraph—

''(i) the term 'community organization' means a private nonprofit organization that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and provides activities for individuals described in section 6381(6), such as a scouting or sports organization; and

''(ii) the term 'school' means an elementary school or secondary school (as such terms are defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801)), a Head Start program assisted under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.), and a child care facility licensed under State law.''.

(b) SCHEDULE.—Section 6382(b)(1) of such title is amended—

(1) by inserting after the third sentence the following new sentence: ''Subject to subsection (e)(4) and section 6383(f), leave under subsection (a)(5) may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule.''; and

(2) in the last sentence, by striking ''involved,'' and inserting ''involved (or, in the case of leave under subsection (a)(5), for purposes of the 30-day or 12-month period involved),''.

(c) SUBSTITUTION OF PAID LEAVE.—Section 6382(d) of such title is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(3) An employee may elect to substitute for any part of the period of leave under subsection (a)(5), any of the employee's accrued or accumulated annual or sick leave. If the employee elects the substitution of that accrued or accumulated annual or sick leave for leave under subsection (a)(5), the employing agency shall not restrict or limit the leave that may be substituted or impose any additional terms and conditions on the substitution of such leave that are more stringent for the employee than the terms and conditions set forth in this subchapter.''.

(d) NOTICE.—Section 6382(e) of such title, as amended by section 3(b)(2), is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) In any case in which an employee requests leave under paragraph (5) of subsection (a), the employee shall—

''(A) provide the employing agency with not less than 7 days' notice, or (if such notice is impracticable) such notice as is practicable, before the date the leave is to begin, of the employee's intention to take leave under such paragraph; and

''(B) in the case of leave to be taken under subsection (a)(5)(A)(ii), make a reasonable effort to schedule the activity or care involved so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the employing agency, subject to the approval of the health care provider involved (if any).''.

(e) CERTIFICATION.—Section 6383(f) of such title is amended by striking ''paragraph (1)(E) or (3) of'' and inserting ''paragraph (1)(E), (3) or (5) of''.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 57—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. BOOZMAN submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 57

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry (in this resolution referred to as the ''committee'') is authorized from March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2027, in its discretion, to—

(1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this resolution shall not exceed $4,464,935, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $200,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $40,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this resolution shall not exceed $7,654,174, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $200,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $40,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this resolution shall not exceed $3,189,239, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $200,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $40,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for ''Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations'' of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025;

(2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

SENATE RESOLUTION 58—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Banking, Housing,

and Urban Affairs which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 58

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs (in this resolution referred to as the ''committee'') is authorized from March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2027, in its discretion, to—

(1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this resolution shall not exceed $5,141,314, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $11,666 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $875 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this resolution shall not exceed $8,813,681, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $1,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this resolution shall not exceed $3,672,367, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $8,334 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $625 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for ''Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations'' of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025;

(2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

SENATE RESOLUTION 59—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mrs. CAPITO submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Environment and Public Works which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 59

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Environment and Public Works (in this resolution referred to as the ''committee'') is authorized from March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2027, in its discretion, to—

(1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this resolution shall not exceed $4,107,247, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $4,666 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $1,166 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this resolution shall not exceed $7,040,996, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $8,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $2,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this resolution shall not exceed $2,933,748, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $3,334 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $834 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for ''Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations'' of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025;

(2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

SENATE RESOLUTION 60—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted the following resolution;; from the Committee on Indian Affairs which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 60

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions imposed by section 105 of Senate Resolution 4 (95th Congress), agreed to February 4, 1977, and in exercising the authority conferred on it by that section, the Committee on Indian Affairs (in this resolution referred to as the ''committee'') is authorized from March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2027, in its discretion, to—

(1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this resolution shall not exceed $1,858,378, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this resolution shall not exceed $3,185,791, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this resolution shall not exceed $1,327,413, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed $20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for ''Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations'' of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025;

(2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

SENATE RESOLUTION 61—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE CONTINUED VALUE OF ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS AND NEGOTIATED CONSTRAINTS ON RUSSIAN AND CHINESE STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES

Mr. MARKEY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 61

Whereas the United States maintains bipartisan support to ensure national security and the defense of United States allies and partners;

Whereas President Ronald Reagan stated that ''a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought'' in his 1984 State of the Union Address, and affirmed the conviction with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985;

Whereas, in January 2022, President Joseph R. Biden joined the leaders of the People's Republic of China, the French Republic, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to reaffirm that ''a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought'';

Whereas the Russian Federation illegally invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and has used veiled and blatant nuclear saber rattling in service of its war of aggression against a sovereign state;

Whereas the war has led to thousands of casualties, including over 40,000 civilians and more than 650 children killed, along with the displacement of over 10,000,000 Ukrainians;

Whereas the Russian Federation's illegal war against Ukraine represents the greatest threat to European security and freedom in a generation;

Whereas, on February 27, 2022, President of Russia Vladimir Putin ordered his military to put Russia's nuclear forces on ''special combat readiness'' in an escalatory response to the unequivocal condemnation from the United States and its western allies of the Russian Federation's illegal invasion of Ukraine;

Whereas, on September 21, 2022, President Putin warned he was ''not bluffing'' when he said Russia has ''various weapons of mass destruction'' and ''will use all the means available to us'' to defend its territory shortly before annexing additional Ukrainian lands through ''referendums'';

Whereas, in February 2021, the United States and the Russian Federation extended the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms signed April 8, 2010, and entered into force February 5, 2011 (commonly known as the ''New START Treaty'') for 5 years until February 5, 2026;

Whereas, on February 21, 2023, President Putin announced the Russian Federation's purported suspension of the New START Treaty, the last major remaining bilateral nuclear arms control agreement, in a move deemed legally invalid by the United States;

Whereas the New START Treaty has had bipartisan support and limits the Russian nuclear arsenal to 1,550 warheads on no more than 700 deployed delivery vehicles, and to 800 deployed and nondeployed strategic launchers;

Whereas the New START Treaty has permitted robust and strict transparency and verification measures and onsite inspections, which have provided valuable insight into Russia's nuclear arsenal;

Whereas the United States has decades of bipartisan leadership in nuclear arms control, including cooperation with the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation even when relations were strained;

Whereas, in June 2023, the United States Government announced it is now ready to engage in a dialogue with the Russian Federation on a post-2026 nuclear arms control framework and is ''prepared to stick to the central limits as long as Russia does'' while also stating a ''willingness to engage in bilateral arms control discussions'' with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China ''without preconditions'';

Whereas the Department of State said in a report to Congress released in January 2024, ''The United States assesses that the Russian Federation likely did not exceed the New START Treaty's deployed warhead limit in 2023.'';

Whereas Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on September 28, 2024, at a United Nations General Assembly meeting that Russia continues to comply with the New START Treaty numerical limits;

Whereas the nuclear weapon states recognized by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, done at Washington, London, and Moscow July 1, 1968 (commonly referred to as the ''Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty'' or ''NPT''), including the Russian Federation, the United States, as well as the People's Republic of China, have an obligation to ''pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament'';

Whereas, in November 2023, senior United States and Chinese officials held ''a candid and in-depth discussion on issues related to arms control and nonproliferation as part of ongoing efforts to maintain open lines of communication and responsibly manage the U.S.-PRC relationship''; and

Whereas the absence of agreed limits on the United States and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals after the expiration of the New START Treaty would affect strategic stability and increase the risk of a costly and unrestrained nuclear arms race: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns in the strongest terms the use of nuclear escalatory rhetoric and veiled threats to potentially use nuclear weapons in the context of the illegal invasion of a free and independent Ukraine;

(2) condemns the Russian Federation's purported suspension of its participation in the New START Treaty;

(3) calls for immediate cessation of nuclear saber rattling and nuclear escalatory rhetoric from the Russian Federation, or by any other nuclear-armed state;

(4) emphasizes the continued value of arms control agreements between the United States and the Russian Federation, which possess the world's largest nuclear arsenals;

(5) calls for the Russian Federation to promptly return to full implementation of the New START Treaty, including onsite inspections, provision of treaty-mandated notifications and data, and resumption of Bilateral Consultative Commission meetings;

(6) calls on the administration to continue to actively pursue a dialogue with the Russian Federation on a new nuclear arms control framework and on risk reduction in

order to maintain strategic stability, ensure the conflict in Ukraine does not escalate to nuclear use, and avoid an unrestrained nuclear arms race following the expiration of the New START Treaty;

(7) calls upon the United States and the Russian Federation to continue to respect the numerical constraints on the strategic deployed nuclear forces established by the New START Treaty until such time as a new nuclear arms control framework is established; and

(8) calls on the administration to continue to engage the People's Republic of China in further bilateral talks on nuclear risk reduction and arms control, and to pursue new multilateral arms control efforts.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I have eight requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing and an organizational business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, to vote on the committee budget resolution.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet in open session during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 10 a.m., to hold an executive session.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct an organizational business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 11:15 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

N O T I C E

Incomplete record of Senate proceedings.

Today's Senate proceedings will be continued in the next issue of the Record.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate February 5, 2025:

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

ERIC TURNER, OF TEXAS, TO BE SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING OFFICER OSCAR GUEVARA

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Officer Oscar Guevara of the Frankfort Police Department for being awarded the 2024 Medal of Merit Citation for his bravery responding to a structure fire.

Once Officer Guevara and Officer Byrd arrived at the scene of the fire, they immediately took action to rescue a mentally disabled female trapped inside the burning structure. After finding the front door was unsafe to enter, they went to the rear of the structure and scaled a fence to reach the victim.

With Officer Guevara supporting Officer Byrd, they executed a critical rescue operation by reaching through a smoke-filled window to remove the trapped female from the building moments before the structure was completely engulfed.

Through successfully executing this critical rescue operation, Officer Guevara showcased great bravery in the face of distress. Their actions demonstrate the utmost professionalism and capability beyond day-to-day requirements.

Officer Guevara voluntarily performed extraordinary acts of bravery. His actions went above and beyond and have made him deserving of this fine honor. I am confident that Officer Guevara will continue to serve as an exemplary role model for law enforcement officers across the 1st Congressional District and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky.

RECOGNIZING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

HON. RILEY M. MOORE

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. MOORE of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, last week we celebrated Catholic Schools week, so today I rise to recognize the 24 phenomenal Catholic schools across our state of West Virginia.

Rooted in a shared Catholic faith, and committed to excellence, these schools consistently provide a high quality, Christ-centered education to Catholic and non-Catholic families across the Mountain State.

In West Virginia, our 24 Catholic schools serve thousands of students from the western border of Huntington to Wheeling and Weirton in the Northern Panhandle and Martinsburg in the Eastern Panhandle.

As a father of students currently attending one of these fine Catholic schools, it's my distinct honor to recognize the outstanding work our Catholic schools do for every child who enters their doors. These schools provide a challenging curriculum that fosters deep intellectual and spiritual growth, while also giving children the ability to recognize, develop, and share their God-given gifts and talents.

Additionally, I'm proud to have championed the Hope Scholarship program during my time as West Virginia State Treasurer, which has expanded access to these great institutions to every child, regardless of zip code or financial means.

It is truly a privilege to recognize West Virginia's Catholic schools, and I look forward to continuing to fight for Catholic schools here in the House of Representatives. May God continue to bless our Catholic schools in West Virginia.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I recently gave birth and am unable to travel to D.C. to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 28; and YEA on Roll Call No. 29.

HONORING BISHOP MARIANN EDGAR BUDDE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde, a steadfast leader, a courageous voice, and a beacon of moral clarity in our Nation. As the first woman to serve as the spiritual leader of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, Bishop Budde has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to faith, justice, and the common good.

Before her historic election in 2011, Bishop Budde served 18 years as the rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Minneapolis, where she ministered with compassion and conviction. Her academic journey includes a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Rochester and a master's degree from Virginia Theological Seminary. She is also a distinguished author of How We Learn to Be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith, Receiving Jesus: The Way of Love, and Gathering Up the Fragments: Preaching as Spiritual Practice.

Bishop Budde's impact extends far beyond the pulpit or the pages of her books. At a critical moment in our nation's history, she called upon the highest office in the land to remember the fundamental duty of leadership: to serve the people with integrity, humility, and compassion. Her words and actions have resonated within the church and in the halls of Congress and across the country, reminding us of the moral responsibility we bear toward one another.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and honoring Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde for her steadfast faith, fearless leadership, and unwavering commitment to our nation's well-being.

RECOGNIZING JESSICA WOOLDRIDGE

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jessica Wooldridge of the Frankfort Police Department for being awarded the 2024 Citizen Distinguished Achievement Award.

During a critical missing person case involving an elderly resident with dementia, Ms. Wooldridge voluntarily joined the search operation, demonstrating exceptional civic duty. While braving challenging terrain, she covered an extensive area on foot, showcasing remarkable determination. Her efforts led to the successful location of the missing person, directly saving a life. Ms. Wooldridge's actions embody the values of service, commitment, and community that the Frankfort Police Department holds dear.

Ms. Wooldridge's example serves as an inspiration, reminding us of the power of individual initiative in making a difference. Her dedication to public service makes her a role model for citizens in the community. I join with the Frankfort Police Department in thanking Ms. Wooldridge for her dedicated service and commitment. I am confident her actions will continue to inspire community members and law enforcement officers across the 1st Congressional District and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky.

CONGRATULATING ROBERT KEMP, SR. ON HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. LLOYD SMUCKER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Robert Kemp, Sr. on his 100th birthday and thank him for his service defending this Nation during World War II.

A veteran of the United States Navy, Kemp enlisted at 17 years old, against his parents' wishes and barely meeting the weight requirement. He served from 1942 until the end of the war in 1945. During his time in the Navy, Mr. Kemp fought in multiple theatres including the North Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Pacific. Kemp served as a quartermaster, assisting with the ships' navigation as well as the vessel's steering. He first served in the North Atlantic, protecting supply convoys to the United

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Kingdom. He then saw action in the Mediterranean, where his ship assisted in the invasion of Sicily. His final mission of the war was in the Pacific, part of a flotilla that participated in the invasion of the Philippines as well as the Battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. After the announcement of the Japanese surrender, his ship sailed into Tokyo Harbor to celebrate the end of the war.

Upon his return home, he settled in Baltimore, Maryland with his wife. However, he had the opportunity to travel the world as a radio technician for the Westinghouse Corporation. He spent time in Germany, Nigeria, and Iran before returning to Baltimore with his family. In his later years, Mi Kemp relocated to Delta, Pennsylvania where he lives with his son, Robert Kemp, Jr.

It is critical for us to recognize the bravery and sacrifice of members of the Greatest Generation that have helped us preserve the Nation that we so dearly love. Thanks to heroes like Mr. Kemp, that remind us to live life to the fullest and to serve others.

It is with great pride that I congratulate Mr. Kemp on a happy 100th birthday, and I sincerely thank him for his service to his country.

HONORING THE LIFE OF VERNIL MITCHELL

HON. JASMINE CROCKETT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Vernil Mitchell, a beloved nurse, philanthropist, wife, mother and constituent of the Texas' 30th District who poured love and joy into her family and her community. Born January 19, 1940, in Ashdown, Arkansas, Vernil was the oldest of thirteen children born to Prince Richard and Leatice Allen Richard. Her earthly journey ended January 20, 2025, in Dallas, the day after her 85th birthday. She spent much of her younger life with her Uncle Elbert and Aunt Ruth Bradley, and their six children.

From modest beginnings in southeast Arkansas, Vernil developed a strong work ethic and unwavering commitment to family. She broke new ground as the first in her family to go to college, enrolling at North Texas State College, known today as the University of North Texas, to pursue a degree in nursing. While attending Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, she met Charles Mitchell in Sunday school—a chance encounter that blossomed into a lifelong love. The couple welcomed their first child, Charles Jr., before moving to Washington D.C., where their second son, Keith, soon joined the family.

Vernil's career in nursing spanned over 40 years, serving as a Licensed Vocational Nurse in Washington, D.C., a visiting nurse with the Visiting Nurses Association in the Bronx, New York City, and helping her husband Charles open his own medical practice. Charles was one of Dallas' first black orthopedic surgeons, and Vernil served as the primary nurse in his orthopedic practice. They had a shared passion for travel, the arts, tennis, skiing, gardening, cooking and most importantly being with family.

Mrs. Mitchell's caring nature went beyond her patients. She worked tirelessly to support the next generation of African American leaders. In Dallas, Vernil supported numerous charitable activities and was incredibly active in the community. She was a charter member of the Dallas chapter of the Continental Societies, Inc., and was an active member of the Dallas chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. She was an active member of Friendship-West Baptist Church.

We ought to look to Vernil's commitment to uplifting others as a true example of devotion to service. Mr. Speaker, I send my sincerest condolences to her family, her friends, her former colleagues, and the entire Oak Cliff community. May her legacy live on through the people she loved.

RECOGNIZING SERGEANT CRAIG GONZALEZ

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sergeant Craig Gonzalez of the Frankfort Police Department on being awarded the 2024 Medal of Valor for his bravery demonstrated while responding to a critical situation within Franklin County.

Without regard for his own safety, Sergeant Gonzalez played a crucial role in successfully resolving a life-threatening situation. Through his actions and support in the face of clear and obvious peril, Sergeant Gonzalez exemplified the highest standards of law enforcement professionalism and demonstrated extraordinary commitment to preserving human life.

His teamwork and decisive intervention reflected greatly upon himself and upheld the finest traditions of the Frankfort Police Department. Sergeant Gonzalez has earned the respect and support of Franklin County. Sergeant Gonzalez voluntarily performed extraordinary acts of bravery. His actions went above and beyond and have made him deserving of this fine honor. I am confident that Sergeant Gonzalez will continue to serve as an exemplary role model for law enforcement officers across the 1st Congressional District and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky.

HONORING THE CAREER AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF DR. RON DANIELS

HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Ron Daniels is the President of the Institute of the Black World 21st Century and Founder of the Haiti Support Project. Dr. Daniels is a longtime advocate for the African diaspora in the U.S. and a leading figure in the field of Africana studies.

As a Distinguished Professor of history, political, science and Pan African studies, he has dedicated his career to preparing the next generation of leaders to lead in these vital fields.

As the Deputy Campaign Manager for my father, Reverend Jesse Jackson's 1988 Presidential campaign, Dr. Daniels worked tirelessly to advance the vital issues and causes my father has advocated for decades. Dr. Daniels ran as an independent candidate for President in 1992 as an extension of his commitment to fulfilling the vision and mission of the Rainbow/PUSH organization.

Dr. Daniels has been a leading figure in some of the most significant social and political movements over the last six decades, including Freedom Inc. in Youngstown, Ohio; the African Liberation Day Support Committee, which spawned the first African Liberation Day (ALD) USA; the National Black Political Assembly (NBPA); National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP); and the African American Progressive Action Network (AAPAN). Dr. Daniels played a key role in the formation of the National African American Leadership Summit (NAALS), and he was a member of the Executive Council of the National Organizing Committee of the historic Million Man March and Day of Absence in 1995 and the Millions More Movement in 2005. He currently serves as Convener of the National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC), which has emerged a driving force in the U.S. and global reparations movements.

Dr. Ron Daniel's work and career has advanced the interests of the African Diaspora in the U.S. and helped to enable Continental Africans, Afro-Caribbeans and Afro-Latinos to gain greater representation and recognition for their contributions in our Nation's history.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing his career and achievements.

APPRECIATING JOHN DAVID BAKER

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, South Carolinians will always be grateful and appreciative for the life of John David Baker. The following obituary from the program of a Service Celebrating the Life of John David Baker of February 4, 2025, assisted by Shives Funeral Home, so thoughtfully highlights his achievements for the community.

As the personal Congressman for John, and Republican Co-Chairman of the Israel Caucus, I especially appreciate his devotion with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee for the existence of Israel. John promoted AIPAC continuing the family tradition of his father David who was so appreciated by my predecessor, Armed Services Committee Chairman, Floyd Spence.

John David Baker, a lifelong Columbia resident, devoted philanthropist, and visionary leader in business and community service, passed away on February 2, 2025, at the age of 69 due to complications from Parkinson's disease. His life was defined by an unwavering commitment to family, faith, and the city he loved. He leaves behind an extraordinary legacy of leadership, generosity, and dedication to improving the lives of others.

Born in Columbia, South Carolina, on July 5, 1955, John was the son of JoAnn and David Baker and one of five siblings. He attended the University of South Florida before earning a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Finance from the University of

South Carolina in 1977. Following in his father's footsteps, John spent over four decades shaping Columbia's landscape as a Managing Partner of Baker Commercial Properties (formerly Baker & Baker), where he played a pivotal role in the city's economic and commercial development until his retirement in 2021.

John's true passion, however, was giving back. His commitment to philanthropy started early; in high school, he started volunteering for the March of Dimes and served as Teenage Chair for the Richland County chapter. What began as collecting donations on Columbia street corners evolved into a lifetime of leadership, earning him the Elaine Whitelaw Volunteer Service Award in 2005, the highest honor bestowed by the March of Dimes.

John was a driving force behind major initiatives in education, literacy, healthcare, and Jewish causes. He served two terms as Chairman of the Richland County Public Library Board of Trustees, and following his tenure, RCPL was named Library of the Year (2001) by the American Library Association. In 1999, he founded Step Into Reading, a statewide effort that provided more than 250,000 books to children in need, and he was deeply involved with the Richland County Public Library Foundation, the Richland School District Two Foundation, and the Forest Lake Educational Foundation.

His humanitarian efforts extended through his work with United Way of the Midlands, where he served as Chairman in 2003 and was named Humanitarian of the Year in 2011 for his leadership in early childhood education. He was also involved in the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the American Cancer Society, and the American Heart Association.

John's civic engagement in Columbia included leadership roles with the Lexington Medical Center Foundation, the Township Auditorium Board of Trustees, the Federation Center of the Blind, the South Carolina Council on Economic Education, the Columbia Action Council, Columbia Jaycees, Columbia Sertoma Club, and the Central Carolina Community Foundation Board.

John's efforts were recognized with South Carolina's highest civilian honor, the Order of the Palmetto in 2002.

His advocacy for Israel was equally significant. He served on the National Campaign Cabinet for Israel Bonds, leading South Carolina's first-ever $10 million Israel bond purchase in 2002 and securing millions more in subsequent years. John was honored with the Ben Gurion Award (2002) and Yitzhak Rabin Award (2018) from Israel Bonds. He also served on the National Council of the Amencan Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

John was a pillar of Columbia's Jewish community, serving as President of Tree of Life Congregation, an active member of Beth Shalom Synagogue, and an early supporter of Chabad of South Carolina and the Columbia Jewish Day School. He served as Columbia Community Co-Chair of the Jewish National Fund and was active in Jewish Federations of North America.

Anyone who met John knew that his love of baseball and jazz music were as much a part of him as his philanthropic work. In the mid-1980's, he helped organize the annual trip by the Atlanta Braves Caravan where players would visit children in area hospitals and raise money for local charities. A devoted Braves fan and avid collector of baseball memorabilia, he was a longtime supporter of the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, where a donated portrait of his dear friend, Hall of Fame pitcher Phil Niekro, remains on display. His passion for jazz music led him to become a radio DJ later in life, hosting ''Jazz in the City with John Baker'' on 92.1 FM, where he shared his deep knowledge and appreciation for the genre with listeners across the Midlands.

In 2006, John was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, yet he never let it diminish his spirit, humor, or generosity. He continued working, mentoring, and giving back, inspiring all who knew him with his resilience.

John is survived by his wife of 34 years, Marcie Stern Baker, and their daughter, Gabbi Baker, of New York. He is also survived by his siblings Kenny Baker (Sharon), Frank Baker (Melanie), and Dale Baker, his sister- and brother-in-law Beryle and Pierre Jaffe, and many beloved nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, JoAnn and David Baker, and his sister, Debbie Brookshire.

John's family wishes to express their deep gratitude to his longtime caregivers: John House, Leonard Bailey, Marvin Goodly, Darian Moorer, Chuck Baltimore, and John Hartley, whose unwavering support brought him comfort and dignity in his final years.

John's impact on Columbia and beyond will be felt for generations; not only in the buildings he developed, the institutions he supported, and the programs he helped build, but in the countless lives he touched through his kindness, generosity, and unwavering belief in the power of giving back.

HONORING CHIEF WILLIAM D. LEIGHTY'S SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. LLOYD SMUCKER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and give thanks to William D. Leighty for his 36 years in law enforcement, selflessly serving his community.

Lancaster native William Leighty has served in law enforcement across the county. Beginning his career at the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office, he then served as a police officer with New Holland Borough and East Cocalico Township. In 1999, William Leighty became the Chief of Police of Clay Township, where he oversaw the merger of three police departments into the Northern Lancaster County Regional Police Department.

In 2017, Chief Leighty returned to New Holland law enforcement as their Chief of Police. During his tenure, he built positive community relationships through his partnerships with local nonprofits and by organizing events like National Night Out.

Once again, I want to thank Chief Leighty for his invaluable career serving and protecting Lancaster County communities. I wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement.

RECOGNIZING OFFICER MAURICE BYRD

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Officer Maurice Byrd of the Frankfort Police Department for being awarded the 2024 Medal of Merit Citation for his bravery while responding to a structure fire.

Once Officer Byrd and Officer Guevara arrived at the scene of the fire, they immediately took action to rescue a mentally disabled female trapped inside the burning structure. After finding the front door was unsafe to enter, they went to the rear of the structure and scaled a fence to reach the victim. With Officer Guevara supporting Officer Byrd, they executed a critical rescue operation by reaching through a smoke-filled window to remove the trapped female from the building moments before the structure was completely engulfed. Through successfully executing this critical rescue operation, Officer Byrd showcased great bravery in the face of distress. Their actions demonstrate the utmost professionalism and capability beyond day-to-day requirements.

Officer Byrd voluntarily performed extraordinary acts of bravery. His actions went above and beyond have made him deserving of this fine honor. I am confident that Officer Byrd will continue to serve as an exemplary role model for law enforcement officers across the 1st Congressional District and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF JANA BRIGHT MCGINNIS

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of Jana McGinnis as Head Coach for the Jacksonville State University softball team.

Jana, a native of Spring Garden, Alabama, spent 31 years as the head coach of the Jax State softball team. She retired with a 1,038–607 career and the all-time 30th most wins among Division I coaches. That record number wins are the eighth-most-all-time by a Division I coach at the same institution and give her more games won than any coach in the university's history. Jana was a two-time All-Gulf South Conference guard in basketball at Jax State. She holds the school's career and single season assists records. After graduation, she started coaching at Cherokee County High School and within two years brought home a state title.

In 1994, she took over as head coach of the softball team at Jax State winning the Trans America Athletic Conference title in her third season and advanced to the 1996 NCAA Regional. It was the first conference title for Jax State at the Division I level in any sport.

Jana spent most of her career in the Ohio Valley Conference winning regular season or tournament championships in 11 of her 17 seasons in OVC and won both in the same season three times. She has also been named OVC Coach of the Year, a conference-record six times. The Jacksonville State University softball complex has been named Jana McGinnis Field to recognize her success over the years.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Jana on her retirement and thanking her for her dedication and service to Jacksonville State. I congratulate Jana.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF JEFF HILBORN

HON. PETE STAUBER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my congratulations to an extraordinary citizen from Minnesota's 8th Congressional district. After 45 years in the broadcasting business, Jeff Hilborn is retiring.

Jeff spent the first 22 years of his career in Kansas and South Dakota before making the Brainerd Lakes Area his home in 1992. Here in Brainerd, Jeff served in several management roles at KLIZ-FM The Power Loon before becoming the manager of six radio station groups for Hubbard Broadcasting.

Jeff and his wife Michelle raised their three children in Brainerd and have been integral members of their community for the last 32 years.

Jeff has dedicated himself to the people of the Brainerd Lakes Area by serving on the Board of Directors for the Brainerd Sports Boosters and the Sunrise Sertoma Club.

He also served as a committee member for the Brainerd Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce ''Destination Downtown'' initiative and worked on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Broadcasters Association.

Jeff is retiring but his legacy will not soon be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to work alongside him.

On behalf of the 8th Congressional District of Minnesota, I would like to thank Jeff for his commitment to our community and congratulate him on a job well done.

HONORING FORT GRATIOT TOWNSHIP FIRE CHIEF MICHAEL FRONIMOS

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Ms. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with deep admiration and respect to honor Chief Michael F. Fronimos, a dedicated public servant who has devoted over 35 years to the firefighting profession across multiple states. As we celebrate his first year as Fire Chief of the Fort Gratiot Charter Township Fire Department, it is fitting to reflect on his transformative leadership, steadfast service, and remarkable contributions to public safety and community well-being.

Chief Fronimos's first year as Fire Chief has been nothing short of extraordinary. He has turned around the morale of the Department, increasing volunteer staffing by nearly 50 percent, and has implemented groundbreaking initiatives to ensure the safety and efficiency of his team. Under his leadership, the Department acquired new life safety equipment and overhauled an aging apparatus fleet to meet NFPA guidelines, drastically improving readiness and compliance. Chief Fronimos has also introduced a new incident management system and scene accountability program, setting a higher standard for firefighter safety and reducing risks of injuries and line-of-duty deaths.

His efforts to enhance training, promote mental health, and foster a positive work environment have created a culture of excellence within the Department. Beyond his internal impact, Chief Fronimos has strengthened Fort Gratiot's community risk reduction efforts and cultivated partnerships with countywide stakeholders, garnering recognition from federal agencies. His record-breaking open house drew unprecedented community engagement, showcasing his commitment to involving and inspiring the public.

Chief Fronimos's influence extends far beyond his Department. Twice elected as President of the National Information Officers Association, he has demonstrated exemplary leadership on a national level, sharing his expertise and advocating for transparency, communication, and collaboration in public safety.

Beyond his professional achievements, Chief Fronimos is a devoted father to his incredible young son, Mickey. His dedication to his family, his integrity, and his unwavering commitment to service are the foundations of his life.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Michael F. Fronimos's 35 years of service are a testament to his extraordinary dedication, innovation, and leadership. His first year as Fire Chief has profoundly transformed the Fort Gratiot Charter Township Fire Department and strengthened the community it serves.

RECOGNIZING MCCRACKEN COUNTY BICENTENNIAL

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize McCracken County on the celebration of their Bicentennial. McCracken County is an integral part of Kentucky's 1st Congressional District, full of rich history and wonderful people. McCracken County, along with the City of Paducah, has been central to Western Kentucky's identity and growth for two centuries.

McCracken County has a proud history of contributing to the communities' rich economic, artistic, and cultural development.

The waterways of McCracken County play a pivotal role in the county's story, serving as a strategic hub for inland waterway industries. They continue to attract businesses to contribute significantly to local revenue through job creation, tourism, and business operations.

I am proud to represent the good people of McCracken County in Congress and look forward to seeing even more prosperous years to come.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF COLONEL ANTHONY J. CLOUD

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of Colonel Anthony J. Cloud. Colonel Cloud assumed the duties of Chief of Staff, Alabama Army National Guard on January 15, 2023. In his previous assignment Colonel Cloud served as the Deputy Chief of Staff Operations, Joint Force Headquarters.

Colonel Cloud began his military career as a Combat Engineer in the Alabama Army National Guard. Colonel Cloud received his commission in 1996 from the Alabama Military Academy, Officer Candidate School. Commissioned as an Engineer Officer, Colonel Cloud held various leadership and staff positions that made a significant impact on the ALARNG Engineer and Chemical community. He is a graduate of the Engineer Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, The Chemical Advanced Course, Airborne School, the Command and General Staff College and the U.S Army War College. Command assignments include: Commander, HHD, 145th Chemical Battalion, 31st Chemical Brigade, ALARNG, Commander, 151st Chemical Battalion, 31st Chemical Brigade, ALARNG and Commander 31st Chemical Brigade.

Key staff assignments include Deputy Chief of Staff Personnel ALARNG, Deputy G3 ALARNG, Executive Officer/Administrative Officer for the 62nd Troop Command, Plans, Programs, and Environmental Division Chief, and Mobilization Plans Officer, Joint Force Headquarters; Engineer Platoon Leader, Battalion Operations Officer, 145th Engineer Battalion, 31st Armored Brigade, ALARNG; Executive Officer and TAC Officer in 2nd Battalion (Officer Candidate School), 200th Regiment, ALARNG; Executive Officer, 1203rd Engineer Battalion, 20th Engineer Brigade, Iraq.

Colonel Cloud holds a B.A. in Marketing from the University of Alabama and a Masters of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Commendation Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Achievement Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, Army National Guard Components Achievement Medal with 2 Bronze Leaf Clusters, National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Star Device, Iraq Campaign Medal with Bronze Star Device, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Silver Hourglass Device and Mobilization Device, Army Service Ribbon, Army Overseas Service Ribbon, Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon, Alabama National Guard Distinguished Service Ribbon, Alabama National Guard Commendation Ribbon, Alabama National Guard Veterans Service Ribbon with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Alabama National Guard National Emergency Service Ribbon with 9-11 Device, Alabama Special Service Ribbon, Alabama National Guard Faithful Service Medal with 1 Silver and 2 Bronze St. Andrews Cross Devises, Alabama National Guard Basic Training Ribbon, and the Parachutist Badge.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Colonel Cloud, and thanking him for his service. Congratulations.

HONORING COMMANDER EUNICE BUTTS

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History month with gratitude for the life of Commander Eunice Butts, her service to our country and Tampa Bay community. Commander Butts volunteered to serve America and shattered glass ceilings as an African American woman in the U.S. Air Force and National Guard during the Vietnam War. She served with courage, empathy and a love of country that continues to drive her work with service members to this day.

Born and raised in Tampa, Ms. Butts graduated from Middleton High School and was the first student to sing opera. Exploring her talent for singing and performing, she continued her education at Gibbs Junior College with a scholarship for music.

Following the first deployment of United States ground troops in Vietnam in 1965, Ms. Butts describes walking down the street and seeing the infamous ''I want you'' war poster that would effectively change the course of her life and begin her service epoch. Ms. Butts always dreamed of helping and opening doors for others, aware of the oppression that came before her and continued during her early life. Immediately walking in the recruitment center and enlisting in the U.S. Air Force, Ms. Butts knew she was ready to patriotically serve her country and uphold the legacy of Black women in the military. Her instinct to serve rang true and 16 years later, Ms. Butts left active duty and settled in Montgomery, Alabama.

Ms. Butts is the proud mother of two sons and a daughter, Edward, Robert and Franjernera. She is also the grandmother of three children, Benjamin, Zori and Latrice.

As a true public servant, Ms. Butts sought other ways to serve her country and found that the Air Force Reserves were looking for Black women. She continued her service in the Air Force Reserves, Alabama National Guard and in the American Legion for an additional 25 years.

Ms. Butts' beliefs were rooted in the sentiment of giving and showing love to all, especially unsung heroes. In the 1970s, Ms. Butts returned to Tampa where she served in the American Legion with World War II Veteran Willie Mae Williams, where they evangelized the pivotal role that women played in the military. When Ms. Williams passed, Ms. Butts answered the call of letting the world know the untold story of female veterans. Ms. Butts moved through the ranks of the American Legion and is the first African American female to serve as the American Legion Department State of Florida Commander.

Continuing to heal the wounds of Vietnam veterans, Ms. Butts believes that every day, Americans should pray and take under their wings, all the veterans who have served in our military. She often reminded her peers that many have been wounded, if not mentally, then physically, or both. Ms. Butts gave the gift of compassion to her partners in veteran service organizations and preached that service members need our shoulders to lean on for support and love.

Commander Butts bravely volunteered to fight and defend a country that did not always protect and defend Black women, yet she never wavered in her full devotion to America and liberty and justice for all. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the patriotic Tampa Bay community, I thank Eunice Butts for her 39 and counting years of work to her fellow service members, veterans and their loved ones. Joining the legacy of women who inspired her, Ms. Butts life's work will be a foundation and benefaction for young, Black women everywhere, especially those who choose to defend and protect our Nation. She has effectively nurtured and opened doors for her fellow service members all while passing on the valiant stories of female veterans who our Nation will be forever grateful for.

HONORING THE LIFETIME SERVICE OF JAMES SHORE AND HIS BATTLE WITH CANCER

HON. ADDISON P. McDOWELL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. McDOWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a man who has committed his life to public service and who deserves our appreciation and support.

For more than three decades, James Shore has served his country and his community. His service began in 1989 when he enlisted with the United States Marine Corps. For four years, James served in some of the most challenging and dangerous regions in the world: from Somalia in the Horn of Africa to the Middle East during Operation Desert Storm. His time in the Marine Corps was recognized with numerous awards for his bravery, leadership, and dedication.

James completed his military service in 1993, but his service to his community was just beginning. He started a career in law enforcement, where he earned recognition for his commitment to the safety of his community and the well-being of his colleagues. He took a leadership role in the Fraternal Order of Police by helping to establish the Davidson County Lodge 97, where he served as President until 2020.

In 2020, James again demonstrated his commitment to public service when he took a seat on the Davidson County Commission. As a County Commissioner, he made significant contributions to the county's justice and public safety while expanding his public service by taking part in the National Association of Counties and the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.

In 2023, James was honored with the M.H. ''Jack'' Brock Outstanding County Commissioner Award for spearheading Operation Green Light for Veterans, an initiative to raise awareness and support for veterans in North Carolina.

In October 2024, James was diagnosed with cancer, and he is expected to complete his treatment on February 6, 2025. Throughout this fight, James has inspired others with his perseverance and commitment to his family and his community. I thank James for his three decades of service. My thoughts and prayers are with him as he navigates this battle against cancer.

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT TODD SMITHER

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lieutenant Todd Smither of the Frankfort Police Department for being awarded the 2024 Medal of Valor for his bravery demonstrated while responding to a critical situation within Franklin County.

During a high-risk pursuit with an armed suspect who had barricaded himself in a vehicle following a multi-jurisdictional pursuit, Lieutenant Smither demonstrated excellent leadership by quickly developing and implementing a tactical plan to resolve the situation effectively. Additionally, along with Sergeant Presley, they worked to de-escalate a potentially lethal situation successfully.

Under Lieutenant Smither's directions, his fellow officers were able to provide adequate support, which led to safeguarding human life. His actions and exceptional teamwork skills allowed for a peaceful resolution for all involved.

Lieutenant Smither voluntarily performed extraordinary acts of bravery. His actions went above and beyond and have made him deserving of this fine honor. I am confident that Lieutenant Smither will continue to serve as an exemplary role model for law enforcement officers across the 1st Congressional District and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky.

HONORING HAMILTON COUNTY SHERIFF DEPUTY CHIEF MARK HOOPER

HON. CHARLES J. "CHUCK" FLEISCHMANN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I use today to commemorate and recognize Hamilton County Sheriff Deputy Chief Mark Hooper on his retirement on February 18, 2025.

Deputy Chief of Law Enforcement Mark Hooper was officially promoted to the rank of Deputy Chief on June 25, 2024. With forty years of service at the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, Deputy Chief Hooper oversees the day-to-day operations of Law Enforcement Services which include Uniformed Services, Investigative Services, Judicial Security Services, School Resource Deputy Unit, and Special Operations.

Throughout his notable career, Chief Hooper has held roles in Uniformed Services, Investigative Services, and Narcotics and Special Investigations, rising from Patrol Deputy to Captain. Notable achievements include founding the nationally recognized Pharmacy Alert Program and leading initiatives like the integration and expansion of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) throughout the department's operations. In 2016, he oversaw the training and the deployment of Naloxone to Hamilton County deputies, which was one of the first agencies in Tennessee to provide this capability. In 2017, he led the initiative in tracking heroin and fentanyl overdoses in Hamilton County and the pursuit and prosecution of traffickers.

Since his promotion to Captain in 2018, Chief Hooper has been a driving force in the adoption of new technology within the Sheriff's Office. He has championed the use of body-worn cameras, data analytics, the creation of our Crime Intelligence and Analyst Unit (CIAU), and enhanced communication systems.

Born and raised in Whitwell, Tennessee, Chief Hooper is a 2014 graduate of the University of Tennessee Southern Command & Leadership Academy. He is married to Mrs. Stacy Enloe Hooper and together they have a son, Reeves.

I am honored to recognize Chief Hooper for his many years of dedicated service to the residents of Hamilton County, Tennessee and congratulate him on his retirement.

HONORING CARRIE HURST

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month to celebrate a change agent, community leader and lifelong Tampa Bay advocate, Carrie Jean Lofton Hurst.

Mrs. Hurst was born and raised in Tampa, Florida, as the youngest of six children. She graduated from Tampa Bay Technical High School in 1977, where she met Robert Hurst, Sr. Afterwards, they became engaged but pursued different paths—Mrs. Hurst's mother had always championed education as a priority, so Mrs. Hurst attended Hillsborough Community College (HCC) and Mr. Hurst started his military career. She worked in the library as a student assistant while pursuing her associate's degree, which she earned in 1979.

Mrs. Hurst delayed completing her university studies to marry and join her husband on assignment.

Soon after relocating and starting a family, Mrs. Hurst started at the library on base at Fort Stewart, Georgia, where they were stationed. She fell in love with the library and learned the skills she needed. Her husband was then reassigned overseas, and she went home to Tampa to await his return.

Back in Tampa, she obtained employment again at HCC's library, where she remained for 18 years as a library technical assistant. During her time there, her love of the work rekindled her desire to further her education, so she worked full-time by day and attended classes by night. She completed her bachelor's degree in 1998 from St. Leo University and then earned her master's degree with honors in 2000 from the University of South Florida.

Mrs. Hurst started her career at Tampa Hillsborough Public Library in 2000 at the 78th Street Library then at the Ybor City Branch Library. In 2008, she became branch manager of the Seminole Heights Library and guided the modernization of the popular library. In 2015, Mrs. Hurst came back to the Ybor City location to now lead it as the new Robert W. Saunders, Sr. Library, named after a prominent Civil Rights leader.

Being selected to open and lead this library would become Mrs. Hurst's greatest professional challenge and role, as this is no ordinary library. The Robert W. Saunders, Sr. Public Library is one of only two African American research libraries in the entire state of Florida. This library is near historical Central Avenue that once served as the hub of Black businesses, Black entertainment and culture for more than 100 years. The library encompasses a visual focus and collection focused on African American life and history. Mrs. Hurst was instrumental in developing initiatives that support access to information and history of this culture and history. She developed community presentations and collaborations, and her efforts were supported by the Library Administration, the Ada T. Payne Friends of the Urban Libraries, the Robert Saunders Foundation and community partners and participants.

"Free and accessible information is a human right and a necessary part of the pathway to equality." Mrs. Hurst yearns to share her knowledge and experience with others. She admires the spirit of service and egalitarianism inherent in librarianship. Librarians seek challenges and continue learning for themselves, to promote and enable the acquisition of knowledge of others and uphold libraries as institutions for betterment, all the things that Mrs. Hurst dedicated herself to.

Libraries have continued to evolve in the age of technology and in the face of the rapid change in the way that information is collected, distributed and preserved. It was compelling to her that access to information and technology could help lay the cultural groundwork for creating social change. Mrs. Hurst embraced this change and mobilized within her community, bringing members of her community to the library for informational and cultural activities. Mrs. Hurst sought to work in urban libraries where she could identify, engage and motivate people wherever they were in their lives. Her desire to assist, encourage and inspire others to use the resources of the library to rise above their circumstances helped to create a strong network of partnerships to touch and transform lives of many.

Mrs. Hurst is also a Charter Member of the Tampa Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., a Member of the NAACP Hillsborough County branch and the Beta Phi Mu, International Library Honor Society. In her retirement, she continues to assist in creating community initiatives and she motivates others by reminding them to: "Keep striving, reach for your dreams. It's all attainable. Just put one foot in front of the other."

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, I am honored to recognize the outstanding accomplishments, leadership and service of Mrs. Carrie Jean Lofton Hurst, who stands as a shining example of the tremendous impact of hard work, nurturing others and providing service to the community to encourage others to reach their highest potential.

RECOGNIZING THE SLCC CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

HON. BURGESS OWENS

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding achievements of the Salt Lake Community College Cross Country Program—a testament to the determination, resilience, and spirit of Utah's student-athletes.

In Richmond, Virginia, at the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Cross Country Championships, the SLCC Bruins made history by sweeping both the men's and women's races, capturing national titles on both sides. This remarkable accomplishment speaks to the extraordinary talent and dedication of the student-athletes and coaching staff.

The women's team claimed its second consecutive national championship, dominating the field and finishing 46 points ahead of their closest competitors. Their impressive victory continued just two days later, as they claimed first place in the NJCAA Half Marathon National Championship—a historic feat for SLCC and a significant milestone in women's athletics at the college.

On the men's side, the Bruins secured second place in the NJCAA Half Marathon National Championship, demonstrating their competitive edge and depth of talent.

These achievements would not have been possible without the leadership of Head Coach Isaac Wood, who was named NJCAA National Coach of the Year, along with Assistant Coaches Kelsey Gilbert, Alden Carlson, and Tom Gruenewald. Athletic Director Kevin Dustin has also been instrumental in fostering a culture of excellence at SLCC.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee and a former athlete myself, I know firsthand the importance of athletic programs in shaping character and building future leaders. The success of the Salt Lake Community College Cross Country Program is not just a win for Utah, but an inspiration for aspiring athletes everywhere.

I applaud the SLCC Cross Country Program for their extraordinary accomplishments, and I look forward to seeing their continued success in the years to come. Their hard work, resilience, and sportsmanship embody the best of what it means to be a Bruin.

RECOGNIZING OFFICER BYRON REDMON

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Officer Byron Redmon of the Frankfort Police Department on being awarded the 2024 Medal of Valor for his bravery demonstrated while responding to a critical situation within Franklin County.

During a high-risk pursuit with an armed suspect who had barricaded himself in a vehicle following a multi-jurisdictional pursuit, Officer Redmon provided critical tactical support throughout the duration of the event, allowing for a synchronized response that led to the suspect's safe apprehension.

Throughout this critical situation, Officer Redmon provided crucial support contributing to the resolution. His actions and exceptional teamwork skills allowed for a peaceful resolution for all involved.

Officer Redmon voluntarily performed extraordinary acts of bravery. His actions went above and beyond and have made him deserving of this fine honor. I am confident that

Officer Redmon will continue to serve as an exemplary role model for law enforcement officers across the 1st Congressional District and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WORDS MATTER FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Words Matter for the District of Columbia Courts Act, which would remove the term ''retarded'' from Title 11 of the District of Columbia Code and replace it with more appropriate and respectful terms. Last Congress, the Senate passed this bill by unanimous consent. Senators JERRY MORAN and GARY PETERS are introducing the companion bill.

Removing the term from the law has bipartisan support. In 2010, Congress removed several instances of the term from federal law by passing Rosa's Law (P.L. 111–256). Last Congress, I joined Republican and Democratic colleagues in introducing the Words Matter Act, which would remove several more instances of the term from federal law.

The term is used three times in Title 11 of the D.C. Code, and, under the D.C. Home Rule Act, only Congress can amend Title 11 of the D.C. Code.

There was a time when the term was a clinical term, but in more recent years, it has become a slur used against people with intellectual disabilities. Words indisputably matter, and I know our country is better than keeping such language in our law.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to attend votes as I was under the weather. Due to my absence, I was not present to vote on Roll Call No. 28 and Roll Call No. 29.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No 28. I fully support the Alaska Native corporations to exercise self-governance over their lands.

Additionally, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 29. I support programs that provide states assistance to control and/or eradicate invasive species which wreak havoc on local ecosystems.

HONORING MR. GLENN R. BLANCHETTE

HON. SUHAS SUBRAMANYAM

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Mr. Glenn R. Blanchette. Originally from Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Mr. Blanchette joined the U.S. Army after graduating from the University of Rhode Island. After more than 20 years of honorable service, he retired as a Major in 2007 and began his next career with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

As the Regional Administrator for the National Capital Region, Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response, he has been at the forefront of emergency responses for multiple category four and five hurricanes and catastrophic earthquakes, both in the United States and internationally, for almost two decades.

Not only was Mr. Blanchett a leader during natural disasters, but he displayed untiring dedication to the U.S. Congress for five Presidential Inaugurations, fifteen Lying in State and Lying in Honor ceremonies, more than fifty Congressional Gold Medal ceremonies, eighteen State Of The Union Addresses, twenty-three Joint Meetings of Congress, concerts, protests, and countless impromptu requests directly supporting the Office of Attending Physician to the U.S. Congress, and the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives.

No matter whether it was early morning or late evening, a weekend or a holiday, rainy or bitterly cold, Mr. Blanchett orchestrated and supervised the delivery of tents, generators, equipment, and supplies for the treatment of heat injuries, traumatic injuries, Advance Cardiac Life Support responses, and patient evacuations, in direct support of the U.S. Congress.

Regardless of world events, Mr. Blanchette's ''What do you need?'' and ''We are here for you'' attitude made the impossible, possible. He assembled teams of hundreds of elite medical professionals from all over the country to support tens of thousands of guests, dignitaries, security forces, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Associate Justices and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, the Vice President and President of the United States, the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives during National Special Security Events in the U.S. Capitol.

Today I would like to honor Mr. Blanchette and thank him for his decades of service to our country both in the U.S. Army and with the Department of Health and Human Services, and I wish him well in his retirement.

RECOGNIZING OFFICER ANDREW HUMPHRIES

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Officer Andrew Humphries of the Frankfort Police Department on being awarded the 2024 Medal of Valor for his bravery demonstrated while responding to a critical situation within Franklin County.

During a high-risk pursuit with an armed suspect who had barricaded himself in a vehicle following a multi-jurisdictional pursuit, Officer Humphries, responding to Lieutenant Smither's direction, approached the barricaded vehicle and successfully deployed chemical munitions, forcing the suspect to exit.

Officer Humphries demonstrated excellent courage and tactical precision through his response. He played a vital role in ensuring this potentially lethal situation was resolved successfully.

Officer Humphries voluntarily performed extraordinary acts of bravery. His actions went above and beyond and have made him deserving of this fine honor. I am confident that Officer Humphries will continue to serve as an exemplary role model for law enforcement officers across the 1st Congressional District and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, February 6, 2025 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

FEBRUARY 11

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the Semi-annual Monetary Policy Report to the Congress.

SH–216

2:30 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

Closed business meeting to consider pending intelligence matters; to be immediately followed by a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.

SH–219

FEBRUARY 12

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Business meeting to consider S. 298, to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to relocate 30 percent of the employees assigned to headquarters to duty stations outside the Washington metropolitan area, S. 300, to improve accountability in the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, S. 371, to require certain reports on small business disaster assistance to be published on the website of the Small Business Administration, and committee rules for the 119th Congress.

SR–428A

10 a.m.
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine the Arctic and Greenland's geostrategic importance to U.S. interests.
SR–253
Committee on Environment and Public Works
To hold hearings to examine advancing carbon capture, utilization and sequestration technologies and ensuring effective implementation of the USE IT Act.
SD–406
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Lori Chavez-DeRemer, of Oregon, to be Secretary of Labor.
SD–G50
10:15 a.m.
Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine pending nominations.
SD–226
2:30 p.m.
Committee on Indian Affairs
To hold an oversight hearing to examine Native communities' priorities for the 119th Congress.
SD–628
Select Committee on Intelligence
To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.
SH–219
3:30 p.m.
Special Committee on Aging
To hold hearings to examine optimizing longevity, focusing on from research to action.
SD–106

FEBRUARY 13

10 a.m.
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Business meeting to consider an original resolution authorizing expenditures by the committee during the 119th Congress; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine eliminating waste by the foreign aid bureaucracy.
SD–342

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate confirmed the nomination of Eric Turner, of Texas, to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S601–S674

Measures Introduced: Thirty-seven bills and seven resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 402–438, S.J. Res. 14–15, and S. Res. 57–61. **Pages S666–67**

Measures Reported:

S. Res. 57, authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

S. Res. 58, authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

S. Res. 59, authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

S. Res. 60, authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Indian Affairs.

S. 347, to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to reauthorize brownfields revitalization funding.

S. 351, to establish a pilot grant program to improve recycling accessibility, to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to carry out certain activities to collect and disseminate data on recycling and composting programs in the United States. **Pages S665–66**

Vought Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget. **Pages S606, S606–61**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 53 yeas to 47 nays (Vote No. EX. 36), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S606**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 55 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. EX. 35), Eric Turner, of Texas, to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. **Pages S601–06**

Messages from the House: **Page S665**

Measures Referred: **Page S665**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S666**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S667–68**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S668–74**

Additional Statements: **Page S665**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S674**

Quorum Calls: One quorum call was taken today. (Total—3) **Page S606**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—36) **Pages S605–06**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10:30 a.m., and continued in evening session.

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Committee ordered favorably reported an original resolution (S. Res. 57) authorizing expenditures by the committee during the 119th Congress, and adopted its rules of procedure for the 119th Congress.

Also, committee announced the following subcommittee assignments:

Subcommittee on Commodities, Derivatives, Risk Management, and Trade: Senators Hyde-Smith (Chair), Grassley, Moran, McConnell, Tuberville, Thune, Booker, Durbin, Schiff, Fetterman, and Slotkin.

Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Credit: Senators Ernst (Chair), Tuberville, Grassley, Fischer, Moran, McConnell, Welch, Smith, Bennet, Warnock, and Luján.

Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry, Natural Resources, and Biotechnology: Senators Marshall (Chair),

Justice, Hoeven, Thune, Ernst, Hyde-Smith, Bennet, Lujan, Warnock, Welch, and Schiff.

Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Organics, and Research: Senators McConnell (Chair), Marshall, Hoeven, Tuberville, Justice, Grassley, Lujan, Warnock, Fetterman, Smith, and Booker.

Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, Poultry, and Food Safety: Senators Hoeven (Chair), Thune, Fischer, Ernst, Hyde-Smith, Justice, Slotkin, Welch, Smith, Durbin, and Booker.

Senators Boozman and Klobuchar are ex-officio members of each subcommittee.

THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Committee concluded a hearing to examine farmer and rancher views on the agricultural economy, after receiving testimony from Zippy Duvall, American Farm Bureau Federation, Greene County, Georgia; Rob Larew, National Farmers Union, Greenville, West Virginia; Nathan Reed, National Cotton Council, Marianna, Arkansas; Kenneth Hartman, Jr., National Corn Growers Association, Waterloo, Illinois; Keeff Felty, National Association of Wheat Growers, Atlus, Oklahoma; Chris Engelstad, National Barley Growers Association, Fertile, Minnesota; Amy France, National Sorghum Producers, Scott City, Kansas; Josh Gackle, American Soybean Association, Kulm, North Dakota; Garrett Kevin Moore, United States Peanut Federation, Chancellor, Alabama; Tim Deal, American Sugar Alliance, Doran, Minnesota; and Jennifer James, USA Rice, Newport, Arkansas.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported an original resolution (S. Res. 58) authorizing expenditures by the committee for the 119th Congress.

DEBANKING IN AMERICA

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the real impacts of debanking in America, after receiving testimony from Nathan McCauley, Anchorage Digital, San Francisco, California; Stephen T. Gannon, Davis Wright Tremaine LLP, Los Angeles, California; Mike Ring, Old Glory Bank, Elmore City, Oklahoma; and Aaron Klein, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 93, to amend the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 to address harmful algal blooms;

S. 98, to require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a vetting process for prospective applicants for high-cost universal service program funding;

S. 99, to require the Secretary of Commerce to produce a report that provides recommendations to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of Department of Commerce programs related to supply chain resilience and manufacturing and industrial innovation;

S. 161, to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue rules relating to the testing procedures used under the New Car Assessment Program of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 195, to amend the Visit America Act to promote music tourism;

S. 216, to amend the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act to improve the administration of the Marine Debris Foundation, to amend the Marine Debris Act to improve the administration of the Marine Debris Program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

S. 245, to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to establish a working group on cyber insurance, to require dissemination of informative resources for issuers and customers of cyber insurance;

S. 246, to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions;

S. 257, to improve the resilience of critical supply chains, with an amendment;

S. 258, to improve forecasting and understanding of tornadoes and other hazardous weather, with an amendment;

S. 260, to amend the Bottles and Breastfeeding Equipment Screening Act to require hygienic handling of breast milk and baby formula by security screening personnel of the Transportation Security Administration and personnel of private security companies providing security screening;

S. 278, to prohibit users who are under age 13 from accessing social media platforms, to prohibit the use of personalized recommendation systems on individuals under age 17, and limit the use of social media in schools;

S. 281, to require sellers of event tickets to disclose comprehensive information to consumers about ticket prices and related fees, to prohibit speculative ticketing, with an amendment;

S. 283, to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and the Administrator of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to develop a standard methodology for identifying the country of origin of seafood to support enforcement against illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing;

S. 306, to establish and maintain a coordinated program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that improves wildfire, fire weather, fire risk, and wildfire smoke related forecasting, detection, modeling, observations, and service delivery;

S. 314, to prohibit unfair and deceptive advertising of prices for hotel rooms and other places of short-term lodging;

S. 315, to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in passenger motor vehicles, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute; and

The nomination of Howard Lutnick, of New York, to be Secretary of Commerce.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee adopted its rules for the 119th Congress, and ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 347, to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to reauthorize brownfields revitalization funding;

S. 351, to establish a pilot grant program to improve recycling accessibility, to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to carry out certain activities to collect and disseminate data on recycling and composting programs in the United States; and

An original resolution (S. Res. 59) authorizing expenditures by the committee during the 119th Congress.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported an original resolution (S. Res. 60) authorizing expenditures by the committee during the 119th Congress, adopted committee rules for the 119th Congress, and selected Senator Murkowski as Chair and Senator Schatz as Vice Chair.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 68, to prohibit the suspension of collections on loans made to small businesses related to COVID–19, with an amendment;

S. 273, to allow nonprofit child care providers to participate in certain loan programs of the Small Business Administration;

An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the committee during the 119th Congress; and

The nomination of Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 62 public bills, H.R. 977–1038; and 11 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 36; and H. Res. 107–116, were introduced. **Pages H501–05**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H506–07**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Bost to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H463**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:33 a.m. and reconvened at 12 p.m. **Page H467**

Committee Election: The House agreed to H. Res. 107, electing a Member to a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives. **Page H469**

Committee Election: The House agreed to H. Res. 108, electing a Member to a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives. **Page H469**

Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members to the Select Committee on the Strategic

Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party: Representatives Krishnamoorthi, Castor (FL), Carson, Moulton, Khanna, Sherrill, Stevens, Torres (NY), Brown, Stanton, and Tokuda. **Page H469**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act of 2025: H.R. 836, to require the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an evaluation with respect to the use of the container aerial firefighting system (CAFFS); and **Pages H478–80**

Requiring the Secretary of Agriculture to convey the Pleasant Valley Ranger District Administrative Site to Gila County, Arizona: H.R. 837, to require the Secretary of Agriculture to convey the Pleasant Valley Ranger District Administrative Site to Gila County, Arizona. **Pages H480–81**

Recess: The House recessed at 1:47 p.m. and reconvened at 4:18 p.m. **Page H481**

Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act—Rule for Consideration: The House agreed to H. Res. 93, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 27) to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, by a recorded vote of 215 ayes to 208 noes, Roll No. 31, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 212 yeas to 208 nays, Roll No. 30. **Pages H469–78, H482–83**

Presidential Message: Received a message from the President transmitting a notification of the national emergency with respect to the situation in and in relation to Burma declared in Executive Order 14014 of February 10, 2021, is to continue in effect beyond February 10, 2025—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 119–17). **Page H469**

Quorum Calls—Votes: One yea-and-nay vote and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appears on pages H482 and H482–83.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Committee Meetings

THE STATE OF AMERICAN EDUCATION

Committee on Education and Workforce: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The State of American Education''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

POWERING AMERICA'S FUTURE: UNLEASHING AMERICAN ENERGY

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Energy held a hearing entitled ''Powering America's Future: Unleashing American Energy''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MAKE COMMUNITY BANKING GREAT AGAIN

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Make Community Banking Great Again''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PREPARING THE PIPELINE: EXAMINING THE STATE OF AMERICA'S CYBER WORKFORCE

Committee on Homeland Security: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Preparing the Pipeline: Examining the State of America's Cyber Workforce''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs held a hearing on H.R. 410, the ''Alaska Native Vietnam Era Veterans Land Allotment Extension Act of 2025''; H.R. 412, to authorize the Bay Mills Indian Community of the State of Michigan to convey land and interests in land owned by the Tribe; H.R. 504, the ''Miccosukee Reserved Area Amendments Act''; and H.R. 741, the ''Stronger Engagement for Indian Health Needs Act of 2025''. Testimony was heard from Representatives Begich, Gimenez, and Stanton; and public witnesses.

RIGHTSIZING GOVERNMENT

Committee on Oversight and Accountability: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Rightsizing Government''. Testimony was heard from Kim K. Reynolds, Governor, Iowa; and public witnesses.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held an organizational meeting. The Committee adopted its Rules for the 119th Congress and approved its Authorization and Oversight Plan.

THE STATE OF U.S. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: ENSURING U.S. GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The State of U.S. Science and Technology: Ensuring U.S. Global Leadership''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

HOPE ON THE HORIZON: PRIORITIZING SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH IN THE 119TH CONGRESS

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Hope on the Horizon: Prioritizing Small Business Growth in the 119th Congress''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

AMERICA BUILDS: MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation held a hearing entitled ''America Builds: Maritime Infrastructure''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Finance: organizational business meeting to consider committee rules for the 119th Congress, an original resolution authorizing expenditures by the committee during the 119th Congress, designation of subcommittees for the 119th Congress, designation of members to serve on the Joint Committee on Taxation, and designation of members to serve as Congressional Trade Advisors on Trade Policy and Negotiations, 9:50 a.m., SD–215.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Jamieson Greer, of Maryland, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider an original resolution authorizing expenditures by the committee during the 119th Congress, committee rules for the 119th Congress, designation of subcommittees for the 119th Congress, and the nomination of Kashyap Patel, of Nevada, to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, 10:15 a.m., SH–216.

House

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Combatting Existing and Emerging Illicit Drug Threats'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Operation Choke Point 2.0: The Biden Administration's Efforts to Put Crypto into the Crosshairs'', 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Administrative State, Regulatory Reform, and Antitrust, hearing entitled ''California Fires and the Consequences of Overregulation'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing entitled ''Now Ore Never: The Importance of Domestic Mining for U.S. National Security'', 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation, hearing entitled ''Transgender Lab Rats and Poisoned Puppies: Oversight of Taxpayer Funded Animal Cruelty'', 2 p.m., 2247 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Aviation, hearing entitled ''Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''VA First, Veteran Second: The Biden-Harris Legacy'', 2 p.m., 360 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Work and Welfare, hearing entitled ''Time's Running out: Prosecuting Fraudsters for Stealing Billions of Unemployment Benefits from American Workers'', 2 p.m., 2020 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

Thursday, February 6

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget, post-cloture, and vote on confirmation of the nomination.

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

10 a.m., Thursday, February 6

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of H.R. 27—Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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