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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 12, 2025.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARIANNETTE MILLER-MEEKS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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.

HONORING THE LIFE OF GABRIELE MUCCIARELLI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Gabriele Mucciarelli who we lost at the age of 90 earlier this month.

Gabe was an exceptional man whose life was a testament to hard work, loyalty, and the power of the American Dream.

In 1952, at the age of 17, Gabe left all that he had in Italy for Canada in search of a better life. There, he worked in a collision shop and realized his natural talent for auto repair.

After marrying the love of his life, his late wife, Maria, in 1961, they moved to Buffalo where they built a beautiful family and continued to work hard.

Three years later, his hard work paid off, and he opened up the first Gabe's Collision on East Delavan in Buffalo. Gabe's attention to detail and quality service made the business a success, and it quickly expanded to Genesee Street.

He was well respected in the industry and known around town as an honest man with impeccable talent, who could make any car look as good as new. Just last year, Gabe's Collision, which has grown from one small shop in Buffalo to three locations across western New York, celebrated 60 years in business.

Gabe lived his life no differently than he did his job. Treating those around him with fairness and integrity, he was always there to help and provide his loved ones with selfless, unwavering support.

He is survived by his children, Johanna and Jeff; grandchildren, Cristina Ippolito and Jioia Mucciarelli; as well as many nieces, nephews, and devoted friends.

Gabe's son, Jeff, has followed in his father's footsteps not only in business but in his commitment to honesty and integrity. For 40 years, Jeff was lucky enough to work alongside his father as they built Gabe's dream of a small collision shop into a large operation with that same commitment to quality and great work.

Gabe loved his family, his work, his community, and our country deeply. As we mourn his loss, let us take comfort in knowing how loved he was and his incredible impact on countless lives, and may Gabriele Mucciarelli rest in peace.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JAMES FRANCIS DOHERTY

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of James Francis Doherty, a remarkable public servant and family man whose perseverance and loyalty will continue to serve as an example for all of those who are willing and able to help make changes to this world.

A graduate of Bishop Timon-St. Jude High School and Buffalo State University, Jimmy went into the world wanting to make a difference, and that he did.

Upon graduation, he worked as a special education teacher at South Park High School until he ran for office. Jimmy was the youngest elected at-large councilman in the Buffalo Common Council. During his tenure, he was a fierce advocate for the people he represented, especially the most vulnerable in our community including women, people of color, and anyone who was disenfranchised.

He always kept a picture of his two beloved daughters, Brigid and Leah, behind his desk. Whenever someone came in with a request, he would point to the photo and say: I do everything for those two. So make sure whatever you are asking of me, I can be proud to share with them.

He would go on to be a mentor and a friend to many and remain active in city policymaking, inspiring generations of civic-minded Buffalonians. After retiring from politics, Jimmy led a selfless career in student transportation, holding executive roles at National School Bus, Laidlaw Education Service, and later First Student. Each fall, western New Yorkers could rely on Jimmy to help them usher in a safe return to school.

As president of the Wanakah Country Club, Jimmy was an avid golfer and passionate sports fan. When he wasn't helping others, he could be found on the green with his favorite golf partner and best friend, his brother Jerry.

Jimmy is survived by his beloved wife, Marleah; his devoted children, Brigid Doherty and Leah Roberts; his loving grandchildren, Haley and Sophia Jones and Anna and Harrison Roberts; as well as countless other nieces, nephews, family members, and friends.

Jimmy's loyalty to his family and devotion to his city made him a model leader, one whom all Buffalonians and western New Yorkers can look up to with pride and admiration. He will certainly be missed.

May Jimmy Doherty rest in peace.

SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE STATUS OF ELON MUSK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BACON). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to remark on the outrage of my colleagues and others over the special government employee status granted to Elon Musk by the executive branch. We are hearing a lot of, oh, he is unelected or he is unaccountable.

Let me remind my colleagues and those voices that the vast majority of government employees who review and authorize grants, disburse billions of dollars, issue rules and laws, or even handle our Nation's pandemic response, like Dr. Anthony Fauci, are unelectable and unaccountable to the voters.

How about the IRS bureaucrat Lois Lerner?

How can we forget ACORN?

None of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle were calling for accountability or investigations when Dr. Fauci was forcing his mandate on 300 million Americans.

None of them were expressing outrage when unelected bureaucrats were forcing 6-year-olds to wear masks or closing down schools or forcing Head Start students to continue to wear masks long after the rest of America had stopped wearing them and closing down churches and small businesses across the country.

Who can forget the government employee who leaked the pending Dobbs court decision?

No conservative has forgotten Lois Lerner of the IRS denying 501(c) status to those volunteer citizens wanting to protest the Obama administration.

These government employees yield tremendous power with no oversight, often making decisions behind closed doors that affect millions of Americans. Elon Musk was hired by the President of the United States, or brought on, to undercover waste, fraud, and abuse in our government. That is it. Every move being made by him and DOGE is being made in the public eye as an audit and not in the shadows.

Let's be clear because this really is not about accountability. It is about the fear of a system that might be held accountable and expose corruption.

CONGRATULATING THE DOVER POLICE DEPARTMENT ON 100 YEARS OF SERVICE

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

Ms. MCBRIDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate the Dover Police Department on 100 years of service to the capital of Delaware.

Beginning in 1925, with a mere two-room office in the basement of city hall, over the past 100 years, the department has grown to more than 100 officers, as well as professional support staff divided over three divisions and nine functional units.

Led by their 15th chief, Thomas A. Johnson, Jr., these dedicated public servants put their lives on the line every day to protect public safety and support victims of crime in Delaware's second largest city.

In all they do, Dover Police are ingrained in the community, working alongside our educators, health professionals, nonprofits, and business partners, as well as regional, State, and Federal law enforcement partners. Their commitment to community policing and their behavioral health unit reinforces their compassionate and holistic approach to public safety.

On the centennial of the Dover Police Department, I thank the heroes who have donned the badge with honor, courage, and unwavering commitment to Dover.

A grateful State wishes the Dover Police Department a happy centennial.

RECOGNIZING PAUL CALISTRO

Ms. MCBRIDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the commitment of a dedicated community leader, Paul Calistro, to the State of Delaware. A former mayor of Newport, Delaware, Paul has been the executive director of West End Neighborhood House in Wilmington since 1991, working tirelessly to provide direct programs, services, support, and advocacy to Delawareans, their families, and our broader community.

For more than 140 years, the West End Neighborhood House has empowered generations of Delawareans to become and remain self-sufficient. Under Paul's leadership, West End has grown their impact, helping over 10,000 Delawareans each year. They provide meals, place people in long-term employment, secure stable housing, and teach critical skills to community members.

While the backbone of that work is the dedicated team of staff and volunteers at West End, at the heart of that work is the big heart of Paul Calistro. When being honored several years ago, Paul said that somebody has got to stand up and be an advocate for people who can't speak.

Whether they are a youth aging out of foster care or a single mom trying to get a good-paying job, Paul is an advocate for those too often left behind. Ever the selfless leader, as Paul celebrates his birthday this week, instead of asking for anything himself, he has asked people to support youth in foster care.

While Paul celebrates his birthday by supporting others, a grateful State celebrates Paul for his ongoing commitment to making Delaware a place that more fully lives up to our values as a State of neighbors.

WATER FOR CALIFORNIA

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, in this ongoing conversation about government overreach and last-minute regulations that have been so damaging, I want to bring up how that has affected the water supply for California and for the West. For everybody that enjoys American-grown food, it affects them.

What we have seen happen is that there is an ongoing effort and an onslaught, really, to remove dams, especially in the Western States and in my own district in northern California.

What are the results of that? In order to somehow believe that they are seeking fish passage and greater fish populations, for example, with this government overreach, with these false pronouncements based on really faulty, fake data, what are we getting?

On the Klamath River we have thousands of dead fish and other wildlife after the removal of the dams that have happened. The silt loads that are behind that dam that we warned them about have been flowing down the river of the Klamath ever since. Massive amounts of fish are killed, and other wildlife are getting caught in that silt. We warned them about that.

They are pronouncing it nirvana. It is heaven because the water is flowing through there, and we have lost that hydroelectric power that the dams used to generate. It is becoming someone else's problem farther down the stream with the silt. If it doesn't wash out within 3 years, that is an entire salmon life cycle. It will actually wipe out the population of water that is sourced from what is actually a warm lake and is not ideal for salmon.

We see it time and again. The government overreach is affecting the smart use of water in California. Right now they are dumping water out of Shasta Dam and Oroville Dam in northern California. The water coming out of Shasta is actually flooding part of the town of Redding and then areas of Glenn County farther down the line along the Sacramento River because there is so much water going out. Yet there is still ample storage space behind Shasta. There is 600,000 or maybe 700,000 acre-feet behind that.

The problem is they don't use up-to-date weather forecasting in order to determine whether we should dump water or could we keep some of it a little longer because we are not going to get

that much rain between now and the target date of April 1 when they stop the so-called conservation of space for flood control.

We all get it. Flood control needs to be provided for behind these dams. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, that is their charge. It seems like their hair trigger is to dump water instead of also trying to conserve it. This is really based not just on the ideal of flood control but also fish passage and fish water because we are receding down in the delta. They are limited in the Bay Delta to being able to only move about 6,000 cubic feet per second via the lift pumps into San Luis Reservoir and other places where they could be stashing this water.

□ 1015

We have a capacity of doing 15,000 cubic feet per second, which over 24 hours means 30,000 acre-feet of saved water. We are not going to have that opportunity soon once this rainy season is over with. Yet, we have a number of somewhere around 180,000 to 200,000 cubic feet per second flowing out through the delta that isn't being trapped and isn't being captured.

Do you think we would miss 9,000 more cubic feet per second out of the delta going into water storage for California than what is happening now out of 180,000 to 200,000, when you have got 60,000 flowing out of Shasta Dam flooding down areas and we have got huge amounts coming out of Oroville and other projects around the State?

We are not capturing the water. We are doing harm to ourselves. No wonder the people of southern California are actually getting really angry about what is happening as their eyes are being opened to how our State is being run and what is being done by government overreach by these last-minute regulations, these last-minute things that come in that declare yet another national monument. In my district, that means nearly a quarter million acres are now off limits for fire management on the forested lands or for other public uses.

The ideal for forest service land used to be—you would see the signs, ''land of many uses.'' Now, this boils down to land only being cut off from the people and from wise management of our forests.

If you enjoy million-acre fires, that is going to continue to be the prescription because of last-minute, eleventh-hour pronouncements such as these national monuments that the Biden administration did on the way out the door.

We have the power in Congress, under what is called the Congressional Review Act, to review regulations that are made by the stroke of a pen. The legislative process is supposed to have all of us here in the light of day, on TV, in committee, where the people can watch us do what we do instead of so much power being vested in the executive, such as under the Antiquities Act, which is where part of the abuses come from, all at the last minute, all at the stroke of a pen.

PROTECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DE LA CRUZ). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, any day now, President Trump is gearing up to shut down the Department of Education. This is the latest power grab, an assault on our kids, an assault on our teachers, and an assault on our families in our district that rely on public education.

The Department of Education is a lifeline for many low-income residents and students. When the President says he wants to abolish it, he is coming after communities like Detroit, Southfield, Dearborn, and Livonia.

The Department's title I funding ensures all children, regardless of which ZIP Code they were born in, can access public education, quality education.

Here we go. The President is attacking public school students. More than half of our Nation's public schools educate low-income kids but also students with special needs. They are going after the different programs that help children living with autism, children having learning disabilities, needing that special care. I know that it is the public education system that takes them in and takes care of them and ensures that they have access to quality education.

We also know that States across the country want to whitewash Black history. They are already going after it, as if Black history is not American history.

We also know they want to erase the existence of LGBTQI+ students and discriminate against our children.

I know without the Department of Education, no one will be left to ensure civil rights laws are enforced in our schools. We know that community college students in my district alone will particularly suffer, because 50 percent of Henry Ford College in my district receives Pell grants that are going and administered through the Department of Education.

I know folks are thinking it is never going to happen. It already has started.

If my colleagues support abolishing the Department of Education, then they should publicly do it. Vote on it on this House floor. Don't allow the little minion billionaire to do it. If they want to do it, then their residents, the American people, deserve to see how they will vote. Will they leave our children behind or not?

It is important, critically important, that we do this in a transparent way, because I know my residents want me on record voting against abolishing public education.

ABOLISHING THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, here we go. Elon Musk, the richest man on the planet, and Russ Vought, the guy who wrote Project 2025, want to shut down the 911 agency for fraud and consumer protection that many of us call the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

This is where my residents call for mortgage fraud, to fight against different scams that they fall victim to because we haven't done a good job preventing folks from out of the country and others targeting our seniors and so many others.

Financial predators like Wall Street and CEOs despise the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. I wonder why. That is because it is the only agency whose sole mission is to protect working people from getting ripped off.

I still remember the success we had in going after loan servicers for student loans, getting back millions of dollars to people who were directly impacted by those scams.

Shutting down the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau lets financial predators run wild, and working-class families will pay the price.

Since it was created, we know it forced big banks and powerful corporations to give $21 billion back to our families that were cheated, but here we go. President Trump's minion, Elon Musk, wants to steal hard-earned money from the working class to reward their billionaire donors and CEOs, to protect them, not us.

I know that the CFPB has had a huge impact on the lives of my residents, doing things like capping credit card late fees, holding companies who break the law accountable, targeting junk fees, and eliminating $49 billion in medical debt from people's credit reports.

Think about that. No one plans to get sick. We have sick care in our country, not healthcare. No one should have to file bankruptcy because they got sick, and they couldn't afford to take care of themselves.

They helped also protect 15 million Americans that have medical debt on their credit report. It was supposed to be implemented in March to remove medical debt from people's credit report. It doesn't belong there.

I know that doesn't matter to these billionaires, but it makes a world of difference for our families who are just trying to make ends meet. They want to make sure that our government is about people, that we have their back. I know the 911 call they make to this agency to protect them has made a difference, but they want to eliminate that.

If they want to get rid of this agency, do it publicly. Vote on it. I have no idea why they are handing their duties and responsibilities and the oath of this office over to a billionaire that never took the oath.

HONORING J.D. ROTTWEILER

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

Mr. CISCOMANI. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of my good friend J.D. Rottweiler for a remarkable 15 years of service as Cochise College's president and to wish him the best on his well-deserved retirement.

Since his tenure began, J.D. has been a transformative leader known for his hyper-local initiatives and incredible work uplifting the college and its students.

Under his leadership, Cochise College expanded access to education by adding student housing at the Sierra Vista campus and launching the First Responders Academy to train and equip students with the tools necessary to keep all of their communities safe.

He oversaw the remodeling and revitalization of Sierra Vista's former hospital into an innovative downtown center that houses nursing, cybersecurity, culinary, and lifelong learning programs.

Moreover, he played a pivotal role ensuring his students had access to high-speed fiber internet at the Douglas campus by enhancing connectivity and accessibility for students and staff.

As a proud product of community college myself, I know firsthand the crucial role these programs play in the lives of our students.

My friend J.D. has truly left a lasting legacy not only for our students but for our entire community. May he enjoy his well-deserved retirement. He has accomplished a lot, and I look forward to seeing him around the district soon.

HONORING BRUCE BIGELOW

Mr. CISCOMANI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a patriot of the highest order, Vietnam war veteran Bruce Bigelow.

Mr. Bigelow is a true hero who exemplifies the highest ideals of service and sacrifice. It was my profound honor to present him with the Purple Heart medal for his heroic service when I visited him in Sierra Vista last fall.

The Purple Heart is a distinguished award given to those who have been wounded or killed in action while serving our Nation, and it symbolizes the immense sacrifices they made to preserve our freedoms and way of life.

Mr. Bigelow served two tours in the United States Marine Corps in Vietnam from 1966 to 1971. In the course of his service, Mr. Bigelow was awarded numerous recognitions and honors, including the National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Rifle Marksman badge, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and certainly, not least of these, the Purple Heart.

His courage is a testament to the bravery and resilience of those who have answered duty's call to wear the uniform as a member of our Armed Forces.

I had the privilege of pinning this Purple Heart on him and thanking him for his service to our Nation in front of his family and his friends.

He told me he was honored, but truth be told, the honor was all mine.

On behalf of a grateful community and Nation, I say again thank you to Mr. Bigelow for his courage, sacrifice, and enduring commitment to service.

ATTACK ON THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

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

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I have been listening to my Republican colleagues, waiting for the moment when they are going to fight for the American people, the constituents they have that are not Elon Musk. So far, the silence is deafening.

If they are not cheering it on, they are standing aside silently as cancer research labs are shut down, as the veterans administration is targeted, as the healthcare for millions of Americans is threatened, and eggs—oh, those eggs—have hit an all-time high of $8 a dozen. This silence is a betrayal of all Americans, of their very voters.

Let's just take a closer look at one example. Now, they are letting Elon Musk dismantle the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Most people haven't heard of the CFPB, but Americans know the corporate greed that they have gone after on their behalf for more than a decade: the predatory loan sharks and the abusive debt collectors. When Republicans are silent, they are siding with the scam artists.

Let me give you one example. Before the CFPB stepped in, a marine stationed in Texas who needs a loan to repair his truck would be charged the average payday interest rate in Texas. Do you know what that is? That is 664 percent. If he took out a $2,000 loan, he would pay $1,100 in interest.

I do hope my Republican colleagues remember the days when they supported the rule of law. When the CFPB enforces the law that limits interest rates for U.S. servicemembers, they reduced that interest on that loan to $60.

□ 1030

Altogether, the CFPB put $360 million back into the pockets of our servicemembers and veterans. That is what they do. They save Americans money. They went after bogus overdraft fees. That is $5 billion back in the pockets of working families every year, over $200 per family. They banned outrageous late fees on credit cards. That is $10 billion every year going back to consumers.

What is the problem with this agency? Apparently, Republicans in Congress would rather have that money go into the pockets of CEOs and spend that money cutting billionaires' taxes instead of fighting fraud and corporate abuse.

The American people did not vote for more scams and more corporate greed. They didn't vote to have our servicemembers go into more debt. They voted for people to fight for them, for lower costs, and for their part in the American Dream.

Let's wake up, GOP. Stand up for the American people.

HONORING KENNY MCMORRIS

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

Mr. BACON. Madam Speaker, I rise today as we celebrate Black History Month and honor the incredible achievements of Kenny McMorris, a visionary leader, champion for community well-being, and constituent in our Second District of our great State of Nebraska.

Mr. McMorris is a veteran healthcare executive, innovator, influencer, and strategist with an extensive leadership, policy, community, and public health background. His wife, Makayla, is the founder and owner of Moxie16. They are the proud parents of two children, Kenny Jr. and Makenli.

As the CEO of Charles Drew Health Center, Inc., Kenny oversees the health center's business, community, and primary care operations. The center has a $24 million operating budget, over 200 employees, 13,000 patients, and nearly 40,000 outpatient service visits annually.

Under his leadership, Charles Drew Health Center has expanded its service locations from 4 to 16, including primary medical, dental, pharmacy, and behavioral health services. It emphasizes the disenfranchised and addresses the social drivers of health.

Over the course of his decade-long career at CDHC, Kenny has contributed to transforming healthcare delivery and equity through his innovative strategies and disciplined commitment to serving disenfranchised communities.

As a North Omaha native, Kenny attended the University of Nebraska Omaha, earning a bachelor's degree in business administration and management in 2002. In 2004, he earned an MPA in public management and healthcare administration.

After his education, he brought his expertise to the Omaha community as the first executive director of the 100 Black Men of Omaha and director of marketing and development for the Urban League of Nebraska.

Kenny has shown himself to be active in both the professional and larger communities. In his advocating career, Kenny is board-certified in healthcare management and a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and Community Health Centers Executives Fellow. He holds memberships with the National Medical Association, the National Association of Health Services Executives, the American Public Health Association, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

These demonstrations showcase his engagement in advancing professional standards, networking, and mentoring. Furthermore, Kenny McMorris also

serves on the boards of directors of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Nebraska Methodist College, RADIUS, Health Center Association of Nebraska, Heartland Community Health Network, BRIDGE Family Resource Connector Network, and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Medicaid Advisory Committee.

It is crystal clear that Kenny is not just a professional of the highest caliber but a great community leader who exemplifies public service, vision, and unwavering commitment to making a difference in our communities.

Kenny's accomplishments include the University of Nebraska Omaha Young Alumni Achievement Award; University of Nebraska Omaha College of Public Affairs and Community Service Alumni Award of Excellence; National Association of Community Health Centers' Betsey K. Cooke Grassroots MVP Award; Urban League of Nebraska African American Leadership Award; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Mid-Western Region Award for Excellence in Health and Wellness; and University of Nebraska Medical Center/Nebraska Medicine Servant Leader Award. He has done it all.

The accolades Kenny received reflect his excellence through investing in public health, uplifting community development, and demonstrating to inspire innovative change in every role he has played while being a great husband and father, which I also admire.

Through dedication and perseverance in tackling healthcare inequities or inequalities, Kenny has encompassed a meaningful vision for disenfranchised populations. His role has laid a foundation for healthier, more equitable communities.

Kenny McMorris' contributions in Omaha exemplify nothing short of the values of Black History Month, which celebrates resilience, leadership, and a commitment to advancing public health and opportunity for all.

Omaha is a better place because of Kenny McMorris. His impact has been positively felt by thousands upon thousands.

OPPOSING CUTS TO NIH FUNDING FOR INDIRECT COSTS

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

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the illegal and unwise policy recently announced by the National Institutes of Health to limit their indirect cost recapture rate to 15 percent.

To start with, as we start with most Trump administration maneuvers these last 3 weeks, it is illegal. I know that my Republican colleagues don't think that it is possible for the President to answer to the rule of law, but it is critical, particularly with the biomedical enterprise that makes long-term, expensive investments, to have confidence that when Congress or the President make a commitment, they stand by it over the course of years and even across decades. Undermining the rule of law undermines our ability to do the kinds of long-term, transformational science that changes lives.

In 2017, when the Trump administration first attempted to lower the indirect cost recapture rate to 10 percent, the Appropriations Committee, by an overwhelming bipartisan vote, rejected it and froze the IDC at its current level. That has been reauthorized every single year from 2017 through 2024.

I ask my Republican colleagues: You voted for this. They are breaking that law that you voted for. What are you going to do about it?

Now, the NIH might say: Well, we are referring to a different section of the code whereby we can, for a subset of grants with documentation, reduce the IDC.

That is not the NIH policy, though. The NIH did not do a subset of grants. They did it for every single grant and with zero documentation.

Wake up, Republicans. They are breaking your law.

The NIH might claim that what we are doing here is actually not cuts to the NIH because the same $35 billion is going to go out to science, but now it is just going to be more of those direct experiments, the people, the reagents, and the travel, and less of that expensive overhead. While it is true that the same amount of dollars could go out the door, in reality, these institutions, whether universities or hospitals, are going to be decreasingly able to afford to accept them.

Of any given experiment, the overhead associated with that experiment is well more than 15 percent. Research facilities, energy bills, support personnel, and data and technology, these things are expensive. We are not in the era of beakers in somebody's backyard doing chemical experiments. We are in an era of cutting-edge genetic engineering, and the equipment costs money.

Fewer institutions and investigators are going to be able to accept these grants. What we are ultimately going to do is privatize research infrastructure, so we are going to get less of it. It is just as though the Department of Transportation told businesses to build their own bridges and sidewalks. We just wouldn't get as many of them.

The impact in Massachusetts is going to be profound. It is a $2 billion attack on the research infrastructure that undergirds our eds and meds enterprise, an enterprise that creates billions of dollars in economic activity that supports hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs. Each of those jobs in biopharma, for example, can create five other jobs. That is a profound economic multiplier.

The work that we do in Massachusetts changes lives. There is progress on Alzheimer's, under which 15 million Americans will suffer by 2050 if we do not come up with therapies. Gestational diabetes—and, just recently, a non-opiate painkiller was developed in Massachusetts with NIH basic research funds that will provide outlets for acute pain that do not expose people to this most addictive chemical that has caused so much pain.

My Republican colleagues might say, ''Yeah, that is Massachusetts.'' That is the whole point, don't you see? ''It is the blue State and those universities and hospitals who think they are so much better than everybody else.'' That is exactly the point.

Here is my challenge to my Republican colleagues: Go back to your districts, talk to your universities, and talk to your hospitals. See how they are feeling about this policy. What you are going to hear is that they can't afford to take these grants. The research, the development, and the commercialization that you brag about when you go home, the ribbons that you cut for new companies and for new projects, all rest upon this research infrastructure that is getting cut.

Go talk to these companies. Go talk to these institutions of higher education. Go talk to these hospitals. They don't want to see this policy go into effect, and they want to see you vote for it and explain it back home, not hide behind the NIH.

So, they are losing. Who is winning? China. There were two main themes in the recent J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference. One was artificial intelligence, which, by the way, requires a lot of research infrastructure. The second was how good China has gotten at biotech in the last few years.

The Chinese biotech enterprise is looking at the United States cutting our own research infrastructure at a time when they are investing tens of billions of dollars, and they cannot believe their luck.

My Republican colleagues need to wake up, stand up, and support basic science.

HONORING HOMETOWN CHAMPION NICK SIRIANNI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a man whose journey from Jamestown, New York, to the pinnacle of professional football is a testament to perseverance, grit, and the power of believing in yourself: Philadelphia Eagles Head Coach Nick Sirianni.

As a lifelong Buffalo Bills fan, I never thought I would be here on the House floor praising the coach of another NFL team, but some stories transcend football rivalries, and Nick's is one of them.

From a young age, Nick was a student of the game. He was immersed in football. He was brought up by two very loving parents who instilled a tremendous work ethic and value set in

him. His father, Fran, was a beloved high school football coach, and his older brothers, Michael and Jay, were standout athletes, as well. In the backyard of their home, they weren't just playing football. They were shaping a champion.

At Mount Union, Nick Sirianni won three national championships, but an injury nearly ended his playing career. Instead of giving up, he pivoted, launching a coaching career that would take him from his alma mater to the NFL. He climbed the ranks with the Chiefs, Chargers, and Colts, proving himself every step of the way.

Four years ago, he took over as head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles and wasted no time turning them into a real contender, but this season, against all odds, his underdog Eagles did more than just compete. They dominated.

In a stunning Super Bowl victory, his team overwhelmed the Kansas City Chiefs, proving that heart, preparation, and relentless determination can overcome even the toughest challenges.

Nick's success isn't just measured in wins. It is measured in the message he sends to every small-town kid in Jamestown, New York, the southern tier, and across small-town America: No dream is too big, and no setback is too great. Success is never given. It is earned. It is built on faith in God, family, and an unrelenting will to win. It is forged through late nights, overcoming obstacles, and moments of doubt that are met with unwavering determination. It is about proving that talent when paired with hard work can take you anywhere.

Nick's hometown stands a little taller today. He has shown us what is possible when resilience meets opportunity.

While hoisting the Lombardi Trophy is an unforgettable triumph, I know this: His greatest chapters lie ahead for him.

I congratulate Coach Sirianni. He has reached the top of the mountain. He is a Super Bowl champion. Chautauqua County celebrates him, and America honors him. I know there is even more yet to come.

Fly, Eagles, fly, and go Bills.

□ 1045

THE SCRIMMAGE LINE FOR LIBERTY

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, Ukraine is the scrimmage line for liberty on the continent of Europe today. We all have witnessed hundreds of thousands of war deaths at record levels in this 11-year, cruel war that Russia has perpetrated against the free nation of Ukraine.

Russia had no provocation. For 30 years, Ukraine had tried to build her land forward.

Importantly, this morning in Europe, U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth made an opening statement, along with many of our allied nations, seeking an end to the horrific 11-year killing field that is Ukraine after war criminal Vladimir Putin's illegal invasion, as I said, in 2014. It has been 11 long years of war.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has stated a negotiated peace will require an exchange of territory. Working with our closest and most-valued allies in NATO in the free world, the United States must do everything possible to bring full liberty to Ukraine and move Russia back into her own borders.

The international community must safeguard those borders, and those negotiations are yet to come. We have some hope this morning if we are serious about making sure the dividing line between the free world and the suppressed world is clearly drawn and safeguarded.

RISING COSTS FOR OHIOANS

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning on behalf of the people of northwest Ohio. We face an economic reality that many across our country are experiencing.

Prices are on the rise. Trade war panic is causing more inflation. Uncertainty and the short supply of goods and services rise as inflation rises. It was announced this morning that prices are up 3 percent across the board, more than expected over the past month of this new administration.

Too many families are overwhelmed by the cost of living, and everyday people are having to face really hard choices between paying for groceries or rent, between medicine or a tank of gas. Do you just fill it halfway?

The latest curse: rising property taxes. In Ohio, eggs cost between $6.66 a dozen and $8 a dozen. Gas is back up to over $3 a gallon. Unemployment is ticking up. Property taxes are skyrocketing, and working people are being squeezed from all sides. They don't have a lot of time to think about politics.

With Democrats here in the House, President Biden was able to allow a few prescription drug prices to be lowered, but it is no secret that the majority of families struggle to pay for medicine when they need it.

Meanwhile, major pharmacy chains, like Rite Aid, are shutting their doors, leaving entire communities with no pharmacy.

Why are there no hearings on that here in Congress?

Where are people supposed to go to fill their prescriptions?

People aren't just feeling economic pressure. They are being crushed by it.

Rents keep rising. This forces families and seniors to downsize or leave communities they have called home for decades.

Consumer credit card fraud is on the rise, bilking people who are already stretched thin. When families have no room left in their budgets, far too many gamble on their futures, making desperate choices just to get by.

My district is no stranger to gambling with lottery tickets, scratch offs, and casinos. The wheels just turn faster. People take chances. In the last election, that is exactly what they did. They gambled.

Many didn't vote. They voted not because they support radical extremism but because they want to get ahead. They want this Congress and the new President to help them do that.

I hear them. We all should, but the reality is that prices are going up. The Consumer Price Index just rose over the past month with 3 percent unexpected inflation. Prices for eggs are up, as I have said, 53 percent.

Look at what is happening with the price of higher education, which is now unaffordable for the majority. If our young people can't afford to go to school and learn, what does that imply for the future of this country?

WICHITA REMEMBRANCE

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

Mr. MANN. Madam Speaker, January 29 is typically a day of celebration in Kansas. From Manhattan to Goodland, Topeka to Liberal, Kansas City to Dodge City, Kansans come together to celebrate the rich history of Kansas and to celebrate the anniversary of our statehood.

January 29, 2025, changed the meaning of this day for Kansans forever. The entire world stood in disbelief as we watched a tragedy unfold in the crash of American Airlines flight 5342 out of Wichita and a U.S. Army helicopter. The world lost 67 bright, innocent souls that day, and I speak for all Kansans when I say that this is a day that we will never forget.

When we celebrate our statehood in years to come, we will also feel the nudging of the somber emotions aroused by last month's accident. We will remember our fellow Kansans whose lives were tragically lost. They were farmers, parents, professors, college students with bright futures, all taken from us far too soon.

Audrey and I continue to grieve, and we are praying for the victims and their families. We express our deepest gratitude to the efforts of local, State, and Federal law enforcement officers and first responders. It is our prayer that God would continue to provide comfort to their families, communities, and loved ones.

There will be a lot to uncover in the days ahead. For now, we join Wichita, our beloved Kansas, and the Nation in mourning the lives lost.

Psalms 34:18 states: ''The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.''

God is near us.

Kansas is the heartbeat of the country. As our State motto reminds us, we will persevere together through this difficult time.

FAREWELL TO LAURA FRANCIS

Mr. MANN. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of Laura Francis, an American

patriot, a selfless neighbor, and a great friend.

Since 2018, Laura has served as the chair of the Kansas Republican Party's Big First District. Over the last 6 years, Laura oversaw the helm of a historic chapter of the Kansas GOP's First Congressional District.

Laura led our district in a historic election of delegates to secure President Trump's nomination. She rigorously defended our Nation's motto from being erased from law enforcement vehicles, fought to protect our children and their parents' ability to choose an education that is right for them, and grew our conservative base that will reverberate through Kansas politics for many years to come.

Somewhere in the middle of her historic term, she fell in love with her husband, Drew. On the same day as their first date, they attended an event that I hosted in my district in Garden City. They shared a phone call with President Trump that day, and the rest of their love story is history.

Laura and Drew married nearly 2 years later.

Laura is a fierce and loyal leader, but she is an even brighter neighbor, law enforcement community member, friend, mom, wife, and follower of Jesus.

Kansas is the pilot light of the country, and I can attest that the pilot light burns stronger and brighter because of Laura.

I thank Laura for her commitment and dedication to our congressional district, State, and Nation. It is so deeply appreciated.

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 52 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. CRAWFORD) at noon.

PRAYER

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

Holy and most wise God, we seek Your wisdom: Wisdom to meet the challenges of this day, wisdom to discern what is the direction You would have us go, wisdom to determine what is the truth You wish us both to hear and speak.

How does a person become as wise as this? The first step You have said is to trust and honor You, O Lord.

So we take our first step today, before any legislative matters are brought forth, before our committees are convened, and in advance of any votes brought to the floor, to show our reverence for You, O Lord.

May we also trust that You will equip us, You will guide us, and You will speak to us with the sufficiency of Your wisdom for the living of this day.

Believing in You and leaning on 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 South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

RETURN POWER TO CONGRESS

(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, during the failed Biden-Harris administration, Federal agencies were allowed to drastically expand power, undermining the legislative authority of Congress.

Currently, the process for Congress to pass resolutions on an agency policy it disapproves of slows the ability of Congress to block destructive regulations, destroying jobs.

This week, House Republicans will vote on the Midnight Rules Relief Act, led by Congressman ANDY BIGGS. The bill allows Congress to disapprove of multiple policies through one resolution when those rules were issued during the last year of a Presidential term.

Ultimately, the bill will provide Congress with the necessary tools to reject regulations, protecting democracy and creating jobs.

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

I thank legitimate President Salome Zourabichvili of Georgia for protesting the rigged presidential election in Georgia.

ON BEHALF OF THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

(Ms. LEE of Nevada asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Let me tell you what the CFPB has done to protect working families for years, such as capping bank overdraft fees and credit card late fees, suing big banks for taking advantage of families, saving Americans over $20 billion from abusive corporations.

Now, Elon Musk and DOGE want to kill it because it is better for billionaires and big corporations and not for you.

Let me be clear: This does nothing to make your life more affordable. It is quite the opposite. In fact, none of what the Trump administration has done so far is making life more affordable for working Nevadans.

If you are concerned about these attacks on working families and attacks on our Constitution itself, I implore you to call your nearest Republican.

Let's face it: They control Congress, and it is up to them to stand up and help us stop this unconstitutional power grab and deliver on their promise to make life more affordable for you.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

CELEBRATING THE RELEASE OF MARC FOGEL

(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 celebrate the release of Pennsylvania schoolteacher Marc Fogel from Russian custody.

For more than 3½ years, Marc, a dedicated teacher, loving husband, and an American citizen, was unjustly detained in a Russian penal colony.

His punishment of 14 years of hard labor was an excessive and politically motivated sentence.

Despite years of bipartisan pleading with the Biden administration to bring Marc home, or at the very least designate him as wrongfully detained, there was no progress.

Enter Donald J. Trump.

In just 22 days, President Trump, Secretary Rubio, Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, and a team of advisers successfully negotiated Marc's release.

Mr. Speaker, Marc Fogel is now back on American soil and reunited with his family.

Promises made, promises kept.

I thank all of those involved in bringing Marc home.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S CLEMENCY GRANTS

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

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, immediately after taking office, the current President granted sweeping pardons and commutations to over 1,500 insurrectionists who stormed the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

At least 174 police officers were injured while protecting the Capitol that day, and 5 officers who responded later died.

One of the people the President deemed fit to be released from prison shot a stun gun directly into the neck of an officer, causing him to suffer a heart attack and sustain a traumatic brain injury. Another attacked officers with bear spray. After being released for these crimes, he is now at large for allegedly soliciting a minor in 2016.

I was one of the last Members who was evacuated from this building on January 6. I have vivid memories, as many of us do, of the Capitol Police officers battered and exhausted but still defending us.

The decision to grant clemency to many violent and dangerous individuals is an affront to our democracy, our justice system, and the brave police officers who defended us that day and every day.

Mr. Speaker, I ask Members and Americans to reflect on this decision.

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 12 o'clock and 12 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1531

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GUEST) at 3 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 12, 2025.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 12, 2025, at 11:14 a.m.:

Appointments:

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Finance Committee as congressional advisers on trade policy and negotiations to international conferences, meetings and negotiation sessions relating to trade agreements Joint Committee on Taxation Washington's Farewell Address

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Clerk.

MIDNIGHT RULES RELIEF ACT

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 122, I call up the bill (H.R. 77) to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for ''midnight rules'', and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 122, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 77

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 ''Midnight Rules Relief Act''.

SEC. 2. EN BLOC CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS OF DISAPPROVAL PERTAINING TO "MIDNIGHT RULES".

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 801(d) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) In applying section 802 to rules described under paragraph (1), a joint resolution of disapproval may contain one or more such rules if the report under subsection (a)(1)(A) for each such rule was submitted during the final year of a President's term.''.

(b) TEXT OF RESOLVING CLAUSE.—Section 802(a) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting after ''resolving clause of which is'' the following: ''(except as otherwise provided in this subsection)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: ''In the case of a joint resolution under section 801(d)(4), the matter after the resolving clause of such resolution shall be as follows: 'That Congress disapproves the following rules: the rule submitted by the ___ relating to ___; and the rule submitted by the ___ relating to ___. Such rules shall have no force or effect.' (The blank spaces being appropriately filled in and additional clauses describing additional rules to be included as necessary).''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 77.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 77, the Midnight Rules Relief Act. This piece of legislation will allow Congress to efficiently oversee Federal agency rulemaking.

Under the Congressional Review Act, known as the CRA, executive agencies must report all promulgated rules to both Chambers of Congress. The CRA gives Congress, then, the authority to pass joint resolutions to prevent agency rules from taking effect. The CRA's disapproval mechanism gives Congress a check on Federal administrative overreach.

Currently, the CRA forces Congress to introduce a separate joint resolution for each agency rule it seeks to review. This limit slows Congress' oversight of agency rulemaking.

Its inefficiency is most clear during the midnight rulemaking period of the last year of a President's term, when executive agencies historically issue more regulations than any other time in a President's term.

The 119th Congress can examine Biden administration rules that fall within the CRA lookback window. This window includes any rule submitted to Congress from August 16, 2024, to the end of the Biden administration.

During that period, the Biden administration finalized a staggering 1,406 rules.

H.R. 77 would make Congress' oversight more efficient during this midnight rulemaking period.

The Midnight Rules Relief Act would allow Congress to introduce joint resolutions considering multiple agency rules during the final year of a President's term.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle may claim that this bill is only an attempt to slow down agency rulemaking, but that is incorrect. There are no provisions in this bill that are designed to slow down rulemaking.

Rather, this bill would merely allow Congress to more efficiently exercise the oversight authority it already has and respond to the influx of agency regulations during the midnight hours of the President's final term.

My colleagues would also like Americans to believe that this is an effort to repeal every regulation submitted to Congress. Again, that is inaccurate. After reviewing submitted regulations, Congress can pick and choose which rules to overturn, just as we do now.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the gentleman's bill is not to give Congress the power to undo midnight rules because Congress already has that power.

Under the Congressional Review Act, House Republicans can go to the floor this week, and they can try to undo every single regulation that was issued by the Biden administration from August of last year to Inauguration Day.

What does their bill do? It would allow the majority to roll up lots of midnight regulations and lots of others, too, including what you might call twilight, midday, and early morning regulations—indeed, all of the regulations adopted in the final 365 days of the prior administration, an entire year that takes place at midnight. All the regulations adopted in the last year could be tied together into a bundle, wrapped up together in a giant bunch, and then voted down as a single jumbo resolution.

This tactic could be used to try to get Congress to eliminate no fewer, by my count, than 355 major regulations from the last year of Joe Biden in one fell swoop, forcing every Member to vote either to sustain all of the regulations or to overturn and destroy all of them. By destroying them, that means the agencies could not try to promulgate similar regulations in the future without an act of Congress.

This would allow Trump's enablers and the sheeplike new Elon Muskovites in Congress to obliterate hundreds of completely diverse and unrelated regulations in one fell swoop. These are regulations that were adopted over the last year: Everything from removing lead from drinking water to making cell phones compatible with hearing aids to creating safety standards for infant bath seats to implementing the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Mr. Speaker, the reason that 43 States have constitutional or statutory single-subject rules for policy legislation initiatives and referenda is because voting on completely different subjects at the same time is a moronic way to govern and an invitation to political manipulation of the will of the people.

What is a Member to do if he or she strongly approves of, say, overturning 20 percent of these rules but strongly opposes overturning 80 percent of them? This weird dilemma makes us ask why we would even want to force such a choice. After all, the vast majority of America rejects this whole concept.

Well, the obvious purpose of this bizarre legislation is to get Republicans to vote to repeal extremely popular, commonsense regulations but then try to enable them to escape the political consequences of doing so.

Consider some of the Biden administration regulations which they would tuck into this monstrosity, omnibus midnight relief resolution and decide if you are willing to vote to overturn them, even if they are tucked in with some infamous washing machine regulation they love talking about.

Consider this one from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. It cuts credit card late fees from an average of $32 to $8, meaning your credit card company cannot charge you more than $8 for late fees because the CFPB brought a suit and determined that is the whole administrative cost of a late fee. It didn't say the credit card companies couldn't charge anything, but it said when they are charging you $32, that is just a rip-off.

Now, our friends on that side of the aisle want to repeal this regulation because they insist it violates their precious laissez-faire principle. That is, let the credit card companies do whatever they want, but when it comes to leaving middle-class and working-class consumers to the mercy of gigantic credit card companies, my friends, laissez isn't fair. At least that is what the Democrats think, and we will stand up for this regulation.

If you think the credit card companies should be restored their power to charge whatever they want for late fees, way beyond their actual administrative expenses, then by all means support the Republicans' bill. Elon Musk and the billionaires will love you for it. Musk did, after all, just sign an agreement with Visa for his X wallet.

Another rule Republicans could add to their giant bundle is from the Department of Transportation, which requires airlines to provide automatic refunds when your flight is canceled and to disclose upfront baggage and flight change fees.

It used to be they could cancel your flight and just say they will give you another flight in the future at some point. The Department of Transportation determined that is not fair. If they cancel your flight, you get a refund. If you want to fly later or go take a train or find another mode of transportation, you can do it.

Now, they could throw that into the big bonfire of regulation destruction they are so excited about, and then you could consign your rights back to the microscopic fine print on the back of your airplane ticket rather than having the consumer champions at the Department of Transportation try to stand up for the people.

If you want the airlines to have that power over you, go ahead and vote for the GOP bill, support more laissez-faire for the billionaires. Strike a blow against the reviled Bidenomics. Give yourself all the airline inconvenience you want.

Another rule that they would throw in is the FTC's wildly popular click-to-cancel rule mandating that it should be just as easy to cancel a service advertised online as it is to sign up for it. The American people love that, right? Do you want to go back to the days when it was as easy as A-B-C–1–2-3 to sign up for an online service but then like the 12 labors of Hercules to try to get out of it when you no longer need it, then by all means support this great laissez-faire Republican bill. Strike a blow against the big, bad, evil, mean, wicked, terrible regulations.

If you fall for all that propaganda, and you are more afraid of the big, bad, evil regulations than the big, bad, evil corporations, go ahead and vote for it. The unelected billionaire bureaucrat and his nameless, faceless, racist, junior bureaucrats in the Muskovite nighttime wrecking ball crew will be thrilled if you vote for it.

Another rule that is up for reversal is the CFPB regulation capping bank overdraft fees at $5. My constituents in Maryland, who might not be as rich as some of the constituents over on the other side, were getting overdraft charges of $35. They didn't like that, so they support the CFPB regulation capping overdraft fees from banks at $5, which is at most what it costs the banks to process it.

That practice was costing American consumers, mostly young people, mostly older people and working-class people, $5 billion a year. Biden's new $5 rule, that is the max for overdraft fees. Excuse me. It is not a rule. It is a dreadful regulation to cut overdraft fees by more than 80 percent.

□ 1545

Guess what? The banks didn't go bankrupt. They have never been wealthier or healthier, with record profits in the last quarter, even with consumer safety regulations, which we are supposed to be so terrified about.

Go ahead and vote for the big banks, Elon Musk, and the Republicans. Vote against your own interests. You can lift the $5 overdraft fee. I would be interested in what the gentleman thinks it should be, $30, $40? I don't know.

Finally, consider an HHS rule that you could be forced to vote for in advancing the big omnibus package they want: a ban on junk health insurance plans that rip our people off when they need healthcare the most and are most desperate. That is an HHS rule, and the Republicans say that that rule should be repealed because I guess the low-quality health insurance companies don't want to rip you off, right? If you believe that, then by all means, vote for the bill.

Instead of considering these regulations one at a time on their own merits and then voting on them transparently and publicly, as current law requires and as the vast majority of State constitutions and State legislatures require, this Republican bill would give Congress the power to wipe out all of these rules and hundreds of others in one single, massive party-line vote, which completely pulls the wool over the eyes of the American people.

Why do it? They haven't said. They just want it to slide through. They want to throw all these excellent regulations, supported by the vast majority of American people, in with a couple of regulations that I have heard them talk about, when I asked them why they want to do it, about washing machines. All right, say you don't like

those washing machine regulations. Make your argument to Congress. Let's debate it and discuss it, and maybe you will convince me. We will give it an up-or-down vote.

Each regulation gets its own vote. What is wrong with that?

No. They want to flood the zone with confusion and treat the people like sheep, not citizens. They don't want their constituents to notice the damage they are inflicting on the public good.

When I first heard about this legislative rip-off, I actually wanted to get in touch with the distinguished gentleman from Arizona, Representative ANDY BIGGS, because I remembered that he was the proud and impassioned sponsor of H.R. 91, which he introduced just a few weeks ago, on January 16, 2025. It was a very impressive bill. Guess what it is called? It is called the One Bill, One Subject Transparency Act. Let me repeat that: the One Bill, One Subject Transparency Act. That is his bill. I love the fact that he has been fighting for that. His bill ''requires each bill or joint resolution to include no more than one subject and the subject to be clearly and descriptively expressed in the measure's title.''

The midnight regulation kitchen sink bill would violate everything that I thought Congressman BIGGS believes about the legislative process: Members should be voting on one subject or one regulation at a time, not a dozen different subjects, not 100 different regulations in a single resolution, and the title of the bill should indeed clearly and descriptively communicate exactly what we are voting on, which means one thing.

Amazingly, before I could get to find Representative BIGGS to tell him that we had to get together across party lines to stop this new monstrosity I heard about, I was told by my staff that he was actually the author of the Midnight Rules Relief Act.

I couldn't believe it. I was dumbfounded and gobstopped. The lead sponsor of the One Bill, One Subject Transparency Act was now advocating this massive conglomeration of subjects and regulations, a huge legislative stew, a gumbo where poison pills and healthy vegetables are mixed up freely into one toxic, indigestible, and incomprehensible meal.

It is amazing to me. This is the cynical tactic that I thought my friends in the Freedom Caucus have for years been complaining about: the passage of bewilderingly complex and inscrutable legislation covering way too many subjects at once.

As Mr. BIGGS' press release on his bill stated: ''Too often, congressional leaders use 'must-pass bills' . . . as methods for passing laws that may have failed if considered on their own.'' I will have some more to say about things that he has said about it in the past.

He had a solution to all of these tactics of political dishonesty. The One Bill, One Subject Transparency Act would require that every bill considered by the House encompasses no more than one subject at a time. Let me repeat that: no more than one subject at a time. If a bill addresses two or more, then guess what? The bill becomes void.

I will stand up for that principle today that I thought once unified us. Borrowing from his own statements, I have also proposed an amendment to the Midnight Rules Relief Act. Using language taken directly from his legislation verbatim, I propose that any resolution we consider overturning agency regulations should be limited to a single subject, and if the resolution attempts to nullify regulations in two or more diverse areas, the resolution becomes, of course, null and void.

The whole point of the one bill, one subject House Republican movement led by the distinguished gentleman from Arizona is that Congress should not be destroying legislative transparency or accountability by shoving unrelated packages into a single moving legislative vehicle.

By the way, please spare me any lame rebuttal that we don't have time to actually do our jobs and hear each bill on its own, an argument that my Freedom Caucus friends have rightfully shown contempt for when raised in the past. If you want to repeal the $5 bank overdraft fee, the clean water rule, or the click-to-cancel rule, be my guest. We have all the time in the world to debate why you want to overthrow the $5 bank overdraft bill.

This week, the Republicans have brought a grand total of three bills to the floor, I think it is. We had some procedural minutia and three bills. We have nothing but time here. They have got no agenda.

Their whole agenda has been sidelined and supplanted by Elon Musk, who I thought was the fourth branch of government. Now, he seems to be the first branch of government, too, as my colleagues across the aisle simply want Elon Musk to do their jobs. We have members in committee thanking him for doing such great oversight.

Gee, I thought that Chairman COMER on the Oversight Committee was supposed to be doing oversight. I didn't think we needed a new fourth branch of government called Elon Musk to do that completely lawless and reckless and replete with conflicts of interest, but I digress.

Twenty-four resolutions of disapproval of specific regulations have actually been introduced in this Congress. Do you know how many of those resolutions of disapproval have been taken up in committees of jurisdiction? Zero. Do you know how many have been brought to the floor of the House by my colleagues, who are so exercised about big, bad, terrible, evil, and mean regulation? None of them.

They have not brought a single regulation forward. They have done nothing on regulations with all the time in the world. Now, they want to destroy every principle they claim to adhere to in terms of legislation on the floor of the House of Representatives.

The truth is that these Republican politicians are terrified to overturn these regulations in broad daylight. They know America supports them.

They should show some courage. Stand up for your anti-working class, anti-middle class, and plutocratic principles. Go ahead and vote to destroy the $5 bank overdraft rule, but do it openly, do it clearly, and do it one by one.

Take each one on. We will stay here with you all day. We will even work a 9-to-5 day, something we haven't seen around here in a long time. We will work 8 hours or 12 hours if you want to get into the details of it.

Let's do our jobs for real. I dare you, all you single-subject zealots out there, to oppose this embarrassing and humiliating Midnight Rules Relief Act.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the good humor that came from the other side of the aisle. It had me in stitches.

I don't really believe that the gentleman was chasing me around because he wanted to sign on as a cosponsor of my single-subject rule. He knows where to find me. I am in the committees with him. He could have done it. He didn't do it.

What I do find is this is a problem for me because I had the Democratic debate bingo card going, and I was feeling pretty good because he did mention ''Elon Musk'' five times. He mentioned ''billionaire'' three times and ''unelected billionaire'' one time. I had those on my card.

Words I didn't have include ''Muskovite,'' and I should have had that because he used that in Judiciary Committee earlier today. I also didn't have ''flood the zone,'' and I also didn't have ''gobstopped.'' I missed those on the bingo card for today.

I do find really intriguing his attempts to try to distract us from what this bill does.

The last thing I will say here before I yield to my friend from California is that the gentleman from Maryland mentioned omnibus bills, these omnibus bills that have everything in them, and he called them moronic. No doubt, I agree with him. The Inflation Reduction Act was moronic.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY).

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, to my friend from Maryland, I would say that one of the nice things about this bill that we are considering is that it allows us—if there are any good Biden-era regulations out there, they can

stay—to simply choose to disapprove of the bad ones, of which there are quite a few.

Then to this idea that we can't disapprove of regulations as a batch because we need to have a debate over each and every one in this rarified Chamber, I would point out that there was no debate at all in this Chamber for any of those regulations when they were imposed by the agencies. We had no role whatsoever. This act allows us to reclaim our legislative authority and our role in the policymaking process going forward.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support the Midnight Rules Relief Act because President Joe Biden went on a regulation binge in his last few months in office. From August 1 of last year through the end of his Presidency, there were 1,524 new regulations issued. This bill today will allow us to press the reset button and to have a more considered process for policymaking when it comes to all of these different areas affected.

There are three main reasons I think that this is a good idea. The first has to do with the nature of regulations themselves, the death by a million cuts that is being felt by every industry and every sector throughout our country. When it comes to energy projects to make our country energy independent, when it comes to transportation projects to make our roads safer and to alleviate traffic, when it comes to forest management projects, when it comes to just about anything you can think of, and when it comes to being a small business owner, the sheer weight of regulation after regulation is making it unduly difficult to build, grow, expand, empower people, hire, and move us toward the prosperity that this country is truly capable of.

Secondly, there is a question of democratic legitimacy. When you have a President who has just been rejected by voters, or in this case at least he has chosen not to run again and his Vice President did not succeed in getting elected, to then issue over 1,500 regulations is a way of trying to lock in unpopular policies.

What this bill does, again, is it only affects new regulations in the last year of one's Presidency. It prevents this sort of undemocratic hangover effect, where new regulations are hastily thrown together in order to block the change that people have voted for.

Finally, I point out that there is an opportunity for Congress to reclaim its legislative authority. We have seen the administrative state and the bureaucracies that issued the sort of regulations we are talking about that have continued to grow and grow and affect American life in new ways and more intrusive ways every single year. We have had a few changes that have allowed us to reverse this decades-long trajectory. Of course, there is the election of President Trump and his commitment to rolling back regulations. There is also the decision from the Supreme Court revisiting the Chevron doctrine.

This legislation adds to that mix. It gives us the ability to say that we are not going to continue to outsource all of our lawmaking authority to administrative agencies. Rather, when it comes to the core of making policy that will affect the lives of Americans, we ought to be very mindful of giving that away and allowing bureaucrats to do the job that the American people have entrusted to us.

When we do that, we can reclaim the idea of self-government, that policy is made by those who truly represent the people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Arizona for proposing this legislation. I look forward to seeing it pass, and I look forward from there on out to the newly empowered Congress being able to consider the merits of those regulations and decide on much better policies moving forward.

□ 1600

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 77, the so-called Midnight Rules Relief Act. Despite the bill's title, this legislation is not really intended to address midnight rules at all. Instead, it is nothing more than an effort by the Republican majority to advance their antigovernment, deregulatory agenda under cover of darkness.

Republicans know that taking a series of votes making it easier for corporations to undermine our health, safety, and economic well-being would be deeply unpopular. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't want the public to know that Republicans care more about corporations than consumers, so they want to package as many rules as possible into a single resolution that would eliminate these rules all at once, reducing transparency and obscuring the consequences.

This legislation would allow the majority to put dozens of critical regulations issued by the Biden administration on the chopping block. Republicans will talk all about the costs of these regulations, but the majority will never talk about the benefits, like healthier children, safer drinking water, and stronger consumer protections.

If my Republican colleagues really want to roll back regulations that ensure the safety of bath seats for infants or create dust, lead, and lead pipe safety standards, or update certain emergency braking standards, fine. Let's have that debate out in the open. We can let our constituents judge whether we took the right vote. Don't hide behind a giant omnibus bill that obscures the consequences of the majority's actions.

If we are truly concerned about so-called midnight rules, we have other options to check them. For example, at the end of President George W. Bush's administration, I authored a bill that would delay implementation of rules issued near the end of a President's term, giving his or her successor the chance to review such rules and to determine if they should go forward.

I believe there are ways that we could work together in a bipartisan manner to address this issue.

Where past efforts tried using a scalpel to address the problems associated with midnight rulemaking, today's Republicans want to instead use a machete, hacking away at the Biden administration's regulatory agenda, putting all of the rules together in one vote, and furthering their ideological goal of radically transforming our government.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to oppose this legislation.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues across the aisle have mentioned several rules that Democrats particularly favor: bank fee regulation, maybe something about lead pipe regulation, and drinking water regulation. These aren't legislation. These are regulations.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle say: If you are afraid to vote on them, you are going to stick them in this midnight rules reversion.

This is what I would submit: When all legislative authority is delegated to the bureaucratic agencies—Elon Musk isn't the fourth branch of government. He is not. Scholars have said and written for 30 years about the administrative state effectively being the fourth branch of government.

When my colleagues look at what scholars have said about that and are delegating that, my Democratic colleagues should just fess up and say: We are afraid. We are afraid to put the CFPB bill on the floor that would reduce the fees. We are afraid of doing that because we might be held responsible by our constituents.

That is what the minority is claiming that we want. In reality, Democrats would rather have nameless, faceless, unelected bureaucrats govern this country. That is what my Democratic colleagues want.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at that, I find myself saying: If Democrats want to preserve the separation of powers, it may be gone, but we can actually reinstitute it. It is not three coequal branches of government. That is not what the Founders intended.

The Founders are very clear in the Constitutional Convention that Article I, that branch, which happens to be this branch, was meant to be the most powerful, and why? It was closest to the people.

Why was that important? They wanted this group of people to be actually bound to the people, be closest to the people.

When Members do what the Democrats want to do, which is to actually

delegate it over to the executive branch and to the bureaucracies, off to la-la land, and not really having an effective way to review it, that is what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would prefer because it makes this body less accountable. Heaven knows, Democrats don't want to necessarily be accountable.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats argue that the Midnight Rules Relief Act does not allow for sufficient debate. That is one of the things we have heard here, but the purpose of the Midnight Rules Relief Act is to increase Congress' opportunity to consider and debate rules.

Since there was an influx of rules at the midnight hour, the last few months of a President's term, which my colleague from New York just mentioned, calling it, I believe, the Biden regulatory agenda, that is what it is. It is the Biden regulatory agenda. It is not the Democrat's elected official agenda, nor the Republicans. It is not these elected officials' agenda. It is not even President Biden's agenda, except for it has been done by a regulatory agency. My Democratic colleagues like that over there.

Congress becomes overwhelmed when we have 1,400 or 1,500 of those rules in the last few months. When Congress is overwhelmed like that, it means that many agency rules are left unreviewed altogether by Congress. It is not just some, but most. It is the vast majority, without a single second or an iota of debate by the elected officials.

America is being governed by unelected bureaucrats. That is who is governing America. The Midnight Rules Relief Act increases the opportunity for Congress to debate agency rules by allowing Congress to consider more than one rule at a time.

This allows agency rules, that would not otherwise receive any debate, to be debated in Congress. Take back the unelected bureaucrats' authority and put it in the hands of the people who have been elected.

Why is that important? We are meant to be accountable to the people. The reason that the House had the purse strings added to it is because we were closest to the people. We are meant to be more accountable to the people.

Prior to the 17th Amendment, the States had their authority and their rights preserved and protected by the U.S. Senate, but now the U.S. Senate is just a bunch of glorified national politicians.

What I would suggest is, if Congress wants to take back the legislative authority and actually have people who are accountable, then the Midnight Rules Relief Act needs to be passed.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of what the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) just said that I agree with because he wasn't talking at all about his bill.

Let's start with what I really agree with the gentleman about.

Article I makes Congress the preeminent and predominant branch of government, as Madison said in the Federalist Papers. We are the predominant branch. Don't accept anything from anybody on either side of the aisle if they get up and talk about how we are three coequal branches, which is what they teach people in fifth grade.

First of all, ''coequal'' is not even a word. That is like the term ''very unique'' or something like that. Republicans are saying we are three equal branches.

I think not because the preamble of the Constitution leads right into Article I. All of the legislative power is vested in us, and it is laid out in Article I, Section 8. There are 18 different powers to regulate commerce domestically, internationally, the budget, taxes, et cetera.

Then Article, I, Section 8, Clause 18 says: and all other powers necessary and proper to the execution of the foregoing powers.

Going to Article II, there are four short sections about the President. There wasn't even a President included in the Articles of Confederation. They decided to add it. Why? What is the core job of the President? It is to take care that the laws are faithfully executed, not distorted, not mangled, not overturned, not defeated, not thwarted.

The President doesn't have the power to impound money that has been appropriated by Congress. An appropriations act is just another law, like the law that you can't assault Federal officers. An appropriations act is just like that. Congress is, indeed, preeminent and predominant, but I am afraid that, at that point, my agreement with the gentleman falls off.

Let me start by addressing the comments of the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY). I don't know if the gentleman is there.

Mr. KILEY was actually a student of mine at Yale Law School. He was an A student all the way, but I would say he just gave us a B-minus argument because he at least addressed the idea of Congress reviewing regulations, and he said he thought that was important for legislative power.

We have that power. He didn't address what this bill is about, which is bundling together a whole bunch of dissimilar and unrelated regulations and voting on them once. The distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY) never talked about that. I hope the gentleman comes back to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) says that the Democrats are giving away legislative authority to the administrative agencies. Not at all. No. No. On the contrary. We think the administrative agencies must faithfully execute the laws that we, Congress, have passed.

This month, Republicans are the ones who have completely abdicated their legislative power. The majority is allowing Elon Musk's actions. God knows what role he is playing. He is a special government employee who hasn't turned in any conflict of interest forms, at least that I have seen.

I don't even know who he thinks he is representing or advocating for other than his own business interests, and he hasn't shown us that he has a conflict of interest waiver for the billions of dollars of taxpayer money he gets from government contracts. Yet, my Republican colleagues are perfectly happy to sit on their hands for several weeks and not do anything to get in the way.

Some of them shamefully have even gotten up and thanked Elon Musk for the great job of oversight he is doing when we have an Oversight Committee that the Republicans chair. The Judiciary Committee could be looking at it also.

Instead, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are applauding a guy and his nighttime crew of a bunch of junior Muskovites who are hacking into computers and taking over the private data of millions of Americans in blatant violation of the Privacy Act and the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986, which was pushed by Ronald Reagan, who would be turning over to learn what has become of his party.

Mr. Speaker, why do Republicans want to be able to bundle all of these bills? Republican Members haven't said.

Why don't my Republican colleagues tell us which bills the majority wants to bundle together?

The gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY) said: We are not going to put all those popular ones that I just talked about from the CFPB and the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Education. We are not going to put all those in it. It is just the unpopular ones.

Tell us which are the unpopular ones that Republicans are going to bundle together as the majority barrels this through.

The distinguished gentleman hasn't explained why he thinks this is befitting the legislative branch of government, which he rightfully commends as the preeminent branch of government.

I thought my colleagues on the other side of the aisle were opposed to multiple subject rules. I thought that the gentleman was advocating for single-subject bills. This is the exact opposite of that when everything is thrown into one big gumbo.

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

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I did not have junior Muskovite on the bingo card. I do find it interesting that the gentleman would be commenting on Ronald Reagan's current condition and his state of repose because I think he probably doesn't understand Ronald Reagan's philosophy at all.

Let's talk about what might be good if regulations are bundled together. Let's just consider a couple of things.

The need for the Midnight Rules Relief Act is most clearly seen in the wave of regulations issued by the prior administration in the eleventh hour of their administration. In the last few months, the Biden administration issued a staggering total of more than 1,400 final rules.

Here are two that might be single subject. Let's think about it. Would Democrats be okay if the Biden energy final rule of December 2024 was included, which effectively banned gas-powered water heaters in homes, which would increase their price by hundreds of dollars?

I wonder if my Democratic colleagues would be comfortable with sticking that with another Biden energy regulation issued in the same month, December of 2024, after he had already lost the election, that forces appliance manufacturers to comply with onerous rules that slow down the washing times for dishwashers from an hour or less to more than 2 hours?

One wonders. Those sound like they might be single-subject bills.

Moreover, there is nothing in here that mandates that we just bind everything together. The minority knows this doesn't require everything to be stuck together.

My Democratic colleagues know that they can be analyzed and bound together, as they can currently, except that they can't currently, can they?

I just picked two rules out of the air. Those two rules right there would require two separate bills. They would require two separate bills. Democrats don't want that.

Last October, the Environmental Protection Agency issued a final rule that dramatically raised the cost of repairing commercial and residential air-conditioning units. Maybe all three of those could go together in the same bill, but that can't be done under the current rule. That can't be done under the current law. We couldn't do it.

You would be stuck and you are going through the process, and believe me when I say I feel like we are going as slow as molasses here. My leadership would say that I complain about it all the time. We are taking next week off. Maybe Democrats would be comfortable if we were working next week and we were going to go through maybe 150 of these rules.

□ 1615

Maybe that would make you happy. What I will tell you is that the Midnight Rules Relief Act would allow Congress to consider and disapprove or accept all three of these burdensome regulations at one time. That makes us more responsive, and it makes us more able to process and oversee these regulators, these bureaucrats.

I find it intriguing. Elon Musk got mentioned again. He has replaced Trump. There is no longer TDS. Now, it is Elon Musk derangement syndrome because he has got to mention that on everything.

Here is the way it works. They want to say Elon Musk is looking at regulations and stuff like that, but we have an Oversight Committee. We do. We have an Oversight Committee, and we are busy conducting oversight.

It sure would be nice if the Oversight Committee could put some of these bills together as we consider these rules. However, when you have 1,400 rules, it doesn't matter how many oversight committees you have, you are going to have a tough time getting them done in a 2-year period. That is just the way it is.

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I know they talk about the deranged Trump syndrome. Now they are talking about the deranged Musk syndrome. I do know that Steve Bannon has described him as a truly evil individual, so I understand that there are major conflicts emerging over there.

In any event, back to the merits of the bill. I have to adjudicate the merits of this bill by the lack of coherence and energy and passion with which my normally passionate and eloquent colleague is operating today. One can barely torture out an argument from everything he is saying for the bill, and I noticed there is no one left on his side who wants to be associated with it in any way.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JACOBS), my colleague.

Ms. JACOBS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Midnight Rules Relief Act, which would strip away the robust debate, careful deliberation, and transparency our democracy requires when considering the repeal of long-established Federal rules.

I have to be honest with you, it is so funny to me that I have just heard my colleagues on the other side of the aisle spend 30 minutes talking about the preeminence of Congress, about how we don't want unelected bureaucrats making these rules, when they are literally allowing an unelected Elon Musk to run roughshod over Congress' power of the purse and to literally break laws that Congress has passed and mandated.

Let's talk about what the Midnight Rules Relief Act actually means in practice. It means that Republicans would dismantle important protections in areas like public safety, consumer rights, environmental conservation, data privacy, and so much more all in one fell swoop—sometimes dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of rules that took years to develop all just smooshed together.

Things like safeguards against lead in our drinking water, rigorous safety standards for baby products, antismoking measures for youth, and consumer protections from shady business practices.

In one hasty move, these protections could vanish without thorough debate or transparent decisionmaking.

Those Federal rules and so many more could be wiped out in the blink of an eye without substantial debate, without sufficient transparency, without allowing the American people to know why we are repealing these rules or what conflicts of interest might be at play, especially from Elon Musk.

For this reason, at the appropriate time, I will offer a motion to recommit this bill back to committee. If the House rules permitted, I would have offered the motion with an important amendment to this bill.

My amendment would prohibit the bundling of rules related to issue areas where Elon Musk has a clear conflict of interest. With a net worth of around $400 billion, Elon Musk has many conflicts of interests. That is why he should be bound by the same disclosure requirements and ethic guidelines as all other civil servants and elected officials, but, in the meantime, my amendment would force us to consider individually any regulation that may be a conflict of interest to Elon Musk.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEUSER). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. JACOBS. Get ready for these lists of conflicts of interests because it is long: anything related to national security, the aerospace industry, transportation and highway safety, biomedical technology, artificial intelligence, peer-to-peer payment systems, workplace safety and workers' rights, and data privacy. It is a long list, and it is why we should keep Elon Musk far away from our government.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the RECORD the text of this amendment immediately prior to the vote on the motion to recommit.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. JACOBS. Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in voting for the motion to recommit.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, surely, it must have snowed in Arizona last night. I thought I heard the gentleman agree with Steve Bannon. Hell must have frozen over is all I can say.

Now, here is the deal. We just heard the gentlewoman talk about how this bill would strip away robust debate. No, it won't. It won't do that. You can debate these regulations under this provision. There will be debate.

The same rules remain in place, but what she actually aggrandized and what the gentleman has been aggrandizing all day is bureaucratic control of regulatory schemes. That is what they are promoting. They want the bureaucrats to control with us not having adequate opportunity to review those.

When you have an administration like the Biden administration as well as the administrations of Clinton, Obama, and Bush, they all increased in their last 6 months by two-and-a-half times the number of regulations that they issued. Those end up staying in place because there is not capacity under the current law to review those regulations and actually debate them.

My bill actually does the opposite of what they are suggesting. It actually brings us in as Members of Congress to review, debate, discuss, and decide if we want to accept or reject those bureaucratic rules.

For the other aspect of this, before I reserve again, I will just say this: If you like those regulations, then why don't you put them in a piece of legislation and promote them yourself?

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

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

Mr. Speaker, why don't we put them in legislation? I would love to. If your leadership would allow us to bring it to the floor, to cap bank overdraft fees at $5, let's do it. I will take all these consumer public safety regulations, turn them into bills, and bring them to the floor as soon as you get an agreement from your leadership to do that. They don't even want to vote on the horrid bills that you bring forward much less the excellent bills that we have got.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is this: If you want to defend the $5 overdraft rule, if you want to defend the ban on junk health insurance, then vote against their bill. If you want to get rid of all this public safety regulation, then go ahead and support their bill.

The gentleman amazingly says in answer to my colleague from California that there will be time to debate the regulations. Their bill would allow for 355 major regulations to be bundled together so they can get away with just one vote. They would twist their arms to vote for that one vote for all the special interests out there who want to get rid of it.

Do you know how much time there would be to debate on each regulation if we had the normal 1 hour rule? As you know, right now each side gets 30 minutes. That is 60 minutes. We would be able to spend 10 seconds on each of those regulations. Just 10 seconds, and the gentleman assures us there will be ample time to do it.

Come on. Get real. Be serious.

This is an attempt to destroy the public interest in a way that the gentleman knows is an absolute travesty in terms of the integrity of the legislative process. He is the author of the one subject, one bill legislation. He is the author of it, and this bill is the absolute antithesis of it.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD two letters of opposition, one from the Coalition for Sensible Safeguards and one from Earthjustice.

COALITION FOR
SENSIBLE SAFEGUARDS,
February 12, 2025.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. HAKEEM JEFFRIES,
Democratic Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON AND DEMOCRATIC LEADER JEFFRIES: The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards (CSS), an alliance of over 200 labor, scientific, research, good government, faith, community, health, environmental, and public interest organizations that represent millions of Americans and advocate for effective regulations to protect the public, and the undersigned organizations strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 77, the Midnight Rules Relief Act.

H.R. 77 would amend the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to allow simultaneous disapproval of dozens of regulations finalized near the end of presidential terms using a single joint resolution. The effect of this bill would be to greatly expand the CRA's anti-regulatory force by amplifying the harmful impact of the CRA's ''salt the earth'' provision, which bars agencies from issuing new rules that are substantially the same as the rules that are repealed. It would also make it easier for narrow majorities of lawmakers to repeal recently completed safeguards without the due consideration and deliberation that Congress should employ before taking such drastic steps. As such, the operation of the bill would significantly constrain agencies' authority to carry out their statutory missions to protect the public.

The proposed legislation is based on a fatally flawed premise—namely, that regulations which are proposed or finalized during the so-called ''midnight'' rulemaking period are rushed and inadequately vetted. In fact, the very opposite is true. In recent months, the Biden Administration has finalized regulations that increase overtime pay to put more money in the pockets of working families, limit carbon emissions from polluters to fight climate change, increase fuel efficiency standards to make cars cleaner, protect workers from harmful ''non-compete'' clauses in employment contracts, block companies from taking advantage of consumers with ''junk fees,'' put new limits on toxic ''forever chemicals'' that poison communities across the country, and many more. Unlike CRA resolutions, which can sprint through Congress in just a few weeks, many of these regulations that will benefit the American public had been in the regulatory process for years.

In July 2016, Public Citizen released a report that compared rulemaking lengths for rules finalized at the end of the term or during the presidential transition period to those that were finalized outside of this period. The results were noteworthy. The report found that rules issued during the presidential transition period spent even more time in the rulemaking process and received even more extensive vetting than other rules.

Prominent administrative law experts have also concluded that the concerns regarding these regulations are not borne out by the evidence. For example, in 2012 the Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS) conducted an extensive study of regulations finalized near the end of previous presidential terms and found that many end-of-term regulations were ''relatively routine matters not implicating new policy initiatives by incumbent administrations.''

ACUS also found that the ''majority of the rules appear to be the result of finishing tasks that were initiated before the Presidential transition period or the result of deadlines outside the agency's control (such as year-end statutory or court-ordered deadlines).'' ACUS concluded that ''the perception of midnight rulemaking as an unseemly practice is worse than the reality.''

Supporters of H.R. 77 have presented no persuasive empirical evidence supporting their claims that regulations were rushed near the end of presidential terms. Likewise, they have supplied no evidence that such regulations did not involve diligent compliance with mandated rulemaking procedures. In reality, compliance with the current lengthy regulatory process prevents agencies from finalizing new regulations efficiently, and thus earlier in presidential terms.

In the end, it is difficult to overlook the tragic irony at the heart of H.R. 77. It would empower Congress to use the Congressional Review Act (CRA)—a process that is rushed, nontransparent and discourages informed decision-making—to block rules that have completed the long journey through the rulemaking process.

Unlike the CRA's expedited procedures, agency rules are subjected to myriad accountability mechanisms, and, for each rule, the agency must articulate a policy rationale that is supported by the rulemaking record and consistent with the requirements of the authorizing statute. In contrast, members of Congress do not have to articulate a valid policy rationale—or any rationale at all—in support of CRA resolutions of disapproval. Quite simply, they can be, and often are, an act of pure politics. H.R. 77 would make the situation even worse. It would, in effect, demand that all members of Congress have adequate expertise on all of the rules that would be targeted by a single disapproval resolution. Such a scenario would be highly unlikely.

It would also risk encouraging members to engage in ''horse trading'' to add still more rules to the disapproval resolution until enough votes have been gathered to ensure the resolution's passage. Surely, this approach to policymaking cannot be defended as superior to that undertaken by regulatory agencies.

Public Citizen, which co-chairs CSS, is actively tracking the CRA resolutions introduced in the 119th Congress. Over 60 rules are vulnerable to repeal through the CRA. Last Congress, 22 out of at least 109 CRA resolutions faced votes on the House or Senate floor. The targeted rules protect small businesses, workers, consumers, students, veterans, investors, people of color, clean air, clean water, renewable energy, wildlife, gun safety, among others.

CSS agrees that the CRA is in dire need of reform, but instead of expanding its harmful effects, as the Midnight Rules Relief Act would do, we encourage the House to evaluate proposals that would limit those effects. One such measure is the ''Stop Corporate Capture Act.'' Among its many real and meaningful reforms to strengthen the regulatory process, the Stop Corporate Capture Act would address one of the most problematic aspects of the CRA by eliminating the ''salt the earth'' provision discussed above. Critically, the Stop Corporate Capture Act would also create a fast-track reinstatement process for rules that were the subject of resolutions of disapproval.

We look forward to working with Congress to ensure that our regulatory process is working effectively and efficiently to protect the American public.

We strongly urge opposition to H.R. 77, the Midnight Rules Relief Act.

Sincerely,

Accountable.US, AFL–CIO, American Bird Conservancy, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Americans for Financial Reform,

Animal Welfare Institute, CalWild, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Economic Integrity, Center for Food Safety, Center for Justice & Democracy, Center for Progressive Reform, Center for Responsible Lending, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Christian Council of Delmarva, Citizen Action/Illinois, Climate Action Campaign, Coalition for Sensible Safeguards, Consumer Action.

Consumer Federation of America, Consumer Federation of California, Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety, Cultivating Lives Educational Services, Inc., Earthjustice, Economic Action Maryland Fund, Economic Policy Institute, Endangered Habitats League, Endangered Species Coalition, Food & Water Watch, FOUR PAWS USA, Friends of the Earth, Government Information WatchGreenpeace USA, Impact Fund, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, Kettle Range Conservation Group, Large Carnivore Fund, League of Conservation Voters, National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders, National Association of Consumer Advocates, National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients), National Consumers League, National Employment Law Project, National Health Law Program, National Wolfwatcher Coalition, National Women's Law Center, Natural Resources Defense Council, Oceana, P Street, People Power United, Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Public Citizen, Public Justice, Public Justice Center, Resource Renewal Institute, RESTORE: The North Woods, Rise Economy, Sierra Club, Southern Environmental Law Center, Team Wolf, Texas Appleseed, Tzedek DC, Union of Concerned Scientists, United Steelworkers (USW), Vermont Public Interest Research Group, Virginia Citizens Consumer Council, Womxn From The Mountain, Wyoming Wildlife Advocates.

EARTHJUSTICE.

Re Please Oppose H.R. 77, the ''Midnight Rules Relief Act.''

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. HAKEEM JEFFRIES,
Democratic Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON AND DEMOCRATIC LEADER JEFFRIES: On behalf of Earthjustice, I respectfully urge you to oppose H.R. 77 when it comes up for a floor vote next week. H.R. 77, titled ''The Midnight Rules Relief Act,'' would amend the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to allow Congress to bundle an unlimited number of regulations finalized in the last months of a President's term into a single CRA resolution of disapproval, instead of blocking them one at a time as permitted under current law. The ability to reach back and place a multitude of an Administration's significant rules under the harsh provisions of the Congressional Review Act is dangerous and outrageous. In the interest of public health and environmental protections that keep us all safe, please oppose the Midnight Rules Relief Act and vote NO.

A resolution of disapproval containing dozens, if not hundreds, of administrative rules finalized over the previous potentially six months or more that dealing with the environment, public health, labor, education, and a myriad of other issues would get merely 10 hours of debate. Frankly, neither the full content of the resolution nor its sweeping implications would receive anything like the scrutiny such a draconian measure deserves. In marked contrast, the very rules targeted by such a resolution would have been many years in the making and have had public engagement as required under the Administrative Procedure Act and other federal laws. Even worse than ''repealing'' in one fell swoop safeguards developed over the years is the CRA's requirement that an agency may not reissue the rule in ''substantially the same form.'' In essence, proponents of this bill seek a permanent 11th-hour veto of essential safeguards, as Congress would never likely successfully re-legislate dozens or hundreds of rules.

There is no plausible reasonable governance justification for Congress to repeal a substantially large number of rules in one blunt measure. The various concerns raised to justify this amendment to the CRA are a pure fallacy. Proponents of H.R.77 presume that ''midnight rules,'' that is, rules finalized towards the end of a presidential term, lack the quality of analysis required in the rule-making process that helps justify regulations. However, most rules finalized in the last months of an administration, irrespective of political party, have gone through multiple years of review and processing, sometimes predating the administration's releasing the final rule.

The bill would also risk encouraging members of Congress to engage in ''horse trading'' to add still more rules to the en bloc disapproval resolution until enough votes have been gathered to ensure the resolution's passage. Indeed, this approach to policymaking cannot be defended as superior to the careful process undertaken by regulatory agencies for each separate rule.

In its current iteration, the CRA is an extremely blunt instrument that can permanently damage crucial public health and safety measures. It disregards the extensive work and expertise that went into the rulemaking process, limits transparency in the political process, devalues public participation in rulemaking, and provides no judicial review. This legislative proposal would only intensify the dramatic and problematic consequences of the CRA by allowing Congress to bundle rules into one single resolution of disapproval.

We strongly urge you to oppose the Midnight Rules Relief Act and reject its false and misleading rhetoric, which is unrelated to the real problems of excessive and systemic delay in the regulatory process.

Sincerely,

BRIELLE L. GREEN, ESQ.,
Earthjustice, Policy & Legislation, Senior Legislative Counsel, Regulatory Reform & Access to Justice.

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

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona has 10½ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. Speaker, when I consider everything that was just said and what a travesty this bill is and how hardened and offensive this bill is, I find it intriguing.

Just like I am not sure I can accept that he was chasing me down because he wanted to sign on to my single-subject bill, I am not sure that his math is right on the 10 seconds to discuss and debate each bill.

Mr. RASKIN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. No. You had your 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is, this bill has the potential to bring back into control and authority the legislative power that has been so wrongfully and wholly without oversight delegated to these agencies that are out there.

It has resulted, under Democrat and Republican administrations, in regulations that impact every aspect of every Americans' life, and they have been put together by unelected bureaucrats.

There is a reason that people said we have had enough of it. That is one of the things that President Trump campaigned on. My colleagues across the aisle don't want to accept that, but the bottom line is this: The meddling that goes on in every aspect of your life they want to control whether you can have a gas heater in your home. They don't want that, but by golly they are going to pass an omnibus bill that spends trillions of dollars and then they are going to complain because we are bundling a few regulations together.

There is no requirement that you bundle every regulation together. There is no requirement that you bundle all of them together. There is no requirement that you bundle two together.

This bill merely allows that to take place. I have mentioned several of what those rules may be that would actually be within the same subject even, but the bottom line is this: If we don't do it, the bureaucrats are going to continue to run this place. They are going to run the country, and the American people will have no recourse.

This gives them recourse. We are the ones who are elected, not the bureaucrats. If you want the $5 CFPB rule, then go ahead and introduce it. Don't complain to me, oh, gosh, your Speaker won't let it in. Yeah. I know how that goes. I have been here when there has been a Democrat Speaker. You know what? The pendulum swings back and forth, but what shouldn't swing back and forth is legislative authority.

We are the preeminent, predominant power amongst the separation of powers, the three branches of government, and there should not be four. Now, scholars will tell you there is a fourth. It is the administrative state. This curbs the administrative state. That is why this is so important.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support and pass this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 122, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Ms. JACOBS. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Jacobs of California moves to recommit the bill H.R. 77 to the Committee on the Judiciary.

The material previously referred to by Ms. JACOBS is as follows:

Ms. Jacobs moves to recommit the bill H.R. 77 to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith, with the following amendment:

Page 2, line 8, insert ''except in the case of a rule that concerns national security, the aerospace industry, transportation or highway safety, biomedical technology, artificial intelligence, peer-to-peer payment systems, fair labor practices, or the administration of the Privacy Act of 1974,'' before ''a joint resolution of disapproval''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XIX, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of passage.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 205, nays 213, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 40]

YEAS—205

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

NAYS—213

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

NOT VOTING—15

Crawford	Gottheimer	Luna
Donalds	Grijalva	Mullin
Garamendi	Johnson (GA)	Pettersen
Gillen	Kelly (PA)	Smith (MO)
Gomez	Leger Fernandez	Wilson (FL)

□ 1652

Messrs. BAIRD, BILIRAKIS, SMITH of Nebraska, GRAVES, GROTHMAN, VAN DREW, MASSIE, and TURNER of Ohio changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Ms. MORRISON, Messrs. LEVIN, MFUME, and STANTON, Ms. DELAURO, and Mr. RUIZ changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Ms. GILLEN. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 40.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

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

[Roll No. 41]

YEAS—212

Aderholt	Dunn (FL)	Huizenga
Alford	Edwards	Hunt
Allen	Ellzey	Hurd (CO)
Amodei (NV)	Emmer	Issa
Arrington	Estes	Jack
Babin	Evans (CO)	Jackson (TX)
Bacon	Ezell	James
Baird	Fallon	Johnson (LA)
Balderson	Fedorchak	Johnson (SD)
Barr	Feenstra	Jordan
Barrett	Finstad	Joyce (OH)
Baumgartner	Fischbach	Joyce (PA)
Bean (FL)	Fitzgerald	Kean
Begich	Fleischmann	Kelly (MS)
Bentz	Flood	Kennedy (UT)
Bergman	Fong	Kiggans (VA)
Bice	Foxx	Kiley (CA)
Biggs (AZ)	Franklin, Scott	Kim
Biggs (SC)	Fry	Knott
Bilirakis	Fulcher	Kustoff
Boebert	Garbarino	LaHood
Bost	Gill (TX)	LaLota
Brecheen	Gimenez	LaMalfa
Bresnahan	Goldman (TX)	Langworthy
Buchanan	Gonzales, Tony	Latta
Burchett	Gooden	Lawler
Burlison	Gosar	Lee (FL)
Calvert	Graves	Letlow
Cammack	Green (TN)	Loudermilk
Carey	Greene (GA)	Lucas
Carter (GA)	Griffith	Luttrell
Carter (TX)	Grothman	Mace
Ciscomani	Guest	Mackenzie
Cline	Guthrie	Malliotakis
Cloud	Hageman	Maloy
Clyde	Hamadeh (AZ)	Mann
Cole	Haridopolos	Massie
Collins	Harrigan	Mast
Comer	Harris (MD)	McCaul
Crane	Harris (NC)	McClain
Crank	Harshbarger	McClintock
Crenshaw	Hern (OK)	McCormick
Cuellar	Higgins (LA)	McDowell
Davidson	Hill (AR)	McGuire
DesJarlais	Hinson	Messmer
Diaz-Balart	Houchin	Meuser
Downing	Hudson	Miller (IL)

Miller (OH)	Rogers (KY)	Stutzman
Miller (WV)	Rose	Taylor
Miller-Meeks	Rouzer	Tenney
Mills	Roy	Thompson (PA)
Moolenaar	Rulli	Tiffany
Moore (AL)	Rutherford	Timmons
Moore (NC)	Salazar	Turner (OH)
Moore (UT)	Scalise	Valadao
Moore (WV)	Schmidt	Van Drew
Moran	Schweikert	Van Duyne
Murphy	Scott, Austin	Van Orden
Nehls	Self	Wagner
Newhouse	Sessions	Walberg
Norman	Shreve	Weber (TX)
Nunn (IA)	Simpson	Webster (FL)
Obernolte	Smith (NE)	Westerman
Ogles	Smith (NJ)	Wied
Onder	Smucker	Williams (TX)
Owens	Spartz	Wilson (SC)
Palmer	Stauber	Wittman
Perry	Stefanik	Womack
Pfluger	Steil	Yakym
Reschenthaler	Steube	Zinke
Rogers (AL)	Strong	

NAYS—208

Adams	García (IL)	Olszewski
Aguilar	Garcia (TX)	Omar
Amo	Gillen	Pallone
Ansari	Golden (ME)	Panetta
Auchincloss	Goldman (NY)	Pappas
Balint	Gonzalez, V.	Pelosi
Barragán	Goodlander	Perez
Beatty	Gray	Peters
Bell	Green, Al (TX)	Pingree
Bera	Harder (CA)	Pocan
Beyer	Hayes	Pou
Bishop	Himes	Pressley
Bonamici	Horsford	Quigley
Boyle (PA)	Houlahan	Ramirez
Brown	Hoyer	Randall
Brownley	Hoyle (OR)	Raskin
Budzinski	Huffman	Riley (NY)
Bynum	Ivey	Rivas
Carbajal	Jackson (IL)	Ross
Carson	Jacobs	Ruiz
Carter (LA)	Jayapal	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
Davids (KS)	Mannion	Swalwell
Davis (IL)	Matsui	Sykes
Davis (NC)	McBath	Takano
Dean (PA)	McBride	Thanedar
DeGette	McClain Delaney	Thompson (CA)
DeLauro	McClellan	Thompson (MS)
DelBene	McCollum	Titus
Deluzio	McDonald Rivet	Tlaib
DeSaulnier	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
Fitzpatrick	Morrison	Veasey
Fletcher	Moskowitz	Velázquez
Foster	Moulton	Vindman
Foushee	Mrvan	Wasserman Schultz
Frankel, Lois	Nadler	
Friedman	Neal	Waters
Frost	Neguse	Watson Coleman
Garamendi	Norcross	Whitesides
Garcia (CA)	Ocasio-Cortez	Williams (GA)

NOT VOTING—13

Crawford	Grijalva	Pettersen
De La Cruz	Kelly (PA)	Smith (MO)
Donalds	Leger Fernandez	Wilson (FL)
Gomez	Luna	
Gottheimer	Mullin	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1700

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, today I was unable to vote in the afternoon due to attending an event at the White House that was during voting time. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 40 and YEA on Roll Call No. 41.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I missed the following votes, but had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 40 and NAY on Roll Call No. 41.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 879

Mr. MURPHY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOLDMAN) as cosponsor of H.R. 879.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGS of South Carolina). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

HONORING BART REISING

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

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank one of the longest serving members of Team Scalise, a son of Covington, Georgia, and a proud Ole Miss alum, Bart Reising.

Bart came to the Hill in 2011 after working on political campaigns and served my good friends, AUSTIN SCOTT and Bill Flores, as their scheduler before joining my team in 2014 as operations director during the last few months of my chairmanship of the Republican Study Committee.

Bart continued his role as operations director when I was elected majority whip. He kept our office operations moving smoothly. Bart made sure that the workers in this beautiful Capitol, the men and women who literally make sure we have a functioning building, and the Capitol Police who protect us always knew that Team Scalise appreciated their efforts.

Later, as my member services director, he worked with so many of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to make sure their needs were heard and taken care of.

When I became the majority leader and all my staff's roles and responsibilities expanded, Bart took on the role of deputy chief of staff, a position that my chief has often reminded me has been instrumental to the success of our team and our House majority in the last Congress.

Bart has been a mentor to so many young Hill staffers, always taking time out of his incredibly busy schedule to meet with interns and staffers alike, providing invaluable guidance as they navigate their Hill careers.

To me and my wife, Jennifer, and our two children, he has been a dear friend. He is fiercely loyal, and I am deeply appreciative of all he has done for me and this institution. While Bart may be leaving the Hill, he is forever Team Scalise.

I wish Bart good luck in this next new adventure that he is now embarking upon. I know his parents, Craig and Susan, and his brother, Brett, are so proud of what he has accomplished. I thank him for the positive mark he has left on this great institution.

HONORING CHAMPION OF THE WEEK KHIRYE TYLER

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

Mrs. SYKES. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize Khirye Tyler as Ohio's 13th Congressional District Champion of the Week.

Khirye is a music producer and recently worked on the production for Beyonce's country album, ''Cowboy Carter,'' which won Best Country Album at the 2025 Grammys.

Khirye's story is one of commitment and dedication, and he is a living testament to the saying: ''It's not how you start but how you finish.''

Khirye grew up in foster care where he was raised by pastors who often played piano for the church. It was during this time that he developed a passion for music. His work and passion helped ''Cowboy Carter'' debut at number one on the Billboard 200 album chart in April, and he is responsible for several credits, contributing to the writing, sound design, and production, as well as providing piano, percussion, and bass instrumentals.

As a card-carrying member of the BeyHive, I was thrilled to see somebody from Ohio's 13th Congressional District make an impact on an album that some have come to adore but, more importantly, put a stamp on music history. On Facebook on February 3, he posted:

A kid from Mansfield, Ohio, won two Grammys last night. Kind of wild to even say that. I am filled with gratitude. Album of the Year/Best Country Album. Thank you, God, for being God.

Congratulations again to Khirye on this fantastic accomplishment. We thank him for all that he does to inspire the next generation of music-makers. Creative visionaries like him are a shining example of what makes

Ohio's 13th Congressional District the birthplace of champions.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. LAWLER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CHRISTOPHER KATZ

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

Mr. LAWLER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of Christopher Katz, a young man of extraordinary dedication, courage, and service.

At just 22 years old, Christopher had already built a legacy of leadership, mentorship, and commitment to his community and country before he was tragically taken too soon.

A native of Crompond, New York, Christopher was a standout athlete at Walter Panas High School where he played football and baseball. His love for sports extended beyond the field. He mentored young athletes, coaching with the same dedication and passion that defined his life.

Christopher pursued his dream of serving others, earning a degree in criminal justice from Temple University and serving as a military police officer in the U.S. Army Reserve. In November, he joined the U.S. Capitol Police, training to protect all of us here. Tragically, his journey was cut short in a car accident in Georgia while training with fellow recruits.

His kindness, bravery, and commitment to service left a lasting impact on all who knew him. Today, we honor his memory, and may his legacy continue to inspire us all.

PROTECTING NIH GRANT FUNDING

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

Ms. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to President Trump's attempt to dramatically reduce NIH grant funding for research institutions, including those in my home State of North Carolina.

Immediately after Trump implemented these extreme funding cuts over the weekend, my staff and I heard directly from universities and researchers in The Triangle about how devastating this decision would be. By slashing NIH funding, Trump would undercut groundbreaking research on cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease, and other conditions that kill millions of Americans.

While I am relieved that the Federal judge temporarily blocked these cuts from taking effect, the fight is far from over. This is just another example of Trump's complete lack of concern for the health of the American people. His actions would cost lives and jobs. I won't stop fighting until these life-saving resources are permanently restored.

□ 1715

HONORING SHERIFF JANIS MANGUM

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

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize retired Jackson County Sheriff Janis Mangum as the very first Special Georgian of the Ninth. This award highlights those who make a real difference in north Georgia, and Janis has done just that.

For nearly four decades, Janis dedicated her life to law enforcement, starting as a radio operator in 1985, serving 19 years as a criminal investigator, and then leading as Jackson County Sheriff for 12 years. Janis rightfully earned the Georgia Sheriffs' Association's 2023 Sheriff of the Year award, and she recently retired in December after 39 remarkable years of dedicated service.

Her impact extends beyond the Peach State, as she has also done inspiring work to help North Carolinians recover from the devastating destruction of Hurricane Helene.

The Ninth District is blessed to have heroes like Janis Mangum who continuously display a true servant's heart.

I thank Janis for her service and unwavering dedication to our North Georgia community. She is truly a Special Georgian of the Ninth.

In her retirement, may the Lord give her fair winds and following seas.

UNPRECEDENTED INFLUENCE

(Mrs. TORRES of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. TORRES of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today as we find ourselves in a situation where a small group of very powerful individuals led by Elon Musk are gaining unprecedented influence over critical national systems.

Right in front of our eyes, we can see how Republicans are allowing Musk to take full control of key resources, including access to Treasury payments and government-backed projects.

The consequence of this unchecked power is a billionaire's unchecked ability to take earned services away from American families, distort markets for personal gain, and influence the future of American democracy.

It is time to ask the tough questions: Why are Republicans enabling this concentration of power, and who is really benefiting from this arrangement?

It is time to take a stance for transparency and accountability in our government. It is time to stand for the rule of law and for our democracy.

HONORING CHIEF PATRICK F. KANE, JR.

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

Mr. BRESNAHAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Chief Patrick K. Kane, Jr., a dedicated public servant, a beloved family man, and a pillar of the Jessup community.

Chief Kane devoted nearly five decades to law enforcement, proudly and faithfully serving as a Jessup police officer from 1960 before leading as chief of police from 1971 until his retirement in 2008.

A U.S. Army veteran, Chief Kane stood watch at the Berlin Wall before returning home to continue his lifelong mission of protecting and serving his community. His leadership was defined by integrity, humility, and an unwavering commitment to his officers and community.

Chief Kane lived a life worth living in service of others. Known for his calm demeanor and firm determination, he truly embodied the words of Theodore Roosevelt: ''Speak softly and carry a big stick.''

Chief Kane leaves behind a lasting legacy of service, love for his family, and devotion to his community. He will be deeply missed.

MUSK-TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

(Ms. BROWNLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BROWNLEY. Madam Speaker, yesterday, Elon Musk, an unelected, unvetted billionaire who has seized control of our government, addressed the Nation from the Oval Office.

Instead of tackling issues like rising costs, the Musk-Trump administration is consumed by an agenda to dismantle our democracy and deliver nothing but chaos.

It has provided no relief at the gas pump or at the grocery store. Worse, today, reports show a 3 percent inflation rate, the highest since June 2024, due to Musk-Trump tariffs.

While the Musk-Trump administration is on track to rack up over 100 lawsuits in its first 100 days, a direct result of its illegal, unconstitutional actions, it has failed to take any steps to help everyday Americans with everyday challenges.

House Democrats are working to protect Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, nutrition assistance programs, Head Start, the Department of Education, and much more. I urge this administration and House Republicans to

work with us on real solutions that prioritize the interests of working families over the interests of billionaires.

RECOGNIZING KAMILLE NUQUE

(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. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Kamille Nuque, a seventh grader who won the Glynn County Spelling Bee on January 15.

Kamille, who is a student at Needwood Middle School in Brunswick, Georgia, won first place in the competition with 14 other spelling bee champions by correctly spelling the word ''astringent.''

Kamille's inspiration to compete is her older sister, Kara, who won back-to-back Glynn County Spelling Bees in 2021 and 2022.

In addition to inspiration from her older sister, Kamille was supported by her parents, Karl and Mary, who helped her study by asking her to spell words from books.

Because of her hard work and dedication, Kamille was able to stay relaxed and focused on stage during the intense competition.

I would also like to congratulate Needwood Middle School eighth grader Julia Knight, who came in second place and will serve as the alternate to Kamille in the region competition.

I wish Kamille luck as she represents Glynn County in the region 8 competition at Georgia Southern's Savannah campus on February 22.

SUMMER EBT PROGRAM

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

Mrs. MCBATH. Madam Speaker, when school lets out and the heat of summer comes, the promise of daily meals falls away for too many children.

Last year, summer meal programs in Georgia failed to serve one-third of our counties and reached less than 15 percent of eligible children.

The Federal summer EBT program fills in the gaps for hardworking parents who some nights might take less for themselves so there is enough to go around the table.

I have led three letters to the Governor of Georgia to encourage him to accept the Federal dollars that would give every eligible child access to summer meals. We have received no substantive response.

The next deadline is this Saturday.

Without this program, kids in Georgia might have to rely on only half a sandwich from a friend at the park picnic table or, God forbid, go without.

Please don't let Georgia families be left out again this summer.

HONORING CORPORAL ROBERT WILLETT, JR.

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

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Willett family and the life of Corporal Robert Willett, Jr. Ninety-eight-year-old Corporal Willett bravely served our Nation in both World War II and the Korean war.

The son of World War I veteran Roger Willett, Sr., he fought for his family's legacy. When Roger Willett, Sr., passed away, he was laid to rest at Canaveral National Cemetery.

Corporal Willett made a simple request to honor his parents, which was that his late mother receive the memorial plaque next to her family where Corporal Willett himself will one day rest. However, due to bureaucratic resistance, this has resulted in 3 years of denial from entrenched bureaucratic agencies.

Denying recognition is a failure to those who serve.

My office will not stand by as bureaucracy overrides honor. We will continue to fight for all Americans.

The Willetts' dedication reflects our Nation and serves as a powerful reminder.

It is my privilege to speak today, and I thank him for his service and resolve.

STANDING WITH UKRAINE

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, today, I stand with the long-suffering people of Ukraine. Theirs is a valiant fight to reclaim their territory, their sovereignty, their security, and their destiny.

Vladimir Putin brutally invaded 11 years ago with no provocation. Russia must be pushed back inside its own borders, and today, Secretary of Defense Hegseth stood on territory freed by 400,000 American soldiers, whose graves mark liberty's greatest victory over tyranny across Europe. Their sacrifice birthed the free world.

General Omar Bradley, one of our Nation's most beloved and great generals, created NATO. He would have been astounded at what Hegseth did in stating: It is unrealistic for Ukraine to return to its pre-2014 borders.

Why would Hegseth take Russia's side with its war criminals and murderous plunder of a free people? Why would he do that?

Ukraine's President Zelenskyy has consistently emphasized Ukraine's position that no peace negotiations with Russia are possible before the complete restoration of Ukraine's stolen territory and return to Ukraine's 1991 internationally recognized borders. The free world must achieve that.

GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT BORDER SECURITY

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, yesterday, I had a chance to participate in the Border Security Caucus discussion with Chief Mike Banks of U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

With over 25 years of experience securing the border, he gave us a clear look at CBP's operations and challenges they face.

One thing was very obvious, though. Under President Trump, morale has improved dramatically and illegal crossings have dropped dramatically into the low hundreds, numbers they haven't seen in many, many years.

Strong leadership and real enforcement policies have made a big difference there. Chief Banks made it clear that CBP has a solid plan to finish the border fence, along with all of the attending technology and equipment that needs to go with that. However, without proper funding, that plan will not work out. That is not an option.

Securing the border means enforcing the law, stopping horrific traffickers, and holding illegal immigrants accountable for breaking the law. If we are serious about border security, we need to back CBP 100 percent with the resources they need to get the job done.

No more delays. No more excuses. It is time to act. Indeed, you can see by the improved morale that things are moving in the right direction.

WE CANNOT NORMALIZE CRUELTY

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

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act, which I introduced with my colleague, Representative ESPAILLAT of New York, last week. No one, no child in the classroom, no mother in a hospital, no family at a place of worship, should live in fear that an immigration raid should shatter their lives in the very spaces meant to protect them.

Under the prior established norms, we understood that schools and hospitals and places of worship were off limits to Federal agencies. Now, in my district and across the country, patients are skipping their appointments, fearful that they could be detained by ICE and separated from their families.

Churches are turning to virtual worship services so that they will not put their parishioners at risk, and teachers have been training to stop ICE from entering their schools, to protect children.

We cannot become a government that normalizes cruelty. This bill will ensure that the promise of safety in those places is enshrined in law.

In America, we do not weaponize fear. We protect our communities, and we do what is right.

□ 1730

CELEBRATING THE OLD CANTEEN

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

Mr. MAGAZINER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the legacy of a Rhode Island institution, Joe Marzilli's Old Canteen.

For nearly 75 years, the Old Canteen wasn't just any old restaurant. It was a gathering place where families came together, friendships were formed, and traditions were passed down over some of the best Italian food in the country.

Located in the historic Federal Hill neighborhood in Providence, the Old Canteen and its iconic neon sign became a symbol of Rhode Island's proud Italian community.

At the heart of it all was the Marzilli family, led by Joe and then his son Sal, who can now enjoy a well-earned retirement. Like so many entrepreneurs across Rhode Island, Madam Speaker, the Marzillis showed us that when you pour your heart into your work, you can build something incredible.

The Old Canteen may have closed its doors, but its legacy will never fade.

To the Marzilli family and to all the wait staff, chefs, and regulars who made the Old Canteen such a special place, I thank you for an incredible 75 years.

CONGRATULATING CAMDEN COUNTY EMS

(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. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate a momentous achievement for Camden County, North Carolina. They will soon have emergency medical services operational for the first time in history.

The county has relied on external EMS providers for emergencies, but thanks to the unwavering commitment of local officials and the community, Camden County will now deliver paramedic-level emergency medical services.

Such a transformative step means quicker response times, improved coverage, and, most critically, an enhanced capability to save lives when every second matters. In rural communities, reliable emergency medical services are not just a luxury but an absolute necessity.

Let us congratulate Camden County EMS on this significant achievement. We eagerly anticipate their first call, knowing that they will have a positive impact on the community for many years to come.

HONORING ROD AND SHIRLEY SAUNDERS

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

Mr. LATIMER. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Rod and Shirley Saunders, who have both dedicated decades of their lives to serving the Bronx community.

Rod is a former president of the African American Association of Co-op City and the Wakefield Kiwanis Club. In 2004, Rod was appointed by the Bronx borough president to serve on the NYC Department of Education's Community Education Council. Since 2015, he has served as a member of the Riverbay Corporation's board of directors and is currently serving as president of the board.

Shirley cofounded the African American Association of Co-op City and served as board secretary and chair of the security committee for the Riverbay board of directors. Shirley volunteered for almost a decade with the Girl Scouts as a volunteer mom, helping out Daisies, Brownies, and Girl Scouts. She is currently serving our community as deputy city clerk of New York for Bronx County.

They are the Co-op City power couple. It is an honor to recognize Rod and Shirley's service to the Bronx today, and a grateful community thanks them.

REMEMBERING KYRE AMBROSE

(Ms. PRESSLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PRESSLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember Kyre Ambrose, an incredible young man and talent who, in his far-too-short life, touched the lives and hearts of many.

Kyre was a source of joy and love to his family, his community, and the audiences he performed for, where he shared his calling, his true artistic genius, his dancing with all of us. He was strength, beauty, and poetry in motion.

Kyre was a recent graduate of Boston Arts Academy and an incredible contributor to the cultural fabric of the Boston dance community, as well as OrigiNation, the BAA school community, and the American Musical and Dramatic Academy, where he was studying and performing.

Those who knew, instructed, learned from, and, most of all, danced with Kyre described him as a remarkable spirit who exuded love and tenderness on the stage and in his relationships.

The loss of his talent, joy, and love is deeply felt by the Mattapan and Boston communities. We mourn the passing of this young man on January 18, and we continue to grieve his absence.

To his beloved mom, Rina; to his father, Kyron; to his sisters, Hope and Ky'Leah; and to his grandparents, family, and friends, thank you for sharing the bright light and gift that Kyre was for so many of us. His memory and legacy will continue to dance in our hearts and minds forever.

Thank you, Kyre. We are honoring you here today on the House floor because I do consider your loss to be a loss for our Nation.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS DELIVERING RESULTS FOR AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam 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. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Utah?

There was no objection.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam Speaker, the 119th Congress has been off to a great start with House Republicans delivering results for the American people.

This week, we are continuing our efforts to reverse the Biden administration's harmful policies and further protect our country from a dangerous, illegal border invasion.

Today, we passed Congressman BIGGS' Midnight Rules Relief Act to amend the Congressional Review Act to allow Congress to disapprove of multiple rules through one joint resolution if rules were issued during the last year of a President's term in office.

House Republicans will also vote on Congressman CISCOMANI's Agent Raul Gonzalez Officer Safety Act, which holds accountable illegal immigrants who break our laws and engage in dangerous high-speed chases in our border communities.

I am grateful to my colleagues for joining me this evening to discuss these necessary pieces of legislation.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

STOPPING REGULATORS FROM TAKING AWAY AMERICA'S ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. MOORE for yielding. I appreciate his leadership in putting the spotlight on the important issues and important legislation that will help us to better serve the American public with what they have asked for.

On the whole concept of government overreach and last-minute declarations that have really put a kink in Federal land use, which is important for people, for energy production, and for being able to utilize and enjoy them, what have you, it was very dramatic and very aggressive at the end of the Biden administration.

Madam Speaker, 674 million acres of U.S. lands and waters were cut off right at the end of the Biden administration from good uses.

The U.S. Forest Service signs at least used to say: ''Land of Many Uses.'' Now, they seem to be restricted down to just whatever a handful in government or environmental organizations want.

We have seen Antiquities Act abuse under President Biden. The Antiquities Act was used to set aside 6 million acres of national land as national monuments. Some of the big examples include, once again, the Bears Ears National Monument at 1.63 million acres, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah at 1.9 million acres, and the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument in New Mexico at 242,000 acres.

A total of 15 national monuments were either created, expanded, or recreated after they had been rightsized in the previous Trump administration. They cover 9 million acres, including also the Chuckwalla and Sattitla Highlands National Monuments at 848,000 acres.

These are dramatic stretches of land that are basically being cut off from human use or usage of the resources, in some cases even the ability to effectively fight or prevent fire.

Madam Speaker, you have the Moab to Mojave Conservation Corridor, for example, covering 18 million acres across California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. They say they are protecting these lands. You would have to ask the question: Protecting from what?

Any type of operation you seek to do out there, whether it is going to be mineral extraction, energy, oil and gas, or timber, they all require permits. When they eventually are successful, these permits and processes can be extremely lengthy. It can take many years in some cases to get them. Still, we keep plowing on.

The 100 million acres of Federal lands that have been cut off through executive orders without approval from Congress also include, in Alaska, ANWR, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which was expanded, limiting even more energy exploration. In Arizona, the Sonoran Desert National Monument, at 496,000 acres, is restricting activities like ranching and energy development.

Other concerns for rural areas include restrictions on land use for industries, as I mentioned, logging, ranching, and energy production. They have hurt rural economies. Montana has dramatic limits on timber and grazing. Wyoming has increased regulatory hurdles for energy development.

What are the economic drivers and especially the inflation drivers of this in this country? High energy costs are a big part of that. President Trump wants to turn that back around, and I hope we can be successful soon.

Idaho, again, has diminished access to public lands for ranching and timber.

There are impacts on wildfire management as more lands are being designated as national monuments, like the new chunk up in my district that is protected, as they call it, under Federal rules. It makes it harder to manage forests and wildfires and access them with the fire equipment we need to get out there. When they take away the roads and make them roadless areas, we have that much less ability to be able to properly put people and equipment out there where they can be effective at firefighting.

It does worsen wildfire risks. In my home State of California, in my own district, a couple of years ago, we had a 1 million-acre fire. Year after year, there are six-digit fires.

Again, another 28 million acres in Alaska were limited, so it just makes energy production that much harder.

Then, the oceans, with the coastline marine conservation aspect of it, here is the big number: 625 million acres of U.S. ocean were withdrawn from future conversation about future oil and gas leasing, restricting, once again, energy development, which would help so much with our economy and lowering inflation.

Madam Speaker, 625 million acres translate into 1 million square miles—rounded off, 1 million. If you want a further illustration, that would be a 1,000- by 1,000-mile square—1,000 miles this way, this way, this way, and this way. It is a 1,000-mile square that Biden, by the whim and stroke of a pen, says no more.

The efforts we are making in Congress this week with the Midnight Rules Relief Act, and also through the ability to use the Congressional Review Act, are very important to stop out-of-control regulators from taking away the ability for us to produce in a way that is going to have America be energy independent and energy dominant and to have our economy be strong once again.

That is why we are fighting back on this. We can still do things very ecologically soundly. We want to take care of the environment, as well, but these things have been weaponized against the types of things Americans need and stand for, for the strength of our economy and for our independence.

I appreciate the opportunities and the good work my colleagues are doing on advancing this legislation.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from California's persistence and willingness to be down here to help share the message.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. HARIDOPOLOS), who is a new Member from Florida. I have on good authority from his freshman colleagues that he isn't a huge fan of the cold we are experiencing here in Washington, D.C.

RESTORING CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF CFPB

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on a very important issue that is facing more and more communities as they are faced with pressure from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, commonly known as the CFPB.

What was created under the guise of consumer protection has instead become a regulatory juggernaut, unaccountable and insulated from the very people it claims to serve, the consumers.

From the beginning, the CFPB was designed to operate outside the bounds of congressional oversight. It was built to be an agency that answers to no one, making sweeping financial regulations without the scrutiny that our Constitution demands.

Its most recent Director turned his bureaucratic machine into a weapon against economic growth, limiting access to credit and strangling the very small businesses and community banks that form the backbone of our economy.

□ 1745

The problem is clear. First and foremost, a lack of accountability. The CFPB functions without proper congressional oversight, wielding immense power without the input of elected Representatives. No agency should have the ability to dictate financial policy without being held accountable by the people.

Second, funding without oversight. Unlike nearly every other Federal agency, the CFPB is funded directly by the Federal Reserve, rather than through the regular congressional appropriation process. This structure allows it to bypass the checks and balances system that protects taxpayers from runaway regulatory excess.

Third, a constitutional violation. The power to tax and spend belongs to Congress. That is not a tradition. That is the law. The CFPB structure is a direct affront to the principle, undermining the separation of powers that defines our democracy.

The consequences have been devastating. The CFPB's heavyhanded regulations are cutting off access to credit for those who need it most. Small businesses are struggling to secure the loans necessary to grow and create jobs. Entrepreneurs, working families, and farmers are finding it harder to get the capital that they need to succeed. The community banks that support Main Street are drowning under the weight of this unnecessary and costly compliance burden.

Madam Speaker, this is not how government by the people and for the people should function.

The solution is simple: Congress must reassert its constitutional authority. We must bring the CFPB under the regular appropriations process, ensuring that no agency operates without unchecked power.

Regulatory agencies must answer to the people, not operate as independent kingdoms making rules without congressional oversight.

Madam Speaker, we stand at a crossroads. We cannot allow an unaccountable bureaucracy to continue restricting access to capital, hindering small businesses, and suffocating economic opportunity. We must restore the balance of power and ensure transparency and put the authority back where it belongs: with the American people through its elected Representatives.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join Chairman FRENCH HILL and my colleagues on the House Financial Services Committee in finally reining in the CFPB, restoring congressional oversight, and reaffirming our commitment to the principles of accountability and economic freedom. The future of small businesses, entrepreneurs, and hardworking families depends on it.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HARIDOPOLOS) for being part of our Special Order tonight.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LUTTRELL).

HOLDING TRAFFICKERS AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ACCOUNTABLE

Mr. LUTTRELL. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, the Biden administration's open-border policies turned our border into a gateway for cartels, human traffickers, and criminals, putting American lives at risk and endangering innocent children.

That is why I introduced legislation to hold DHS and HHS accountable for properly vetting and tracking unaccompanied migrant children.

Under the Biden administration, HHS lost contact with over 300,000 children. Under the Biden administration, 300,000 children were lost. Let that sink in. That is not just incompetence. It is an absolute tragedy.

We must hold traffickers accountable and ensure that illegal immigrants who break our laws face real consequences. Our border must be secured, and those who exploit our system, whether criminals or failed bureaucrats, must answer for their failures. The American people deserve law and order.

Thankfully, Republicans and the Trump administration are quickly cleaning up the mess that Joe Biden left us.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LUTTRELL) for his comments.

A lot of times, with policies and things that go on back here, there are variations moving to rightwing policies and leftwing policies. There is not a more stark difference between what President Biden was doing at the border and allowing to have happen to what we are seeing now and the changes we are making. That highlights the simplicity of our messages.

We have to protect people's lives, and we are finally starting to do it, and it feels great. I think the American people are seeing that.

I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LUTTRELL) again for his comments.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the great Commonwealth of Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS), my good friend.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF FELIX ''MO'' MAURIZIO

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to wish a happy 100th birthday to a very important resident of Hampton Roads, U.S. Navy veteran Mo Maurizio.

This American hero has experienced more of the history of our great Nation than most people can even dream of.

Born on February 21, 1925, he grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, before enlisting in the Navy in August of 1943 at the age of 18. After completing basic training in New York, he transferred to Hampton Roads, Virginia, to complete additional training at Little Creek in preparation for the invasion of Normandy.

On June 6, 1944, as Allied Forces launched the largest amphibious invasion in history, Mo was a part of the first wave of troops to hit the beaches on D-day.

After surviving this important first step on the path to liberate Europe, he then deployed to the Pacific theater.

On February 19, 1945, he was aboard a ship that took part in the battle for Iwo Jima, shelling the island ahead of American forces making their landing.

Mo didn't spend his 20th birthday celebrating. He was instead serving our Nation by landing troops and supplies during one of the worst battles of the entire war. In total, nearly 6,000 brave marines lost their lives to take this strategic island that day, and it is only 8 square miles.

In April, Mo continued his service, this time assisting with the deployment of marines on Okinawa Island. Months later, when Japan was set to surrender, Mo was among the crew of one of the first ships carrying U.S. troops to mainland Japan.

On September 2, aboard the USS *Talladega*, he was only a small distance away from history being made on the USS *Missouri* as the Japanese formally surrendered, officially marking the end of World War II.

Following the conclusion of the war, he continued serving in the Navy, both back in Massachusetts and in Virginia. Along the way, he met his late wife, Laura. Together, they had a set of twins, Bill and Stella.

One of my favorite stories of Moe's life is when, in 2014, his two children took him to his first-ever Army-Navy football game. As any good Navy fan would agree, he was hoping to watch the Navy midshipmen, and I quote, ''beat the snot out of the Army.'' Luckily enough, Navy won that year with a score of 17–10.

Mo retired from the Navy on June 6, 1966, exactly 22 years after he participated in the invasion of Normandy, but he did not retire from public service.

After the Navy, he joined the post office in Hampton Roads, where he worked on behalf of our community for nearly 40 years before retiring at the age of 80 on June 6, 2005, exactly 61 years to the day after D-Day.

This past June, at the age of 99, Mo had the opportunity to return to the Normandy beaches to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day invasion with his fellow World War II veterans.

I had the honor of meeting Mo with a group of his biggest fans last June at the Norfolk International Airport as he returned home from his trip.

Our world is free today because of the heroic actions made by these members of our Greatest Generation, like Mo, on that fateful day.

Since World War II, Mo and his family have called Hampton Roads their home.

Sadly, on December 7, 2024, the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, his loving wife, Laura, passed away after 73 years of marriage. Her memory lives on through Mo and their two wonderful children.

For 100 years, Mo Maurizio has embodied what it means to be an American hero. From the beaches of Normandy, to the islands of the Pacific, to our local community in Hampton Roads, Virginia, Mo has lived through truly foundational moments in our Nation's history. We will be forever grateful for all that he has done for our great Nation, the United States of America.

Happy 100th birthday to Mo.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the great Commonwealth of Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS).

Madam Speaker, I yield to the new Member from Pennsylvania (Mr. MACKENZIE).

ECONOMIC STATE AND SAFETY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Mr. MACKENZIE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, two of the most important issues confronting our citizens today are the state of our economy and also the safety in our local communities. My focus while serving as an elected Member of Congress will be to address those two issues and the mess that we have been handed over the past 4 years from the Biden administration.

Over those last 4 years and preceding that, there were decisions made by State and local elected officials which have made our country less safe and our communities at home in a vulnerable situation.

Madam Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Homeland Security Committee to speak about the safety of our Lehigh Valley community and how the actions of one local elected official, Northampton's county executive, exemplified the negative impact that radical policy decisions can have on the safety of our law enforcement officers and the safety of our entire community.

In March 2020, 5 years ago, the Northampton County executive issued an order prohibiting county law enforcement from cooperating with ICE unless

ICE acquired arrest warrants before working to capture criminal illegal immigrants.

Recently, the dangerous results of this policy were put on clear display in our local community and placed law enforcement and the general public in greater danger.

Over the last 4 years, our Nation has witnessed an unprecedented surge of illegal immigration. Under Joe Biden's administration, over 2 million illegal immigrants crossed the border each year, burdening communities nationwide. As of July 21, 2024, ICE reported that there were over 100,000 nondetained illegal immigrants with convictions, including homicide, assault, rape, and robbery.

In Pennsylvania alone, illegal immigration is costing taxpayers over $300 million for police and corrections, but this isn't just a statistical problem.

In our community of Lehigh Valley, 2 weeks ago, ICE agents arrested Luis Gualdron-Gualdron outside of the Northampton County Prison, which is situated within the Seventh District of Pennsylvania, which I have been elected to represent.

According to ICE, the U.S. Border Patrol arrested Gualdron near Brownsville, Texas, in December of 2023 for illegally entering the United States. He was served the next day with a notice to appear before an immigration judge. He made his way all the way to our local community 5 months later, and he was arrested in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, on charges of indecent assault against a minor.

In cases where individuals have entered our country illegally and then broken an additional law, the public has a right to expect that our local officials will cooperate fully with the Federal authorities. Unfortunately, that was not the case in this situation.

The county executive's order caused ICE to be forced to arrest this dangerous predator outside of the prison. There was no ability for a proper hand off to take place.

There is no need to just take my word that this was a dangerous situation. My office has spoken to ICE, and they explained that allowing this predator to leave the prison, rather than be arrested while already detained, greatly increased the possibility for escape from capture as this prisoner would have been free on the streets.

It also increases the danger to those law enforcement individuals who have to make an arrest in an uncontrolled environment, and it puts the public in greater danger as this predator has a greater chance of escaping justice.

Thankfully, ICE officers were successful in staking out the prison and arresting Gualdron, but that took them off of the streets, took away valuable law enforcement time, put them in greater jeopardy, and put our community in greater jeopardy. They shouldn't have been put in that situation but for that executive order from the Northampton County executive back in 2020.

Madam Speaker, this is simply unacceptable. At a time when our country is reeling from the consequences of 4 years of open borders, we also have to deal with these situations in our local communities.

We are making ICE jump through hoops to deport criminals who assault children, and it definitely shouldn't be happening right here in a community that is flagged as a trafficking hub. We know the problems. We are aware of the problems. We should be working with our Federal law enforcement agencies to make sure that these predators are off the streets.

The law-abiding residents of the Lehigh Valley and our entire country and community should never have to wonder whether criminal illegal immigrants will escape justice due to the challenges that have been created by our own elected officials.

The American people have made their position crystal clear on this. Madam Speaker, 80 percent of Americans oppose the concept of sanctuary cities, and 83 percent support deporting illegal immigrants who have committed violent crimes.

Let me repeat that. There are 83 percent of individuals who support deporting illegal immigrants who have committed violent crimes.

□ 1800

At the same time, we have a local elected official following through on the executive order that he signed back in 2020, making it such that our Federal law enforcement agents can't do their job and deport this violent criminal who has made his way all the way to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Madam Speaker, this is simply unacceptable, and it is time for a change. I am calling on the leaders of our local communities and this Northampton County executive to fully rescind that executive order, which is standing in the way of law enforcement doing their job.

Anything less is an admission on his part that he is going to stand with violent criminals and against our law enforcement. That is what it is. The public has spoken, and 83 percent of people want these violent criminals deported; yet, we have one person in Northampton County standing in their way.

I encourage that individual to change his mind, rescind that executive order which is inhibiting our law enforcement from doing their jobs, which is leaving them less safe and leaving our community more vulnerable, and ultimately leaving our country in a disastrous position. This is the very least that we can do to ensure the safety of our residents.

As the elected Congressman from Pennsylvania's Seventh Congressional District, I am going to continue to fight for all of our residents, every single one of them, to make sure that they are safe every single day of the week.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate and thank, again, the gentleman from Utah for this opportunity to address the Chamber this evening.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his remarks. It is great to have a new group, and Pennsylvania is well represented.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Dakota (Mrs. FEDORCHAK), the new and improved Representative.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in saying it is past time to reduce the regulatory state in this Nation. We are crippling our businesses. We are smothering new ideas before they can even take flight. We are stifling innovation.

These regulations are coming from a runaway executive branch agencies filled with unaccountable staff who have never experienced the realities of turning a wrench, tilling a field, or turning a profit.

As a former energy regulator, I know the value of smart, efficient regulation.

For example, in North Dakota, electric utilities are required to follow least-cost planning. This ensures high reliability of our power systems at the lowest possible cost to customers. This is smart regulation.

In Washington, we have had just the opposite. We had the Biden administration setting the staffing requirements for nurses in every nursing home in North Dakota. Rather than improving care, this, like many other last-minute Biden regulations, will make it harder, if not impossible, for North Dakota organizations and businesses to do their jobs.

The rule and regulation mania of the last administration was historic.

According to a study by the National Association of Manufacturing, the total cost of Federal regulations in 2022 was more than $3 trillion, roughly 12 percent of the U.S. GDP.

Make no mistake, businesses don't just take on these costs. Hardworking American families pay for these rules and regulations in the price of anything they buy.

What is worse, these regulations burden small businesses the most, including North Dakota farmers, ranchers, energy producers, manufacturers, and Main Street businesses. I heard this loud and clear from North Dakotans in every corner of the State.

That is why my first official action as a Member of Congress was to send a letter to President Trump and then-Governor Burgum that identified 20 burdensome energy regulations. These regulations were created by Federal agencies—not Congress, the elected Representatives of the people—and they pose a major threat to American energy producers and energy workers.

The Trump administration is already taking bold action to repeal these regulations, and they have stepped on the gas even further by requiring agencies to identify 10 regulations to repeal for every new one issued.

For North Dakota businesses, workers, and families, this is certainly welcome news.

Today, the House passed the Midnight Rules Relief Act, which I was very proud to support. This legislation will allow Congress to rescind multiple agency rules simultaneously under the Congressional Review Act authority if they have been issued during the final year of a President's term.

Why is this needed? The Biden administration issued a staggering 1,400 regulations during the 60-day CRA lookback window.

Several of these regulations have significant impacts on North Dakota. For example, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management finalized its sweeping new resource management plan for North Dakota the very last week of the Biden administration.

This plan will shut down leasing on millions of acres of Federal land in North Dakota, including 99 percent of the Federal coal acreage and 44 percent of federally owned oil and gas mineral acres.

Due to the nature of mining, this rule would make a majority of North Dakota's coal reserves uneconomic to mine.

North Dakota isn't alone in this, however, as the BLM finalized a separate resource management plan to effectively end all future coal leasing in the Powder River Basin, affecting Montana and Wyoming.

If these two plans are equally bad, why shouldn't we be able to use the CRA process to repeal them together instead of doing it one by one.

I am working with my Senate colleagues from North Dakota in beginning the CRA process to repeal the North Dakota plan and will support efforts of other States to do the same with their midnight rules that are strangling their businesses.

As demand for energy reaches record highs, we should be unleashing American energy production, not shutting it down.

Doing so will help reduce America's debt, lower energy prices for hardworking families, reduce global emissions, and bolster our national security. We must start reining in bureaucratic overreach and putting power back where it belongs, with the American people.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in Congress and the Trump administration to rein in the administrative state and help make life better for American workers and families.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Dakota. She has an authentic and sincere voice with actual expertise on all matters of energy. It is awesome to have the State very well represented.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), which apparently has an improved basketball team down there now. He is also somebody that is well deserved to be the new chairman of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend from the First District of Utah for yielding.

His magnificent career before he came to Congress in business and in national security make us all proud. We are so grateful that he is our vice chair of the Conference, and that he leads us in bringing the good work of Republicans to the House floor every week so the American citizens see what we are doing and hear from us directly.

Aside from his beautiful family, the best thing about him is that he is an Eagle Scout. People are still talking about his Eagle Scout project in Utah. I thank him for letting me share some time with him.

Madam Speaker, I come to the House floor tonight to also express my deep dismay for the plethora of midnight rulemakings that we saw at the end of the Biden-Harris administration.

Last December, Senate Banking Committee Chairman TIM SCOTT and I were clear when we sent letters to outgoing Biden-Harris regulators and department heads urging them to put their pens down. Don't issue any more rulemakings or guidance. Don't sue anybody. Their time has come to an end.

What did we see in response? We saw an avalanche of relentless rulemakings, one after another after another.

Madam Speaker, the worst offender was former head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Rohit Chopra.

Madam Speaker, I think he became the poster child of midnight rulemaking renegades. Chopra never put his pen down. Under his leadership, the CFPB went full steam ahead with their reckless rulemakings. They capped fees on overdraft services, which is just another form of price control that harms customers who deserve access to financial choices and financial options when it comes to managing their household budgets.

He issued a rule to hide medical debt owed from credit reports, which will drive up the costs of all Americans' access to credit and to seeking healthcare. It will have a devastating long-term impact on consumers.

Mr. Chopra initiated lawsuits one after another before he left office.

Mark my words, Madam Speaker, we are going to fight to overturn these erroneous actions. The House passed my colleague Representative ANDY BIGGS of Arizona's bill today that ensures Congress can exercise appropriate oversight of these kinds of executive rulemakings.

It would allow multiple agency rules to be considered en bloc, that is in a group, as a single Congressional Review Act resolution if the rulings took place at the end of a Presidential term. I think this is a terrific idea from our friend and colleague Representative ANDY BIGGS.

It is an important step in fighting back to rectify the misguided rulemakings at the end of the Biden-Harris administration, and I thank him for leading this effort.

As the chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, I am committed to my work with Chairman TIM SCOTT across the Capitol in the Senate, as well as the Trump administration, to rightsize the regulatory burden facing America's financial providers.

When we do that, we will preserve safety and soundness absolutely, but we will also increase the access to capital to our families, to our businesses that need it. Together, we will facilitate faster and stronger economic growth in the years ahead.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate my friend from Utah and I thank him for the time.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arkansas, and I appreciate his leadership.

I thank my colleagues, again, tonight for being here and for taking time to speak on these important pieces of legislation.

Under the Biden-Harris administration, Federal agencies expanded their power at an alarming rate, undermining the legislative authority granted to Congress by the Constitution.

I think if people truly understood how much of that was done during the Biden administration, there would be more appreciation—and it will take some time to understand what is going on, I know, but there will be more appreciation for trying to rightsize this, and that is a significant effort from the Trump administration.

I think it is important to see what had taken place, and I think from my perspective that you don't get anywhere else by being, you know, a Member of Congress, being involved in these issues on a day-to-day basis, you don't see the amount of rulemaking that is going on. You don't see the amount of expansion of the Federal Government.

People are lobbing that complaint or that criticism over to the Trump administration right now, and I get it because there is a lot of action and activity being done from the executive level, so the criticism can cut both ways, but the entire effort is to reduce the size of what Biden had expanded all this to. I just don't think people understand that nuance enough. That is why this process has to take place.

The Congressional Review Act of 1996 requires Congress to pass a separate joint resolution for each agency rule it seeks to disapprove, slowing Congress' ability to hold the administrative state accountable and block burdensome regulations.

That is the whole premise of why House Republicans just passed Congressman BIGGS' Midnight Rules Relief Act to empower Congress to review and potentially disapprove of several regulations that Federal agencies may attempt to implement in the last days of an administration.

Again, we passed this, this actually affects a Republican administration, as well. This becomes law to try to hold the administration, regardless of the party, accountable.

This bill will equip Congress with the tools we need to reject the Biden-Harris administration's last-minute regulations, hold our government accountable, and protect our Nation's democratic values.

This bill reins in bureaucratic overreach, protects Americans from burdensome regulations, gives power back to the legislative branch, and ensures transparency in the legislative process.

We are also continuing our efforts to secure our borders and protect our communities.

Tomorrow, House Republicans will vote on the Agent Raul Gonzalez Officer Safety Act, introduced by Congressman JUAN CISCOMANI from Arizona. This bill will create new criminal offenses for operating a vehicle within 100 miles of the southern border while fleeing from Border Patrol agents or any law enforcement officer assisting the U.S. Border Patrol. This includes serious jail time and prohibition from ever receiving legal status in the United States.

□ 1815

This bill is in honor of U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agent Raul Gonzalez, who, in 2022, died from injuries sustained in a crash while pursuing migrants who illegally crossed the Texas border.

This bill sends a message to traffickers, cartels, and other illegal immigrants that if they risk the lives of American citizens, we will hold them to the full extent of the law. House Republicans will not allow more Americans to die at the hands of illegal immigrants, and we are committed to ensuring the safety of our communities.

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

UNITED STATES IS A REPUBLIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BEGICH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight an underpublicized but important hearing that was held today.

First of all, however, I would like to make one more time the point to my colleagues—because I recently heard one of the Senators grotesquely abusing the word—what form of government we have here today.

The Senator—fortunately, it wasn't a Congressman, but sometimes they do it, too—twice, in two sentences in a row, referred to the form of government we have as a democracy. Of course, we all should know by now that we do not have a democracy. We have a Republic, and our forefathers had contempt for democracy.

Alexander Hamilton said: We are a republican form of government. Liberty is never found in the extremes of democracy.

John Adams: Democracy never lasts long.

Benjamin Franklin, upon the completion of the U.S. Constitution: We give you a Republic if you can keep it.

When we say the Pledge of Allegiance, what, again, do we say? We pledge allegiance to the flag and the Republic for which it stands.

Nevertheless, again and again around here, people misspeak and, I am afraid, miseducate the younger generation into thinking we have a democracy.

Why did our forefathers not like a democracy? Our Republic under our Constitution is designed to keep limited government and, therefore, liberty in the United States.

Democracy, or representative democracy, means a majority of people are free to take property from anybody in here or take freedoms from anybody in here. If a clear majority of people say it does not like a religion or, as is increasingly true in this country, does not like religion at all or some of the precepts of religion, they believe in a democracy that they can impose their will on other people.

One of the crises we are facing, which we are going to be talking about tomorrow night, is the huge debt we have. Why do we have such a huge debt? Under our Constitution, under our Republic, they were supposed to restrict the things that the Federal Government could spend money on. Instead, as we have gotten away from a Republic, and the arrogant people of this body think that we have a democracy—they think because they won an election or got 55 or 65 percent of the vote, they are free to either go into debt or spend other people's money until we are bankrupt.

If they had realized all along that we are just a Republic, they would be humble before our Constitution and say: We cannot spend money on such and such. Go to your State legislator.

I had a couple of groups from an educational institution in my office this week. Of course, they were asking for more Federal money. I didn't want to get angry with them or mad at them, but I just noticed that, one more time, a group of educators came before me and asked for more money. Because I won an election, they think I have the authority to give them other people's money. Well, I don't, and it is very irritating to see educators in particular say that we have a democracy when our forefathers disliked democracy and would have been terrified had they known.

Right now, we are almost 250 years down the road. I am sorry, we are 230 years down the road from the founding of our Republic under our Constitution. I am sure our forefathers would be terrified if they knew how many people were under the impression that we were a democracy.

AMERICA'S WELFARE SYSTEM

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, now, I am going to talk about the hearing we had earlier today and what I think is probably, next to the out-of-control immigration system, the biggest crisis that we face, and that is our welfare system and a huge marriage penalty associated with it.

When I talk about our welfare system, I talk of approximately 90 different programs that somebody who is almost broke is entitled to. Some you have to have children to be entitled to. All these programs, as you earned more money and went to work, you would lose eligibility.

There are two things we could say about these programs. I should point out the testimony in a hearing today from a guy by the name of Robert Rector from The Heritage Foundation. There are examples—and I know there are even greater examples than this—that we penalize a woman who marries the father of her children $28,000 a year if she makes too much money or, scarier, if she marries a man to support her or to support their family.

First of all, you might say: ''Well, that is hard to believe. Who wants to destroy the nuclear family?'' It is not hard to find people to destroy the nuclear family.

We have Karl Marx, of course, back from the 1860s, who felt the family was the root of so many horrible things.

We have Kate Millett, who I would describe as the mother of women's studies classes. Who knows how many of our poor college students have taken that drivel. She was very definite in the fact that she wanted to get rid of the American family and, in particular, wanted men outside the family.

We also have Angela Davis, a 1960s radical who was still powerful when she spoke into the 1980s and 1990s. She was clearly opposed to the American family.

Until they scrubbed their website, Black Lives Matter was against what they referred to as the Western-prescribed traditional nuclear family.

These people all were against having a mom and dad at home with their children.

You might say these people can't be that powerful, but you have to remember, the Democratic Party has proven that they can be led around by the nose by the most extreme elements of their coalition. That is why, even though they have to know better, they will vote for abortion at 8½ months. That is why the Democratic Party will vote for a boy pretending to be a girl going into the girls' restroom, because they will be led around by the most extreme group.

Therefore, I don't think it should be considered a surprise that the Democratic Party has supported programs that overwhelmingly favor and encourage an end to the nuclear family.

What type of programs are they? Almost any so-called antipoverty program you can think of. Certainly, food

share would qualify. Even worse, any low-income housing credits in which if you are not married and don't have much of a salary, you get almost free rent. Of course, to somebody who is 19 or 20 years old, being able to get outside their parents' house and get free rent is something that is very tremendous, very desired. There is free healthcare, free daycare, Pell grants, which lead to free college tuition.

All of these things are inducements to, as an Indian friend of mine said, result in the American system in which the women don't marry the men; the women marry the government.

Another downside, of course, is not only that the children do not have a father at home, and they would be better off with a father at home, but the fathers don't have anything to do, which is a problem, as well.

Normally, in life, the purpose or the goal of a man is to support his family, to be the husband and father of children. Of course, in the system encouraged by our welfare system, the men have nothing to do.

If you look in areas of society in which we have maybe the worst results of the welfare system, most of the bad results happen not to the children—although the children are damaged—not to the women, but to the men. When you think of areas of the United States that are more associated with people taking advantage of these systems, these benefits, the men are the ones who are largely committing the crimes. The men are going to prison. The men are doing the drugs.

We talk about it like it is society's problem. It is society's problem, but it was caused by an out-of-control welfare system that left the men with nothing to do. This was well documented by George Gilder, the great sociologist of the 1970s who followed around a young couple when the young gal got pregnant. He noticed it was not cause for concern. It was cause for celebration because of all of the benefits that were available.

A thing that really brings this home is the fact that frequently these programs provide a more beneficial system than even a low-income married couple has. We all know that when you talk to the clerks at the grocery store, they will frequently tell you that the people on the government are buying food that they themselves don't feel they can afford. We know that many young couples starting out may live with their parents, which is probably a good thing because the grandmas and grandpas can teach the young couple ways to live.

Unfortunately, here, they are not only given their own apartment but an apartment that is superior to most other apartments. When I had a staffer get married and look for an apartment back in Wisconsin, they found the best apartments were the low-income housing.

Why were the best apartments low-income housing? It is because we have a tax provision called section 42 in which we give overly generous subsidies to property developers to build new low-income housing. Since the government pays up to 70 percent of the cost of the housing, the developers, of course, are able to make those new apartments, which already are better than the old apartments just by their age. The new apartments are particularly nice because the government is paying for 70 percent of them. You get better apartments than you would for your sister who is getting married and having a husband.

We know that, frequently, middle-class families either choose not to help their children out when they go to college or don't have the money to help them out, and they wonder why somebody who comes from a family which maybe was living off the government in the first place gets free Pell grants and close-to-free college tuition, whereas the middle-class family does not.

When you look at the medical—and we don't want to take away anybody's medical care, but when you look at the medical, frequently people who have a job in the private sector may have a $10,000 or $15,000 deductible. Instead, people on the system have no deductible or almost no deductible. It is usually no deductible. Again, the government sets one up in which you are in better shape if you don't get married and marry the government.

As I said, a lot of the problems wind up landing on the men who have no purpose in life since the government has bribed the mother to raise the children without a father in the home, but it results in a lot of problems that this institution debates separately.

Over 100,000 people die every year in this country from illegal drugs. They can come from any family.

I want to emphasize that there are single parents who do a fantastic job. I know so many single parents, and their children would make anybody proud.

Nevertheless, when I talk to law enforcement, disproportionately the number of people who die of drug overdoses come from a difficult family background. If we were serious about doing something about fentanyl, we would be addressing the family background.

□ 1830

Now, we have nice bills this week. Though, they may be technically flawed—increasing the penalties for people with fentanyl—but if we really want to go after the 100,000 deaths, you figure you would want to do something about the family, but we don't care that much.

Crime. When I talk to law enforcement about crime that is going on, again and again they will talk about the family being broken down as the reason we have so much more crime than we did 50 years ago. As we get away from the crime caused from the tragic events in Minnesota, they have dropped the last couple of years. However, nevertheless, crime is much greater than it was before we passed the Great Society in the mid-1960s.

If we were serious about doing all we could to fight the crime in this country, we would address the current welfare system, which discourages making up a traditional intact family. In other words, I would not say that this institution is being entirely sincere in saying all they can do to fight crime when we continue to allow this welfare system to ramble on, give the men no responsibility, and have the high crime.

Another thing we spend a great deal of time talking about here is education. I was talking with my school superintendents about a month ago, and we talked about special education and the children who were having special problems. My school superintendents agreed that disproportionately those problems were caused by people with a tough family background. In other words, it is caused by the actions of this body who have set up a welfare system that discourages intact families.

This is the primary reason I ran for this job several years ago. If you are in a city council, if you are in a State legislature, and you want to address these problems like drugs or crime or the education system, you quickly realize that a lot of the problems are caused by the breakdown in the family, and that the Federal Government, who caused the problem in the first place, is doing nothing to solve the problem.

I ask our leadership, and I ask President Trump, in this important bill we are going to pass sometime in the next 2 or 3 months, to address our welfare system, which is designed to bribe, usually mothers, to raise the child without a father providing the support, without a father in the home. It is hard to believe we are trying to make America great unless we revisit the horrible welfare system.

There is one more thing that I think the press has not covered enough that I would like to touch upon today, and that is one of Donald Trump's great executive orders. He is doing a good job here. One of the things that I would like to get rid of and I thought it would take maybe 10 or 12 years to do, Donald Trump—at least temporarily until we have a Democrat President—got rid of it with a stroke of a pen.

In 1965—and something I think should have been unconstitutional—Lyndon Johnson, with the stroke of a pen, said he would no longer enforce Executive Order 11246, which was an order put into effect by Lyndon Johnson that—well, he would argue it wasn't requiring—as a practical matter, it created an affirmative action type system in which preferences were given to women over men and preferences were given to people based on racial background.

Now, there are absurdities in the order in the first place. You could be a very well-off, say, Asian American worth millions of dollars, but you

would be considered a minority in need of help. You could be somebody who just came to America a week ago, and you would be considered a person who needed help, and, for diversity purposes, would be given preference over a person of European descent who was around here for 50 years.

I have told the story when I was first made aware of this before, and I will tell it again so you can see how it worked out as a practical matter.

I got a call from a human resources professional who worked for a company that had at least 50 employees and did at least $10,000 of business with the Federal Government. They hired out a firm to tell them how to negotiate this executive order.

I might have these numbers off by one, but they were told that when they had five engineers and wanted to hire a sixth engineer, that sixth engineer better be a woman. It didn't have to be a woman, but they had to prepare to show the Federal Government that they did all they could to find a woman.

They went from three to four members of management, and they were again told: If you are going to hire a fourth member of management, see if you can make it a minority. If you can't, that is fine, but you have got to prove that you went out of the way to find someone.

As a practical matter, we had the Government weighing in, giving preference to one person over the other person for different jobs in this company. Because I tried to do something with this when I was in the State legislature, people would come up to me with other examples. There were plenty of examples.

This applies not only to employees of Federal contractors, but the Federal contractors themselves. Recently, I had even heard stories of people in which the Federal Government is going to pay significantly more—which I think is illegal—for preferred contractors rather than men of European descent. It is not only costing the taxpayer money, but they were incredibly unfair to these people.

Sometimes you get around it by maybe it is a guy, maybe he puts his wife in charge of the company, and that way he can say we have got a woman-owned business, and they should get preferences.

In any event, Donald Trump, with the stroke of a pen, got rid of this ridiculous law. It could be challenged in court. I am sure the Supreme Court will uphold President Trump. I would hope this body would get rid of this law once and for all. It would be hard to get it out of the Senate. I think a lot of Americans don't know it exists. I didn't know it existed until 12 or 14 years into my political career.

I thank Donald Trump for making sure one more time we are hiring the most qualified people we can find. We are contracting with the best that we can find. In any event, there are three stories for you today, Mr. Speaker. Let me remind you one more time that we are a republic, not a democracy, and our forefathers were scared to death of having a democracy.

I, one more time, will point out the huge penalties that the welfare system has on a man and a woman who want to get married together and raise a child. I hope that this body takes up that problem. It is not an easy problem to take up, but if we care at all about the next generation or the generation after the next generation, we have to walk our way back from the insane policies put into place by Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s.

One more time, we thank Donald Trump for allowing the government and contractors of the government to hire or contract with the best they can find.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC–421. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Agriculture, transmitting a letter expressing the non-concurrence of the U.S. Department of Agriculture with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Biofuels and the Environment Third Triennial Report to Congress, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 7545 note; Public Law 110-140, Sec. 204(a); (121 Stat. 1529); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC–422. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Ukraine that was declared in Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC–423. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Venezuela that was declared in Executive Order 13692 of March 8, 2015, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC–424. A letter from the Legal Yeoman, United States Coast Guard, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Cybersecurity in the Marine Transportation System [Docket No.: USCG-2022-0802] (RIN: 1625-AC77) 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–425. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1699; Project Identifier AD-2023-01084-T; Amendment 39-22918; AD 2024-26-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 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–426. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Various Airplanes and Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2024-0996; Project Identifier AD-2023-00365-A,Q,R,T; Amendment 39-22917; AD 2024-26-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 7, 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–427. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment and Amendment of Multiple United States Area Navigation (RNAV) Routes; Eastern United States [Docket No.: FAA-2024-1157; Airspace Docket No.: 24-AEA-2] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received February 7, 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–428. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31587; Amdt. No.: 4150] received February 7, 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–429. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31586; Amdt. No.: 4149] 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.

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. FONG (for himself and Ms. STEVENS):

H.R. 1223. A bill to require a plan to improve the cybersecurity and telecommunications of the U.S. Academic Research Fleet, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. OGLES (for himself, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, Mr. FINSTAD, Mr. ROSE, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Ms. HAGEMAN, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. GILL of Texas, and Mr. BIGGS of Arizona):

H.R. 1224. A bill to prohibit the use of a merchant category code that separately identifies firearms merchants or ammunition merchants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CALVERT (for himself and Mrs. TORRES of California):

H.R. 1225. A bill to direct the United States Postal Service to designate a single, unique ZIP Code for Eastvale, California; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. STUTZMAN (for himself, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. NORMAN):

H.R. 1226. A bill to sunset new Federal regulatory rules after 5 years, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 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 Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS (for herself, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. PANETTA):

H.R. 1227. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure appropriate access to non-opioid pain management drugs under part D of the Medicare program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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. CISCOMANI (for himself and Mr. BOST):

H.R. 1228. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the organization of the Office of Survivors Assistance of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. NORCROSS):

H.R. 1229. A bill to enhance bilateral defense cooperation between the United States and Israel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign 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. VAN ORDEN (for himself and Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina):

H.R. 1230. A bill to amend the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a program under which the Secretary will award competitive grants to eligible entities for the purpose of establishing and enhancing farming and ranching opportunities for veterans; to the Committee on Agriculture, 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. BONAMICI (for herself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. CARTER of Louisiana):

H.R. 1231. A bill to reauthorize and expand the pilot program to help individuals in recovery from a substance use disorder become stably housed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. CLINE, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. PERRY, Mr. ISSA, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. PALMER, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Ms. HAGEMAN, Mrs. CAMMACK, Mr. FITZGERALD, Mr. TIFFANY, Mr. HERN of Oklahoma, Mr. GUEST, Mr. BABIN, Mrs. HINSON, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. ALFORD, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. BEAN of Florida, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. CISCOMANI, Mr. OBERNOLTE, Mr. SELF, Mr. STRONG, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. COLLINS, Mr. ELLZEY, Ms. MACE, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BARR, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. MANN, Mr. EZELL, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. MOORE of North Carolina, Mrs. BIGGS of South Carolina, Mr. EDWARDS, Ms. LETLOW, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. SCHMIDT, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. MCCORMICK, Mr. DUNN of Florida, Mrs. BICE, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. GREEN of Tennessee, Mr. OGLES, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. HARIDOPOLOS, Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania, Mr. ONDER, Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. MCDOWELL, Mr. MCGUIRE, Mr. OWENS, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. MALOY, Mr. HILL of Arkansas, Ms. LEE of Florida, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. YAKYM, and Mr. BURLISON):

H.R. 1232. A bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Mr. MASSIE (for himself, Mr. BIGGS of Arizona, Ms. BOEBERT, Mr. BURLISON, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. GOSAR, Ms. GREENE of Georgia, Mr. OGLES, Mr. PERRY, Mr. ROY, and Mr. WEBER of Texas):

H.R. 1233. A bill to prohibit the obligation or expenditure of Federal funds for disinformation research grants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mrs. BICE (for herself, Mr. MORELLE, Mr. CAREY, and Mrs. TORRES of California):

H.R. 1234. A bill to direct the Librarian of Congress to promote the more cost-effective, efficient, and expanded availability of the Annotated Constitution and pocket-part supplements by replacing the hardbound versions with digital versions; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. WEBSTER of Florida (for himself and Mr. CARBAJAL):

H.R. 1235. A bill to establish the Federal Infrastructure Bank to facilitate investment in, and the long-term financing of, economically viable United States infrastructure projects that provide a public benefit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, and Ways and Means, 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. BARR (for himself and Mr. GOLDMAN of New York):

H.R. 1236. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to include certain retired law enforcement officers in the public safety officers' death benefits program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOST (for himself and Mr. FINSTAD):

H.R. 1237. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to deny the energy credit to property located on prime or unique farmland, as defined by the Secretary of Agriculture in part 657 of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, if such property is used for generating solar energy; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURCHETT (for himself and Mr. MESSMER):

H.R. 1238. A bill to authorize the President of the United States to issue letters of marque and reprisal with respect to acts of aggression against the United States by a member of a cartel, or a member of a cartel-linked organization, or any conspirator associated with a cartel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. CASTEN (for himself and Ms. SALAZAR):

H.R. 1239. A bill to direct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a voluntary sustainable apparel labeling program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 1240. A bill to require the Attorney General to issue rules pertaining to the collection and compilation of data on the use of deadly force by law enforcement officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. GILL of Texas, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. HARIDOPOLOS, Mr. TIFFANY, Mr. NEHLS, and Mr. OGLES):

H.R. 1241. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate the diversity immigrant program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CRANE (for himself and Mr. LEVIN):

H.R. 1242. A bill to require the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to establish a pilot program to identify and refer veterans for potential employment with Federal land management agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committees on Natural Resources, 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. DAVIDSON (for himself, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. BIGGS of Arizona):

H.R. 1243. A bill to prohibit United States assistance to foreign countries that oppose the position of the United States in the United Nations; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina (for himself and Mr. PFLUGER):

H.R. 1244. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require that coinsurance for drugs under Medicare part D be based on the drug's actual acquisition cost and not the drug's wholesale acquisition cost; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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. EDWARDS (for himself, Ms. TITUS, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mr. NEGUSE):

H.R. 1245. A bill to improve individual assistance provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, and Small Business, 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 Mrs. FISCHBACH (for herself, Mr. FINSTAD, and Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina):

H.R. 1246. A bill to amend the Farm Credit Act of 1971 to provide support for facilities providing healthcare, education, child care, public safety, and other vital services in rural areas; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. FOSTER (for himself, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 1247. A bill to secure Federal access to scientific literature and other subscription services by requiring Federal agencies and

legislative branch research arms to make recommendations on increasing agency library access to serials, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida (for himself, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Ms. DE LA CRUZ, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. VAN DREW, Mr. BIGGS of Arizona, and Mr. BUCHANAN):

H.R. 1248. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the consideration of continuity of health care in determining best medical interest under the Veterans Community Care Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. HAGEMAN (for herself and Mr. GOLDEN of Maine):

H.R. 1249. A bill to require the United States Postal Service to post notices of changes that will affect nationwide postal services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. HAMADEH of Arizona (for himself, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. GOODEN, and Mr. WEBER of Texas):

H.R. 1250. A bill to require the imposition of sanctions with respect to Ansarallah and its officials, agents, or affiliates for acts of international terrorism; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. HAYES (for herself, Mrs. MCIVER, Ms. CROCKETT, Ms. TLAIB, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. RANDALL, Ms. BROWN, Mr. LIEU, Mr. BELL, Ms. JACOBS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. LEE of Nevada, Mr. TAKANO, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Ms. STEVENS, Mrs. SYKES, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. SCHOLTEN, Mr. MFUME, Ms. ANSARI, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. TURNER of Texas, Ms. PETTERSEN, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. UNDERWOOD, Mr. CARSON, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Ms. NORTON, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Ms. WATERS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. SOTO, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. PRESSLEY, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. FROST, and Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia):

H.R. 1251. A bill to provide Members of Congress access to Federal buildings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. JACKSON of Texas (for himself, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. SELF, Mr. HAMADEH of Arizona, Ms. VAN DUYNE, and Mr. WEBER of Texas):

H.R. 1252. A bill to direct the Secretary of State to submit to Congress a report on funding provided by the United States to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota (for himself and Mr. TAYLOR):

H.R. 1253. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a tax on the sale of electric vehicles and batteries; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois (for herself, Mrs. KIM, Ms. SCHRIER, and Mr. MEUSER):

H.R. 1254. A bill to improve obstetric emergency care; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. KUSTOFF (for himself, Mr. YAKYM, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, and Mr. PANETTA):

H.R. 1255. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reinstate advance refunding bonds; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LANGWORTHY (for himself, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, and Ms. TENNEY):

H.R. 1256. A bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to require reports to Congress on State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Ms. LEE of Florida (for herself and Mr. PAPPAS):

H.R. 1257. A bill to permit the Attorney General to award grants for accurate data on opioid-related overdoses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LIEU:

H.R. 1258. A bill to amend title 41, United States Code, to require information technology contractors to maintain a vulnerability disclosure policy and program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. LYNCH (for himself, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mrs. TRAHAN, Ms. ROSS, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. BISHOP, and Ms. HOULAHAN):

H.R. 1259. A bill to require the resumption of demining activities, the clearance of unexploded ordnance, the destruction of small arms, and related activities by the Department of State, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. MALLIOTAKIS:

H.R. 1260. A bill to reduce the number of, and shorten the time between, pay grade steps for officers and members of the United States Park Police, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. MAST:

H.R. 1261. A bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to make financial assistance to States under the Land and Water Conservation Fund available for water quality projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MCCAUL (for himself, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. SCHRIER, Mrs. HARSHBARGER, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. CRENSHAW, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. TRAHAN, and Mr. WEBER of Texas):

H.R. 1262. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to molecularly targeted pediatric cancer investigations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MEEKS (for himself, Mrs. KIM, Mr. BERA, Mr. HUIZENGA, and Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE):

H.R. 1263. A bill to require a strategy for bolstering engagement and cooperation between the United States, Australia, India, and Japan and to seek to establish a Quad Inter-Parliamentary Working Group to facilitate closer cooperation on shared interests and values; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MEUSER (for himself, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, and Mr. PERRY):

H.R. 1264. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to eliminate lead oxide, antimony, and sulfuric acid as taxable chemicals under the Superfund excise taxes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 1265. A bill to amend the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act to expand eligibility for certain wastewater infrastructure grants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. PANETTA (for himself, Mr. PFLUGER, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. PAPPAS, Mr. FITZGERALD, Ms. ROSS, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. HARDER of California, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Ms. PETTERSEN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. DELUZIO, Mr. MAGAZINER, Mr. BACON, Mr. OBERNOLTE, Mr. COSTA, Mr. BALDERSON, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. CISCOMANI, Mr. CAREY, Mrs. BICE, Ms. CRAIG, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. FONG, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. BURCHETT, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mr. COHEN, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. CORREA, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. COLLINS, Mr. SUOZZI, and Mrs. HARSHBARGER):

H.R. 1266. A bill to prohibit certain uses of xylazine, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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 Ms. PEREZ (for herself and Ms. MALOY):

H.R. 1267. A bill to exempt certain entities from liability under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 with respect to releases of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on 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 Ms. SALAZAR (for herself, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Ms. DE LA CRUZ, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. BEAN of Florida, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. EZELL, Mr. MOYLAN, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. DONALDS, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. MAST, Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. GUEST, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Ms. LEE of Florida, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. HARIDOPOLOS, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey):

H.R. 1268. A bill to extend the customs waters of the United States from 12 nautical miles to 24 nautical miles from the baselines of the United States, consistent with Presidential Proclamation 7219; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. SCANLON (for herself, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. AMO):

H.R. 1269. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide public safety officer benefits for exposure-related cancers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCHWEIKERT:

H.R. 1270. A bill to suspend the production of the penny and nickel, to require the Comptroller General of the United States to carry out a study on pennies and nickels, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia (for himself, Ms. ADAMS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BISHOP, Ms. BROWN, Mr. CARSON, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Mr. FIELDS, Ms. MCBRIDE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. MCIVER, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. THANEDAR, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi):

H.R. 1271. A bill to provide additional funding for scholarships for students at 1890 institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. SHERRILL (for herself, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. BROWNLEY, Ms. STEVENS, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. GOLDMAN of New York):

H.R. 1272. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to require a Federal firearms licensee to provide secure firearms storage information to a prospective firearm transferee, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a gun safe credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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. SUBRAMANYAM (for himself, Mrs. KIM, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Ms. MALLIOTAKIS):

H.R. 1273. A bill to direct the Secretary of State to establish a national registry of Korean American divided families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (for herself, Mr. VAN DREW, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, and Mr. MORAN):

H.R. 1274. A bill to reauthorize the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WESTERMAN (for himself, Mr. STAUBER, Ms. MORRISON, and Mr. CROW):

H.R. 1275. 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 Education and Workforce.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 40. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Defense relating to ''Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) Program''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 41. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to ''Postsecondary Student Success Grant''; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 42. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Energy relating to ''Energy Conservation Program for Appliance Standards: Certification Requirements, Labeling Requirements, and Enforcement Provisions for Certain Consumer Products and Commercial Equipment''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 43. 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 ''New Source Performance Standards Review for Volatile Organic Liquid Storage Vessels (Including Petroleum Liquid Storage Vessels)''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 44. 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 ''National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for Lead and Copper: Improvements (LCRI)''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 45. 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 ''Reconsideration of the Dust-Lead Hazard Standards and Dust-Lead Post-Abatement Clearance Levels''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 46. 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 ''Decabromodiphenyl Ether and Phenol, Isopropylated Phosphate (3:1); Revision to the Regulation of Persistent, Bioaccumulative, and Toxic Chemicals Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 47. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency relating to ''Quality Control Standards for Automated Valuation Models''; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 48. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System relating to ''Quality Control Standards for Automated Valuation Models''; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 49. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation relating to ''Quality Control Standards for Automated Valuation Models''; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 50. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Credit Union Administration relating to ''Quality Control Standards for Automated Valuation Models''; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 51. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to ''Quality Control Standards for Automated Valuation Models''; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 52. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Housing Finance Agency relating to ''Quality Control Standards for Automated Valuation Models''; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 53. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Securities and Exchange Commission relating to ''Form N-PORT and Form N-CEN Reporting; Guidance on Open-End Fund Liquidity Risk Management Programs''; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. JAYAPAL (for herself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. TONKO, Mr. NADLER, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. TLAIB, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. MAGAZINER, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. BROWN, Mr. PETERS, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Ms. SALINAS, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. CHU, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. FROST, Ms. ADAMS, and Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania):

H.J. Res. 54. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States providing that the rights protected and extended by the Constitution are the rights of natural persons only; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 55. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network relating to ''Anti-Money Laundering Regulations for Residential Real Estate Transfers''; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 56. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network relating to ''Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism Program and Suspicious Activity Report Filing Requirements for Registered Investment Advisers and Exempt Reporting Advisers''; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 57. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior relating to ''Oil and Gas and Sulfur Operations in the Outer Continental Shelf-High Pressure High Temperature Updates''; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CLYDE:

H.J. Res. 58. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services relating to ''Medicare Program; Calendar Year (CY) 2025 Home Health Prospective Payment System (HH PPS) Rate Update; HH Quality Reporting Program Requirements; HH Value-Based Purchasing Expanded Model Requirements; Home Intravenous Immune Globulin (IVIG) Items and Services Rate Update; and Other Medicare Policies''; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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. ANSARI (for herself, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. CARSON, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. COSTA, Ms. DEXTER, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. NORTON, Mr. THANEDAR, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi):

H. Res. 126. A resolution celebrating the legacy and contributions of immigrants and opposing discriminatory immigration policies; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DOGGETT (for himself, Mr. NEAL, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. SEWELL, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. CHU, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BEYER, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. HORSFORD, Ms. PLASKETT, and Mr. SUOZZI):

H. Res. 127. A resolution of inquiry requesting the President and directing the Secretary of the Treasury to transmit, respectively, certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the Department of Government Efficiency's access to the Treasury payment systems and confidential taxpayer information; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin (for herself, Mrs. DINGELL, and Mr. FITZPATRICK):

H. Res. 128. A resolution expressing support for designation of the month of February 2025 as ''National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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. FONG:
H.R. 1223.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 3
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. OGLES:
H.R. 1224.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section VIII of the United States Constitution

By Mr. CALVERT:
H.R. 1225.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 1 and clause 18.

By Mr. STUTZMAN:
H.R. 1226.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS:
H.R. 1227.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. CISCOMANI:
H.R. 1228.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:
H.R. 1229.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. VAN ORDEN:
H.R. 1230.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Ms. BONAMICI:
H.R. 1231.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1 Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:
H.R. 1232.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8 of the US Constitution

By Mr. MASSIE:
H.R. 1233.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I Section 8

By Mrs. BICE:
H.R. 1234.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8

By Mr. WEBSTER of Florida:
H.R. 1235.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8

By Mr. BARR:
H.R. 1236.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. BOST:
H.R. 1237.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8

By Mr. BURCHETT:
H.R. 1238.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. CASTEN:
H.R. 1239.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, clause 3 of the Constitution

By Mr. COHEN:
H.R. 1240.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I Section 8

By Mr. COLLINS:
H.R. 1241.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1 section 8 grants Congress the authority to enact laws relating to immigration.

By Mr. CRANE:
H.R. 1242.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. DAVIDSON:
H.R. 1243.
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. DAVIS of North Carolina:
H.R. 1244.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18.

By Mr. EDWARDS:
H.R. 1245.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 3
''Regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.''

By Mrs. FISCHBACH:
H.R. 1246.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8

By Mr. FOSTER:
H.R. 1247.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida:
H.R. 1248.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Congress is granted the authority to introduce and enact this legislation pursuant to Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Ms. HAGEMAN:
H.R. 1249.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. HAMADEH of Arizona:
H.R. 1250.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution, which grants Congress the authority to regulate commerce with foreign nations.

By Mrs. HAYES:
H.R. 1251.
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. JACKSON of Texas:
H.R. 1252.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota:
H.R. 1253.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois:
H.R. 1254.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the Constitution

By Mr. KUSTOFF:
H.R. 1255.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Under Article I, Section 8, the Necessary and Proper Clause. Congress shall have power to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing powers and all Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department of Officer thereof.

By Mr. LANGWORTHY:
H.R. 1256.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Ms. LEE of Florida:
H.R. 1257.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. LIEU:
H.R. 1258.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
U.S. Const., Art. 1, Sec. 8

By Mr. LYNCH:
H.R. 1259.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Ms. MALLIOTAKIS:
H.R. 1260.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. MAST:
H.R. 1261.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1
By Mr. MCCAUL:
H.R. 1262.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8,
By Mr. MEEKS:
H.R. 1263.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution
By Mr. MEUSER:
H.R. 1264.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.
By Ms. NORTON:
H.R. 1265.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
clause 18 of section 8 of article 1 of the Constitution
By Mr. PANETTA:
H.R. 1266.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Ms. PEREZ:
H.R. 1267.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I of the US Constitution
By Ms. SALAZAR:
H.R. 1268.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Ms. SCANLON:
H.R. 1269.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I Section 8
By Mr. SCHWEIKERT:
H.R. 1270.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1 Section 8
By Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia:
H.R. 1271.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
To lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises in order to provide for the general welfare of the United States.
By Ms. SHERRILL:
H.R. 1272.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the Constitution of the United States of America
By Mr. SUBRAMANYAM:
H.R. 1273.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1 Section 8
By Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ:
H.R. 1274.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. WESTERMAN:
H.R. 1275.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 1, Clause 8
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 40.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 41.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 42.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 43.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 44.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 45.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 46.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 47.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 48.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 49.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 50.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 51.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 52.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 53.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Ms. JAYAPAL:
H.J. Res. 54.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 55.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 56.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 57.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. CLYDE:
H.J. Res. 58.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 24: Mrs. BIGGS of South Carolina.
H.R. 35: Mr. MCGUIRE.
H.R. 40: Ms. ADAMS, Ms. BALINT, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BISHOP, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. BROWN, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. CARSON, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. CASE, Mr. CASTEN, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, Ms. CHU, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Mr. FROST, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. HIMES, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. JACOBS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Mr. LIEU, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Mrs. MCIVER, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. NADLER, Ms. NORTON, Ms. OMAR, Mr. PANETTA, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SIMON, Ms. STEVENS, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. SWALWELL, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THANEDAR, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. TITUS, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mrs. TRAHAN, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 51: Mr. LATIMER.
H.R. 77: Mr. HURD of Colorado.
H.R. 97: Mr. WEBER of Texas and Mr. OGLES.
H.R. 211: Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, and Mr. FROST.
H.R. 212: Ms. CASTOR of Florida and Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 220: Mr. GOLDMAN of New York and Mr. FROST.
H.R. 247: Ms. SCHRIER, Ms. BROWNLEY, and Mr. FROST.
H.R. 250: Mr. CORREA and Ms. SALAZAR.
H.R. 261: Mr. BENTZ.
H.R. 290: Mr. PAPPAS.
H.R. 301: Ms. LEE of Nevada.
H.R. 381: Ms. JAYAPAL.
H.R. 404: Ms. HAGEMAN.
H.R. 407: Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. LATIMER, and Ms. ESCOBAR.
H.R. 413: Ms. MCDONALD RIVET.
H.R. 424: Mr. FALLON.
H.R. 425: Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. MILLER of Ohio, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Mr. GOODEN.
H.R. 433: Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania and Ms. ROSS.
H.R. 436: Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Ms. MCBRIDE, and Mr. MOYLAN.
H.R. 465: Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Mr. FLOOD, Mrs. LUNA, and Mr. YAKYM.
H.R. 492: Mrs. MCCLAIN DELANEY, Ms. TITUS, and Ms. ADAMS.
H.R. 493: Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 515: Mrs. MCIVER, Ms. SALINAS, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. MCBRIDE, and Mr. TONKO.
H.R. 516: Mr. MOORE of Utah.
H.R. 520: Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas.
H.R. 521: Mr. HURD of Colorado.
H.R. 539: Ms. STRICKLAND and Ms. CRAIG.
H.R. 588: Ms. RANDALL and Mr. CASE.
H.R. 599: Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas.
H.R. 637: Mrs. HARSHBARGER, Mr. KUSTOFF, Mr. STAUBER, Mr. GARBARINO, Mr. BACON, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. STRICKLAND, Ms. TOKUDA, Ms. SALINAS, and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 643: Mr. MOORE of West Virginia.
H.R. 654: Mr. DOWNING and Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas.
H.R. 719: Mr. STUTZMAN.
H.R. 720: Mr. STUTZMAN.
H.R. 764: Mr. LATIMER.
H.R. 768: Ms. CRAIG.
H.R. 783: Mr. SOTO, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, and Ms. SEWELL.
H.R. 801: Mr. LAHOOD.
H.R. 802: Ms. MCDONALD RIVET.
H.R. 813: Mr. MASSIE.
H.R. 846: Mr. LATIMER and Mr. CASTRO of Texas.
H.R. 850: Mr. BURCHETT.
H.R. 862: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 879: Mr. NEWHOUSE, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Ms. TITUS, Mr. BABIN, Mr. OLSZEWSKI, Mrs. HARSHBARGER, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. PFLUGER, Ms. SCANLON, Mr. BAUMGARTNER, Mr. LATIMER, Mr. GOODEN, and Mr. HUDSON.
H.R. 897: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 898: Mr. RUIZ and Ms. MENG.
H.R. 900: Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 911: Ms. TENNEY and Ms. MALLIOTAKIS.
H.R. 925: Mrs. FISCHBACH and Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas.
H.R. 934: Mr. DONALDS.
H.R. 940: Mr. HARIDOPOLOS.
H.R. 941: Mr. HARIDOPOLOS and Mr. NUNN of Iowa.
H.R. 943: Mr. BUCHANAN.
H.R. 944: Ms. ESCOBAR.
H.R. 945: Ms. ADAMS and Ms. TITUS.
H.R. 956: Mr. FULCHER.
H.R. 959: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut and Mr. GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 964: Mrs. HAYES.
H.R. 973: Mrs. MCIVER, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, and Ms. MENG.
H.R. 977: Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia.
H.R. 979: Mr. BRESNAHAN, Mr. COSTA, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. FLOOD, Mr. BOST, Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia, Mr. MCGUIRE, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. PAPPAS, Mr. FINSTAD, Mr. AUCHINCLOSS, Mr. KEATING, Mr. VAN ORDEN, Mr. AMODEI of Nevada, Mr. SCHMIDT, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 987: Mr. DOWNING, Ms. BOEBERT, and Mr. COLLINS.
H.R. 989: Mr. BEYER, Ms. TITUS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. OMAR, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. SALINAS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. TOKUDA, Ms. ROSS, Mr. MFUME, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, and Ms. BYNUM.
H.R. 992: Mrs. BIGGS of South Carolina.
H.R. 1004: Mr. MCGARVEY, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. BROWNLEY, and Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 1005: Mrs. HOUCHIN.
H.R. 1027: Mr. SOTO.
H.R. 1031: Mr. LAWLER.
H.R. 1040: Mrs. MILLER of Illinois.
H.R. 1041: Mrs. HINSON.
H.R. 1048: Mrs. HOUCHIN.
H.R. 1049: Mrs. HOUCHIN.
H.R. 1057: Mr. YAKYM, Mr. BUCHANAN, and Mr. STRONG.
H.R. 1061: Mr. CORREA, Ms. PETTERSEN, Ms. ROSS, and Mr. CROW.
H.R. 1065: Mr. RESCHENTHALER.
H.R. 1069: Mr. BARR.
H.R. 1076: Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.
H.R. 1085: Ms. MACE.
H.R. 1086: Mr. BOST and Mr. TAYLOR.
H.R. 1099: Mr. LEVIN and Ms. MCBRIDE.
H.R. 1101: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. CASE, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, and Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 1103: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 1106: Mr. FROST.
H.R. 1111: Ms. STANSBURY.
H.R. 1123: Mr. TIFFANY.
H.R. 1145: Mr. CISNEROS, Ms. BROWN, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, and Ms. TITUS.
H.R. 1146: Mr. COLLINS.
H.R. 1151: Ms. VAN DUYNE and Ms. HOULAHAN.
H.R. 1158: Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. PANETTA, and Ms. HOULAHAN.
H.R. 1159: Ms. TOKUDA.
H.R. 1178: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina and Mr. ROSE.
H.R. 1181: Ms. BOEBERT and Mr. MESSMER.
H.R. 1182: Mr. NEHLS.
H.R. 1195: Mr. KNOTT.
H.R. 1196: Mr. LIEU, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SMITH of Washington, and Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 1200: Mr. GOODEN and Mr. WIED.
H.R. 1206: Mr. HURD of Colorado.
H.R. 1216: Mr. BIGGS of Arizona.
H.R. 1217: Mr. ESTES and Mr. LANGWORTHY.
H.R. 1222: Mr. PFLUGER and Mr. SESSIONS.
H.J. Res. 20: Ms. GREENE of Georgia.
H. Res. 66: Mr. LATIMER.
H. Res. 73: Ms. TITUS, Mr. LAWLER, Mr. MOYLAN, Ms. MCBRIDE, and Mr. SHREVE.
H. Res. 94: Mr. CASE.
H. Res. 95: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. CARSON, and Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia.
H. Res. 115: Mr. SMUCKER.
H. Res. 116: Ms. SHERRILL.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 879: Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas.

United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE *119th* CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025 *No. 29*

Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

God of mystery and clarity, open our eyes to see the unexpected ways You come to us. Lord, reveal to us Your presence in the beauties of nature and the promises of Sacred Scriptures and in the challenges that deepen our dependence on You.

Make clear Your plans to our lawmakers and infuse them with confidence in Your power. Inspire them to use their talents as instruments of liberation and healing. Lord, keep them purposeful and expectant so they will experience a deeper friendship with You in the living of their days.

We pray in Your abiding 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 Tulsi Gabbard, of Hawaii, to be Director of National Intelligence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF BROOKE ROLLINS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, for the third time, I come to the Senate floor to ask my Democrat colleagues if they will respect the Democrats on the Senate Agriculture Committee. That committee voted unanimously to approve Mrs. Rollins to be Secretary of Agriculture. There should be no reason to spend 30 hours of debate, and it would show disrespect for the Democrats on the Agriculture Committee not to approve her unless we did it by unanimous consent.

TRIBUTE TO COOPER DEJEAN

Mr. President, on another point, the champions of the 59th Super Bowl will celebrate with a parade on Valentine's Day in Philadelphia. I can say with pride that the State of Iowa is celebrating this victory with Cooper DeJean, a hometown hero and former Iowa Hawkeye. On Super Bowl Sunday, he made history on his 22nd birthday in his rookie season with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Cooper grew up in the northwest Iowa farming community of Odebolt, population 985. He was a four-star varsity athlete in high school, competing with the Odebolt Arthur Battle Creek Ida Grove Falcons. From Odebolt, he went to the University of Iowa, becoming a two-time all-American cornerback. Last year, Cooper was drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles.

As you would expect, his hometown had a watch party on Sunday. They called it ''Cooper Bowl'' and, boy, did Cooper shine. He had a thrilling 38-yard ''pick 6'' in the second quarter. Cooper made Super Bowl history, becoming the first player to intercept a pass or score a touchdown on his birthday.

The young man from Odebolt was spotted entering the Super Dome in New Orleans—you know what—wearing his high school letterman jacket. He also had a ''712 to 215'' printed on his cleats in homage to his hometown area code and his new Philadelphia area code.

So congratulations, Cooper. You are a role model for young athletes to dream big and put in the work.

A smalltown kid from Western Iowa made history and made all Iowans proud. We look forward to watching you shine for many years to come.

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.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, President Trump's border czar was at the Capitol yesterday to update Republican Senators on the progress the administration is making on arresting and deporting criminals here illegally. And it is difficult to believe some of the individuals they have arrested were still in the country—members of violent international gangs; individuals arrested for murder, for rape, for kidnapping, for drug trafficking, for sexual crimes involving children, and for human smuggling. Again, it is staggering to think that these criminals were out there on our Nation's streets. And our communities will be safer places without these individuals.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Since day one of his administration, President Trump has been fulfilling his campaign promise to crack down on illegal immigration and secure our border. And it is good to see.

Immigration is a key part of our country's story, and immigrants have made untold contributions to our country. But we need to ensure that immigration is done legally, for both the safety of our country and to preserve respect for the rule of law. The chaos of the last 4 years was unsustainable, and it was dangerous.

We had 10 million individuals flood across our southern border. We had millions—millions—of undocumented individuals take up residence in our country, more than the population of a number of U.S. States. Law enforcement officials were overwhelmed, and officers were pulled off of essential work of guarding the border just to process the flood of migrants.

Border cities and other cities across the United States struggled to deal with the influx. And all of this chaos was an invitation to terrorists, to smugglers, to drug cartels, and other dangerous individuals to enter our country.

So I am tremendously proud and grateful for the incredible amount of work the President has done so far to make it clear that illegal migration will no longer be tolerated. There is a lot more work to do, and some of that is going to require Congress's help.

Mr. Homan, President Trump's border czar, made clear to Senators yesterday that Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement are going to need additional resources to continue the good work they have been doing to secure our border and to get criminals off of our streets. We intend to deliver.

Today, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, is kicking off the committee markup of a budget resolution that will lay the foundation for a transformational investment in border security and immigration enforcement and in our national defense. We will provide resources to increase the number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers and Border Patrol agents, expand detention space, facilitate deportations of dangerous individuals, and obtain the barriers and technology that we need to secure the border.

Mr. President, for too long, our country has tolerated rampant illegal immigration. That ends now. I am grateful for everything the President is doing to protect our streets and uphold the law. And the Republican-led Congress will ensure that the administration has the resources needed to continue this important work.

TRUMP CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, in a few minutes, we are going to be voting on a couple of nominees. The first one is Tulsi Gabbard to be the Director of the DNI. The second one will be a cloture vote to proceed to the nomination of Bobby Kennedy to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

What I observe—it is interesting about both of these nominees—is that both are former Democrats. In fact, a year ago—a year ago—they were Democrats. I would argue they have seen the light. They have become Republicans and now they have been nominated by President Trump to fill important roles within his administration.

But I made that observation only because there is a lot of talk these days about loyalty oaths and allegiance and saliva purity tests for people to be considered good enough to be in the so-called MAGA movement—in other words, the Republican Party.

Yet when it comes to Democrats, a very different standard seems to be applied here because both of these people were former Democrats. In fact, frankly, they probably agree with the Democratic Party here in the Senate on a lot of positions that they hold.

And yet they have the temerity to come out and support positions that, perhaps, run contrary to some of the positions held by, particularly, the progressive wing of the Democrat Party in this country—in the case of RFK, coming out for positions that run counter to the orthodoxy of the healthcare so-called establishment, or in the case of Ms. Gabbard, different views, perhaps, about national security matters than those held by a lot of Democrats, certainly here in this Chamber, and progressive movement in the country.

It harkens back to two other Democrats who pretty much got pushed out of their party here in the U.S. Senate for holding views that ran contrary to the majority view of the progressive wing of the Democrat Party. Those two Democrats were Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema.

In the case of Kyrsten Sinema, she was viewed, I think, by Democrats as, perhaps, too free market. She was viewed as pro-business, as pro-investment, and as pro-jobs, lighter regulatory touch, lighter tax policy, pro-energy policy.

In the case of Joe Manchin, he had—I should say he had what I would say are accurate views with respect to energy development in this country—in other words, making America energy dominant, a view shared by many in our party, including our President. And for that, he was viewed as too conservative to be a true Democrat.

So Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema ended up getting pushed out of the Democratic Party here in the U.S. Senate.

Their ultimate cardinal sin, however—in the case of Manchin, as I said, he was pro-energy in a party that is dominated by climate, green, all those—whatever adjectives you want to use to characterize it or describe it—his views ran contrary. In fact, he tried to cut a deal with the Democrats in the Inflation Reduction Act only to find out they kind of went back on it, and the deal wasn't what he thought he had agreed to.

So his views were out of step, out of the mainstream of the Democratic Party, as were Kyrsten Sinema's. But their cardinal sin—their cardinal sin—was that they voted against getting rid of the legislative filibuster, a view that was held by—up until just a few years ago—a majority of Democrats here in the U.S. Senate. There was a letter signed, which I shared the other night, that had 32 Democratic signatures on it pleading with the leadership here in the Senate not to abandon the Senate tradition and heritage with respect to the Senate filibuster; to maintain the heritage and tradition that the Senate has for open debate and for representation of the minority; for the requirement of collaboration and bipartisanship when it comes to moving consequential legislation. Those are the things that the filibuster traditionally was about.

And up until a few years ago, most of my colleagues on the other side—a majority on the other side—signed a letter articulating their views that it ought to be the position of the U.S. Senate.

Well, they tried to push it because they weren't getting the outcomes they wanted on a couple of pieces of legislation when they had the majority a couple of years ago. And they forced a vote on changing the rules—breaking the rules—to get rid of the legislative filibuster and be able to map an agenda that is more consistent with their liking.

There were two people that voted against it on their side, Kyrsten Sinema and Joe Manchin. And for that cardinal sin, they were essentially ostracized. And to this day, the Democratic Party continues to hold a position now, very contrary to the one they held just a few years ago, about getting rid of the legislative filibuster.

Why do they want to do that? Because they want to enact an agenda—a progressive leftist agenda—which the American people voted against in November.

As recently as last summer at the Democratic convention, the Democrat leader basically laid out the things they want to do. First he said: We are going to get rid of the filibuster because we have the votes now. Manchin and Sinema are gone. I talked to the Democrats that we think we are going to elect, and we will have 51. At that time, he was predicting a clean sweep—they were going to win the House, the Senate, and the White House. They would get rid of the legislative filibuster, and the first thing they would do is they would Federalize our elections. That was the first thing they would do.

Then they said they would enshrine abortion rights in law. That was one thing they would do. There were many on their side who talked about packing the Supreme Court, about allowing statehood for Puerto Rico and for Washington, DC—all elements of the agenda they want to accomplish through getting rid of the legislative

filibuster. That was articulated by the Democrat leader as recently as the Democrat convention last summer—intentions that they had to get rid of the legislative filibuster so they—their party is in control—they could do the things they wanted to do that they felt that the American people were asking them to do.

Well, it turns out there was an election between last summer and now in which the American people spoke otherwise. And they had a very different view than the Democrats on a whole range of issues; issues on which, I think, the left and Democrat Party are completely out of step with the American people, not the least of which is allowing boys to play girl sports. That is a 90-percent issue with the American people.

The House passed legislation on it. We will vote on it at some point in the future. And I just can't imagine—I speak as a dad of daughters who were both female athletes, one of whom is in her high school and college hall of fame. I don't know how anybody—this is where I say I think there is just a certain intuitive common sense the American people have, and they voted for that, and made that abundantly clear in the election just this last fall.

So I say to that, again, just to remind people, when you hear this perspective about how Republicans don't have any room for dissent, they all have to be in lockstep—believe me, we have a lot of dissent on our side. Try leading the Republican conference. The Democrats, on the other hand, if you have a dissenting view, particularly on something like the filibuster—sorry, you are out of here.

Mr. President, today, it is ironic to me that we are going to vote on two nominees—President Trump's nominees—to be Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services and to be Director of National Intelligence who are former Democrats. And I will be surprised—I would like to be surprised—but I don't believe there is going to be a single Democrat that votes for either of the two people who, less than a year ago, were members of their party—in some cases, members of their party that go back decades. The Kennedy family—the Kennedy family—Democratic politics in America.

You have two nominees who were Democrats a year ago, but because they articulate views now or demonstrate a dissent from the ideology of the Democrat Party, no longer can get even one Democrat to vote for them here on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

Again, I am hoping to be surprised. That vote is going to happen in about 30 minutes on Tulsi Gabbard to be Director of National Intelligence. And then shortly after that, we will have a cloture vote on Robert F. Kennedy to be Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services.

In each of those cases, you have Democrats in good standing as recently as a year ago who have been pushed out, come now—their nominees brought by President Trump for positions within his administration—and you are not going to see a single Democrat vote for them. But we will confirm them, and we will get these people into these positions as soon as possible. And in answer, I think, to the mandate that was given by the American people in November—and that is they want a different track in this country, a different direction. They have a different set of priorities than is being articulated here in the U.S. Senate.

Mr. President, we also had just recently a vote on Laken Riley. That was probably the most glaring example, again, of Democrats' willingness to filibuster, something they wanted to get rid of 2 years ago. They wanted to get rid of the legislative filibuster.

We get the majority, first time we put a bill on the floor, what do they do? They filibuster. Here we are, slowing down these noms—full 30 hours on Tulsi Gabbard. I assume they will do the same thing on RFK. But these are people that are going to be confirmed and going to be, again, working in this administration to implement the agenda that the President of the United States has articulated and the one that he carried to the voters in this last election, an election in which the voters gave him a decisive majority at the polls.

Mr. President, I hope, again, I am wrong. I hope we have a bipartisan vote today on either or both of these nominees. But I will tell you that based on my assessment of where the party is, the Democratic Party in this country, it would come as a great surprise to me if that is the case.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, let me begin with a quote from President Trump during his campaign for the Presidency.

He said:

When I win, I will immediately bring prices down, starting on Day 1.

Well, today is day 23, and prices are up 3 percent. Let me reiterate that Donald Trump said during his campaign that prices would come down starting on day 1. It is day 23, and prices are up 3 percent.

Donald Trump is already breaking his promise to the American people. Inflation is the No. 1 concern of most Americans, and Donald Trump said he would fight inflation, but he hasn't. Groceries are up 0.5 percent. Chicken, pork, steak are all more expensive. Egg prices are up 15 percent from last month. Gas prices are up 2 percent from last month. The prices of used cars are up. The price of heating your home is up. Housing costs are through the roof even though Republicans are racing to privatize Fannie and Freddie.

Well, welcome to the age of Trumpflation. Donald Trump is breaking his promise to lower costs. This was the No. 1 issue in the campaign to most people. Donald Trump said: Starting on day one, prices are going to start coming down. Well, they are up 3 percent, and it is day 20. Welcome, again, to the age of Trumpflation.

Donald Trump knows that he doesn't have real solutions to bring costs down despite his campaign promises. So what is he doing?

He is distracting and diverting the American people or trying to—with issues that have nothing to do with bringing prices down. He is distracting and diverting with issues like changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico; talking about changing the chairman of the board of the Kennedy Center; talking about building hotels in Gaza; talking about the Panama Canal; talking about annexing Canada.

These are not the things Americans signed up for. No way. If there is one mandate Donald Trump had, it was to fight inflation on day one like he promised to do, but he is not doing that. He is focused on everything else except what Americans want most.

Meanwhile, Americans woke up this morning to bad news for their bank accounts. They woke up to the grim reality that Donald Trump is not going to keep his promise to lower costs. They woke up—Americans woke up—to an era of Trumpflation, and, unfortunately, this is only the beginning.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. President, on DOGE, we all agree—I have said it many times—that cutting waste in government and increasing efficiency is a good thing, but what DOGE is doing is something else entirely. DOGE is taking a meat-ax and attacking vital programs indiscriminately. Of the programs that he cuts, some may be wasteful; many, clearly, are not. Cut now, says DOGE. Ask questions later.

Meanwhile, of course, Trumpflation continues to get worse. If Donald Trump and DOGE want to focus on efficiency, they should do it as the Constitution maintains and the Founders wisely prescribed—through Congress. The Founders knew we needed debate; we needed sunlight; we needed transparency so we can see what programs can be improved or changed and what should be maintained. Instead, DOGE is taking a meat-ax and cutting vital programs that virtually no one outside of DOGE would call wasteful.

Cut now. Ask questions later.

I was in Albany and Syracuse on Monday, visiting community health centers. These centers throughout the country—CHCs as they are known, community health centers—are among the most effective and efficient users of government funding, and they rely on Federal dollars to provide high-quality, affordable healthcare for working people—far cheaper than for the people who would show up at a hospital. They are particularly important in rural areas where people have no option, but

many of these community health centers have had their funding cut temporarily, and too many are still unable to access funding. Some have even had to close. That means many working people suddenly have no option for high-quality, affordable healthcare near them.

Is this DOGE's idea of cutting wasteful spending—taking among the most effective, efficient parts of the healthcare system that deliver healthcare to people who need help with lower costs and cutting it without asking a question? without examining what community health centers do? Meat-ax. Meat-ax. That is what they are doing.

Or let's look at programs like PEPFAR in the AID program. Again, they want to cut the whole AID. But what about PEPFAR? Do people at DOGE even realize what PEPFAR does? It helps combat things like AIDS. It has saved 25 million lives. Other programs stop things like Ebola in central Africa. If Ebola is left unchecked, it could, one day, spread to America—from Uganda to around the world today. There are flights from Kampala all over the world. So even if you oppose foreign aid on a policy ground, most people believe that PEPFAR and the programs fighting Ebola in central Africa are effective and cost-effective and make us more secure. God forbid Ebola would spread to the United States.

Do you want to see what government waste looks like? It doesn't look like those two programs. Thanks to DOGE, here is what government waste looks like that DOGE has created: Thanks to DOGE, half a billion dollars in food assistance through USAID is sitting in ports and ships and warehouses unable to move.

So the bottom line is simple: If you want to make cuts, you have sunlight, transparency, debate in Congress—not lawlessness; not breaking the law because you feel, well, that you know more than anybody else; not by implementing cuts and asking questions later. It is a formula for disaster when you do things like that. These policies will hurt children; they will hurt seniors; they will hurt veterans and so many other of our friends and neighbors.

RECONCILIATION

Mr. President, on reconciliation, today, Senate Republicans' scheme to pass tax cuts for the ultrarich takes the next important step. Later today, Chairman GRAHAM of the Budget Committee will hold a markup of the Republicans' first reconciliation bill.

Republicans claim that their bill will be fully paid for, but that means Republicans are laying the groundwork to gut things like nutrition assistance, funding for nursing homes, student debt support, and to kill clean energy jobs that employ Americans in red and blue States alike.

There has been so much focus on how Republicans are going to pass their signature bills—should it be one bill? Should it be two bills?—that at the end of the day, talking about process is a sideshow. This ''one bill, two bills, or a hundred bills'' is meaningless. What they are trying to do is give tax cuts to the very wealthy—further tax cuts to the very wealthy—who are doing just fine, and they are hurting average Americans by cutting programs—again meat-ax, slashing—across the board to do it.

They could carve up their bill. They could carve up one bill, two bills, five bills. As I said, it doesn't matter. They could carve it up in their agenda however they want, and they could change the order of policies they tackle first, but the endgame does not change. This is all about clearing the path to cutting taxes for billionaires and making the American people foot the bill.

The whole thing—the whole big enterprise—is aimed with one goal in mind: tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans—large tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans—who, as I said, are doing fine—not as fine as the average Americans, who just saw their inflation go up 3 percent.

Plain and simple: Again, what is their plan? To funnel more wealth to the ultrawealthy while slashing everything else to the bone: gutting Medicare and Medicaid; yanking school lunches from kids; blocking prescription drug reforms which make drugs cheaper for the average American; cutting funding for cancer research—one of the most popular things we do; cutting research for semiconductor manufacturing and letting China get ahead of us. No matter how they dress it up, no matter what spin they can put on it, the Republicans' agenda boils down to this: tax cuts for the wealthy and deep, deep painful cuts for everybody else.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Finally, Mr. President, on the nomination we are about to vote on in a little while, the Gabbard nomination, every single Democrat, I am proud to say, will oppose the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard because we simply cannot, in good conscience, trust our most classified secrets to someone who echoes Russian propaganda and falls for conspiracy theories.

So before my Republican colleagues cast their votes to confirm Ms. Gabbard, I hope they are going to think carefully one last time because America's safety—America's security—is at stake.

Is Ms. Gabbard really whom Republicans want leading intelligence Agencies? I will bet not.

Is she the best person we could find for the important position of Director of National Intelligence? Of all the people who know the intelligence world, I know some will be conservative like Donald Trump would want, but they wouldn't have the huge question marks about them that Ms. Gabbard has.

Do Republicans truly believe, I say to my colleagues, that someone who has so carelessly and repeatedly echoed Russian propaganda and sympathized with the likes of Putin and Assad is the right person for this job?

I ask my Republican colleagues to think about the safety of the American people and the concern of our allies—and the threats posed by Vladimir Putin—before casting this vote.

Objectively, I think most Senators would agree there are better choices to lead National Intelligence. Do you know what my guess is? If we had a secret ballot, Gabbard might get 10 votes and 40 against her from the other side. People know—that is why they raised so many questions—but Donald Trump and Elon Musk, evidently, threatened them, and they are changing their views.

The Director of National Intelligence must be strong against America's adversaries. This is an amazing one. How could we put someone in when you hear about this? After Assad used chemical weapons against his own people in 2017 and 2018, Tulsi Gabbard turned against U.S. intelligence—by the way, at that point, Donald Trump was President—and sided with fringe conspiracy theorists to cast doubt on these two specific incidents.

I want to be clear about how strange and troubling this episode was. On one side, you had the entire U.S. intelligence ecosystem, the intelligence system of the French Government, and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons all saying the same thing: that Assad used chemical weapons against his own people in 2017 and 2018. The findings were not speculation. They were based on satellite imagery, witness accounts, medical experts—in other words, the kind of intelligence data that Ms. Gabbard would be responsible for evaluating if she—God forbid—gets this job.

On the other side were all these experts and all this evidence—fact-based—and you have Tulsi Gabbard relying on the judgment of an individual who had appeared on Russian-funded propaganda outlets, questioning those findings and shielding Assad for his inhumane conduct.

I have to say, I have never heard of a DNI nominee who was so ready and willing to question the findings of America's own intelligence operations and yet accept Russian disinformation so easily. And, of course, I am troubled by her long record of showing weakness against Russia when it came to Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

On the night Russia invaded Ukraine and launched the first full-scale invasion of a sovereign nation in Europe since World War II, what was Ms. Gabbard doing? She was on Twitter at 11:30 p.m., blaming NATO and the United States for starting the war in Ukraine when Putin invaded Ukraine. She said the war could have been avoided had NATO and the U.S. just accommodated Putin.

That is who we want as head of National Intelligence?

By the way, Russian state TV gleefully aired these comments shortly

thereafter. And now Republicans want to make this person top U.S. intelligence chief. Can you believe it?

I really don't believe my Republican colleagues believe she is the right choice. I really don't. I know the pressures that have been placed upon them. There is word in the newspapers and other places that people were told their elections would be opposed, et cetera. Who knows? But we do know that there was tremendous pressure on Republican Senators.

But sometimes, my Republican colleagues, you have to buck and stand up to the pressure and say no, this is the wrong choice—definitely the wrong choice—for America.

Again, I would repeat: If there were a secret ballot, I would bet that Gabbard would get no more than 10 votes in the Senate—10 maybe.

The nomination of Ms. Gabbard is one of those moments. Again, before Republicans cast their vote to confirm Ms. Gabbard today, please, please, please answer one simple question: Do you care more about doing the right thing for our national security or doing whatever is necessary to keep Donald Trump happy?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

ECONOMY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I just heard the minority leader, the senior Senator from New York, Senator SCHUMER, on this floor talking about today's Consumer Price Index data. Stunningly, he points to President Trump as the reason for it.

Let me just correct the record. The price data that Senator SCHUMER is complaining about is from the final days of the Joe Biden administration. Those are the numbers that are out today from the final days of the Biden administration.

Certainly everyone in Wyoming and everyone in your home State of Oklahoma knows that under the Biden administration, the Democrats, prices of goods and groceries, gasoline—the things that we need in our everyday life—prices rose more than 20 percent under Joe Biden.

High prices are Joe Biden's parting gift and his lasting legacy. They are the party of open borders and high prices. That is why they lost the election.

So here we have the Senate minority leader—now in the minority. He used to be in the majority. The reason he is in the minority is because of the high prices brought on the people of this country as a result of that administration. The numbers out today are reflective of the final days of that administration.

Painfully high prices—they came from Democrats' reckless overspending. And their policies—we are from energy States—were anti-American-energy policies. Those are the things that Senate Democrats voted for repeatedly and stood behind and supported.

Republicans are focused on making life more affordable for families all across this country, hard-working families. We have a plan to unleash American energy, and that way, we can keep lowering prices for American families.

I can just never forget when Joe Biden said he wanted to prioritize climate over energy that was available, affordable, and reliable. It was a disaster for the country and resulted in the defeat of the Democrats.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Today, Mr. President, I come to the floor also to talk about confirmation votes. The Senate will soon vote on the confirmation of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to be the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

America needs to be healthy. I am a doctor. I have worked with patients for over 20 years, was a surgeon in Wyoming. The problem is, our Nation faces a chronic disease epidemic—chronic disease, including diabetes, cancer, obesity, heart disease, and high blood pressure. Chronic diseases are so widespread that managing them accounts for almost 90 percent of the Federal healthcare spending in this country. We spend a lot of our gross national product on healthcare.

Nearly three in five American adults and one in four American children are impacted by this. Our healthcare system tries to address the problem. Yet, by incentivizing procedures over prevention and paying for that, well, it often fails to address what we need to do effectively as well as economically. As a result, Americans are actually becoming less healthy.

We need to put America on the path to good health. President Trump has selected Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to do just that, to make America healthy again. Mr. Kennedy will bring a fresh set of ideas and eyes to important debates surrounding our Nation's public health. He is going to be a voice for the vast number of Americans who were failed by the previous administration. The previous administration silenced reasoned debate.

I believe Mr. Kennedy is going to deliver accountability and transparency. For Americans, that means more choices and better information. It means healthy foods and healthy competition for patients. It means lower costs and higher quality. It means increased access to care. Access is so critical in my home State of Wyoming, with so many rural and frontier communities, people going long distances for healthcare. It also means honest, unbiased, and trustworthy scientific research that is both innovative as well as accountable to the American people. People want the truth. They want to know what the facts are. They want to make decisions for themselves.

This is Mr. Kennedy's bold vision to revitalize America's bill of health. He is very clear about his mission, has been throughout. The mission, as he told the Finance Committee, is ''to end the chronic disease epidemic and make America healthy again.''

Apparently, that is not enough for the Senate Democrats. Senator CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO of Nevada was actually dismissive of him at the Senate Finance Committee. I heard her say to Mr. Kennedy:

So that's the only reason why you're are at HHS? To address this one issue.

This one issue—chronic disease epidemic that is plaguing our Nation—is the key issue to our healthcare. Respectfully, addressing chronic disease is what we ought to be talking about for healthcare for the people of our country.

Mr. Kennedy had to testify and did testify before two separate Senate committees as part of his confirmation. Most people being confirmed come to the Senate and only testify at one committee. He responded to rigorous questions from both Republicans and Democrats, and he answered those questions with candor and with clarity.

He told the Senate HELP Committee that his leadership approach was collaborative. He pledged to ''empower the scientists to do their jobs,'' not to impose, as he said, ''preordained opinions on anybody at HHS.''

He was also clear that he supports vaccines. He told the Finance Committee:

I support the measles vaccine. I support the polio vaccine. I will do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking . . . those vaccines.

The Senate has every reason to take him at his word.

Mr. Kennedy is a bold choice. He is pro-health, pro-vaccine, and pro-transparency. He is the right choice to make America healthy again. I look forward to voting to confirm him.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for 6 minutes, followed by Senator WYDEN for 5 minutes, Senator CRAPO for 5 minutes, and Senator SCHUMER for 2 minutes, prior to the scheduled vote.

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

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise once more to oppose the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard to be the Director of National Intelligence.

As I have said repeatedly, I have great respect for Ms. Gabbard's over 20 years of service to our Nation both in and out of uniform. I am, however, profoundly worried that she lacks the qualifications or judgment to be DNI.

The job of the Director of National Intelligence is not a duty to be taken lightly. The incumbent serves as the principal intelligence adviser to the President and also bears the weight of responsibility to prevent another 9/11.

The DNI must also represent the tens of thousands of intelligence professionals around the world who often toil in anonymity. They serve as America's first line of defense against terrorists,

transnational criminals, and adversarial nations that wish to do us harm. She must also represent America to our allies as a trustworthy partner.

Unfortunately, through her own words and actions, Ms. Gabbard has demonstrated she is not up to the task.

She took the word of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad against the assessments of our own Department of Defense, State Department, and intelligence community when she denied that Assad used chemical weapons against his own people.

She knowingly met with a Syrian cleric who had vocally threatened to conduct suicide bomb attacks against the United States.

She sought to blame the United States and NATO—the United States and NATO—for Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

She publicly praised and defended Edward Snowden when he compromised our Nation's most sensitive collection sources and methods and then ran off to hide in China and Russia. Those compromises put at risk not only our intelligence but our men and women in uniform in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Just last week, even with repeated inquiries from our Republican colleagues, she refused to call Snowden a traitor.

Speaking of China, when asked about TikTok at her confirmation hearing, she refused to acknowledge the threat posed by China owning a social media company that reaches 170 million Americans.

All the way up until she was nominated to be DNI, she publicly advocated for the wholesale elimination of FISA 702, a tool we use actively in the intelligence domain, a tool that contributes literally 60 percent of the information that makes up the President's Daily Brief. That Daily Brief would also fall under her responsibility should she be confirmed.

The environment facing a new DNI today is complicated and fraught with challenges. Not only have the traditional threats persisted from China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, but we have seen increased threats from terrorism, cyber actors, and transnational criminal organizations.

All the while, the intelligence community itself is under attack. Some of our own senior and experienced law enforcement and intelligence professionals are being asked to take political litmus tests, and those who are seen as insufficiently loyal are being fired or forced to resign. Whole Agencies are being eliminated and funding impounded, in flagrant defiance of the Constitution, which only gives the Congress—us here in this body—the power of the purse.

Unvetted, unqualified individuals illegally burrow into classified and sensitive information. This very action is jeopardizing our national security and violating Americans' privacy. These DOGE bros seem to have no restriction on them at all, and I have seen no evidence that Ms. Gabbard is prepared to deal with this onslaught.

Therefore, I must oppose her nomination and urge my colleagues to do the same.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Idaho.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in a moment, the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to be Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. I rise to encourage my colleagues to support this motion.

As Secretary of HHS, Mr. Kennedy would oversee our Nation's expansive healthcare system, from sources of coverage to advancement of public health. Mr. Kennedy's decades of experience and deep drive to advocate on behalf of consumers will set a patient-centered tone at the Department.

As he has demonstrated in both public and private settings, Mr. Kennedy is committed to reorienting our healthcare approach and restoring faith in our institutions. His passion for addressing America's chronic disease epidemic will save lives, reduce costs, and establish a foundation for a healthier, stronger country. His dedication to transparency will empower patients to make more informed decisions about their healthcare and form a responsive rapport with Congress. As Mr. Kennedy stated during his hearing, ''if Congress asked me for information, you will get it immediately.''

Over the course of his vetting process, Mr. Kennedy met with dozens of Members on both sides of the aisle, spoke with bipartisan Senate Finance Committee staff, appeared before two committee hearings, and answered over 900 questions for the record, not to mention presenting thousands of pages of documents.

Mr. Kennedy has gone through the same Office of Government Ethics process as all nominees who come before the Finance Committee and has received support for his efforts. Similar to all other nominees, we have a letter from the Director of the Office of Government Ethics stating:

> Based thereon, we believe that this nominee is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

He even amended his ethics agreement, going beyond what was required by the Office of Government Ethics, in response to the request from one of our Finance Committee members.

I urge my colleagues to join me in advancing this nomination so we can begin to make our country healthier.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I know I spoke a little while ago on Tulsi Gabbard, but I feel so strongly, I just wanted to make one last plea to my Republican colleagues.

In a moment, the Senate will vote to confirm Tulsi Gabbard as the next Director of National Intelligence. Every single Democrat, I am really proud to say, will oppose this awful nomination because we simply cannot, in good conscience, trust our most classified secrets to someone who echoes Russian propaganda and falls for conspiracy theories.

It is hard to believe, of all the talented and capable people, that this is the person nominated. It is a person who has said things like: The Ukraine invasion was caused by the United States, not by Putin. It is somebody who has denied Assad's use of chemical weapons, despite all of the intelligence. It is someone who echoes Russian propaganda and falls for crazy conspiracy theories.

I say to my Republican colleagues, please think once again about this nomination. This endangers our security. And my guess is, if a secret ballot were cast on Tulsi Gabbard, maybe she would get 10 votes. You all know how bad she is.

And so I know that people feel they want to please the President in his nomination, but there are certain times you have to buck and stand up and say: No, this is just a very bad choice for America. And the nomination of Ms. Gabbard is simply one of those.

I plead with my colleagues—I know it is the last minute—to think twice, to vote no, as we all will vote, because this is such an awful nomination, who will endanger our national security and our intelligence operations throughout the country and the world.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to be the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

And let me put it very bluntly to my colleagues: A vote for Robert Kennedy for this position is a vote for a sicker America. And there is irony in that judgment, considering Mr. Kennedy is the figurehead of a mass movement known as Make America Healthy Again. But on issue after issue, Mr. Kennedy refused to stand up for policies that will keep Americans healthy and out of the hospital.

From vaccines to affordable health insurance, to lower drug prices, to women's reproductive healthcare, Mr. Kennedy—through several hearings—ducked and dodged and weaved instead of answering the basic questions that came from Senators of both parties. When he did answer, he demonstrated a shocking lack of knowledge about the

Federal health programs he would be charged with running and a willful desire to mislead Senators about his views on science matters like vaccine safety.

The only conclusion I am left with is that he stands steadfastly by the outlandish views he has expressed over his two-decade career as an anti-vaccine crusader, and he is fully prepared to implement the Republican healthcare agenda.

That agenda boils down to putting Big Pharma and insurance companies back in charge, while leaving millions of American families to fend for themselves without affordable care.

And I want to be clear about this. Going back to my days as director of the Gray Panthers, which is what I did before I went into public service, I can just tell you, this is the least qualified nominee to ever be nominated for a position of this importance. So for the next day and night, Senate Democrats are going to be on the floor telling the American people why.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle still have an opportunity to turn away from this dangerous path. If they do not, my view is their legacy will be tarnished by setbacks in science that will echo in America for decades.

As I mentioned, I spent countless hours as a young man working with seniors to navigate the newly created Medicare Program and help them avoid predatory insurance company tactics that remain all too common today. To me and many other Americans, healthcare, colleagues, is the most important issue, because if you and your loved ones don't have their health, everything else goes by the boards.

The reality is we need to make sure that Americans have the best and most affordable healthcare possible, rather than having a handful of healthcare companies gobble up the entire market for health insurance, pharmaceuticals, hospitals, and even doctors.

The results have been great for shareholder profits and disastrous for American families. Costs keep climbing. The act of getting a doctor's appointment or filing an insurance claim seems to have become an Olympic sport in much of America. The system delays and denies care and rakes in profits, while patients are left wondering how they are going to get the care they need.

So the question before the Senate now is whether we want America's chief health officer to be somebody who is going to take on those corporate interests, somebody who is going to fight tooth and nail to lower costs and improve care, somebody who is going to work to protect and improve the Federal healthcare programs that tens of millions of Americans rely on and not gut them.

Everything I have seen and heard from Mr. Kennedy over these last few weeks has led me, colleagues, to conclude he is not the person that America needs. Americans have little reason to take Mr. Kennedy at his word. They do, however, have every reason to believe Mr. Kennedy will continue to embrace and amplify anti-vaccine programs, every reason to believe that he will back up Donald Trump's abortion bans. Every reason to believe that he will be a rubberstamp for the Republican health agenda that would rip away the healthcare of so many Americans.

Over the course of the rest of the day and through the night, Democrats are going to show the American people why these concerns are so serious.

I yield the floor, and I urge my colleagues to oppose this nomination.

VOTE ON GABBARD NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gabbard nomination?

Mr. WYDEN. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 50 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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	McCormick	Wicker
Daines	Moody	Young
Ernst	Moran	
Fischer	Moreno	

NAYS—48

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Reed
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	McConnell	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Fetterman	Murphy	Warnock
Gallego	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 actions.

WAIVING MANDATORY QUORUM CALL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Kennedy nomination.

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

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. 17, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Tommy Tuberville, Kevin Cramer, Ashley B. Moody, Mike Crapo, Markwayne Mullin, David McCormick, Mike Lee, Ron Johnson, John Barrasso, Jim Justice, Jon A. Husted, Bernie Moreno, Tom Cotton, Tim Sheehy, Rick Scott of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, 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. 51 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Sheehy
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Curtis	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young
Fischer	Moran	

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. RICKETTS). 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 Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, as we begin this discussion that is so important to America, I thought I would just mention the conversation I had recently with a couple of young medical students who came up to me and said: We know you are interested in healthcare and have been involved in this.

I am so appreciative of Senator MURRAY, who is going to pick up on the healthcare issue—an area where she has very substantial experience and expertise.

I thought these medical students summed up this debate, because they said: The way we see this Kennedy nomination, it is not just a vote for next week or even next year; this is a vote with enormous impact for decades.

Because Mr. Kennedy, according to these young medical students, has a long record of essentially being anti-science.

What we are going to do in our discussion of his nomination is go into that and other issues.

Suffice it to say, during his confirmation hearings—and they have been in multiple committees now—he was given ample opportunity from members on both sides of the dais to clarify his views on science and vaccines and our Nation's biggest Federal health programs. We are going to, in the hours ahead, touch on each of these and why Mr. Kennedy's failure to demonstrate a basic understanding of these important issues that impact America's health make him a uniquely unqualified nominee to become our Nation's chief healthcare officer.

In beginning my remarks, I wanted to say that ever since my days with the Gray Panthers, I have always felt that healthcare is the most important issue. If you and your loved ones don't have your health, everything just goes by the board. So that just reinforces what these young medical students were saying about the decision we are going to make in future hours with respect to Mr. Kennedy.

I am going to start with perhaps the most dangerous aspect of his long history, and that is his embrace and amplification of vaccine conspiracy theories. He has made a lucrative career out of sowing doubt in the minds of parents when it comes to vaccinating their kids. His nonprofit, the Children's Health Defense, is solely dedicated to peddling these conspiracies. You can even get merch. There are baby onesies, apparently, that read ''Unvaxxed, Unafraid,'' ''No Vax, No Problem.''

He has been the attorney of record on at least five cases against drug companies for their vaccines, which he didn't disclose to ethics officials and refused to answer questions about. He also refused to give up his 10 percent stake in any settlement agreements—instead, passing them off to his son. He refused to recuse himself from taking any actions that might affect his family's financial interests.

A vaccine that became routine for young people about 20 years ago is involved here, and since then, it has successfully cut cervical cancer rates into just a fraction of what they were before the drug came out to market. All of this adds up to a future HHS Secretary who stands to profit off of undermining this vaccine and, as a result, raise cervical cancer rates.

To quote my Republican colleague Senator CASSIDY, a physician, Mr. Kennedy is ''financially vested in finding fault with vaccines.''

He also played a big role in one of the most deadly measles outbreaks in recent history. In 2019, he traveled to Samoa and used his platform to promote his anti-vax agenda, taking aim at the measles vaccine. The vaccine rate in Samoa plummeted. By 2019, measles had torn through the population, making more than 5,700 people sick, and 80 people were killed, most of them young kids.

During his confirmation hearing at the Senate Finance Committee, Mr. Kennedy told me, ''We don't know what was killing them,'' speaking about those 83 deaths. But just last week, the Director General of Health for Samoa called this claim by Mr. Kennedy ''a total fabrication.''

So, Mr. President and colleagues, just put that in your thinking about this consideration—Mr. Kennedy saying that he didn't know what was killing these young people in Samoa and the Director General of Health of Samoa calling Mr. Kennedy's claim ''a total fabrication.''

A recent analysis showed that Mr. Kennedy has made 114 separate appearances in the last 4 years where he took anti-vaccine views or spread misinformation about the efficacy of vaccines. In 36 of these instances, Mr. Kennedy directly linked vaccines to autism.

Instead of providing the committee with clarity or reassurances about his decades-long career peddling vaccine conspiracies, what did Mr. Kennedy do? He dodged, he weaved, he bobbed and gave no indication that as Health and Human Services Secretary, he would stand by settled science that surrounds vaccines.

As HHS Secretary, Mr. Kennedy would have a huge amount of control over how vaccines are promoted and administered in our country. He could issue orders that discourage doctors from sharing information with parents and patients about lifesaving vaccines. He could issue an order that discourages schools from talking about or even requiring vaccines. He could rubberstamp an Executive order from Donald Trump that defunds the Centers for Disease Control, which is essentially the Agency in charge of getting Americans up-to-date information about vaccines and when to get them.

Just imagine you are a parent scrolling on Instagram or listening to a podcast. You hear this gentleman speaking passionately about the danger of vaccines. Maybe you do a bit of research, and lo and behold, you find this is the Secretary of Health and Human Services, America's chief healthcare guy. You think to yourself: Huh, this guy must know what he is talking about. Maybe he is right in his questioning of whether vaccines are safe and effective.

So the seed of doubt on vaccines gets planted. Then, at your kid's next wellness exam, you decide not to get them their next round of vaccinations. A few months later, you are taking them on a trip to Disneyland, say for spring break, where countless other parents like you have heard the same medical advice from the same person and they, too, decided against vaccinating their kids.

It only takes one of those kids carrying a deadly disease like measles for an outbreak to begin, and pretty soon, after what was supposed to be the spring break trip of your dreams, your kid, sadly, is showing symptoms.

What follows then is a slew of doctor's appointments, maybe even a stay in the hospital, sleepless nights, missed days of work and school, not to mention dread and fear for your child's very well-being. Meanwhile, countless other parents around the country that went on the same trip to Disneyland are now experiencing the same exact nightmare you are.

Sowing the seed of doubt in the minds of just a few people can have massive consequences for communities across the country, and it is not hypothetical. Right now, there is a measles outbreak in Texas that has sickened more than a dozen kids. The number of kindergartners showing up with an exemption for required vaccinations jumped to a record high last fall. The two facts are connected, and Mr. Kennedy and his allies can take the credit for it.

Now, Mr. Kennedy is fond of saying he is not making recommendations about whether parents should vaccinate their kids; he is just asking questions and giving people choices. That is a slippery tactic used by conspiracy theorists to dodge any real responsibility for their words and actions, and it is absurd coming from somebody who is about to be confirmed for a job that is entirely about making recommendations.

Mr. Kennedy is also fond of saying that if somebody shows him the science to prove he is wrong, well, then he will apologize and retract his statements, but when somebody does show him the science proves him wrong, he just brushes it aside and basically will not accept it as fact.

Once again, to quote my Republican colleague BILL CASSIDY directly: ''to

improve the health of Americans, or undermine it, always asking for more evidence and never accepting the evidence that is there''—that is why, BILL CASSIDY told Mr. Kennedy, he was struggling with his nomination.

Even Republicans like Senator CASSIDY—someone I work with frequently on the Finance Committee and respect his opinion—he notes how dangerous this guy is.

It is not hyperbole to say that when Mr. Kennedy becomes Health and Human Services Secretary, if he does, and has control over how our government rolls out vaccines or makes them available, I believe kids in America will die.

When disease rates for illnesses that have effective vaccines start to rise in States across the country and hospitalizations and death tolls mount, my Republican colleagues are going to regret voting, if they do, for Mr. Kennedy today or early tomorrow.

When disease rates for illnesses that have effective vaccines start to rise in States across the country and death tolls mount, again, we will see Republicans say: This is something that could have been prevented. What else should we have done?

Republicans will be responsible for every child that dies as a result of not being vaccinated because it seems they care more about staying in the good graces of Donald Trump than they do about protecting the lives of kids. Again, this is something they will regret for years to come.

Now, before we turn to Senator MURRAY's remarks, I would just like to touch on Mr. Kennedy's stance on reproductive choice—an area where Senator MURRAY has been our leader for years and years in the Senate.

In the lead up to and during his failed Presidential campaign, Mr. Kennedy repeatedly claimed he supported a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions. Less than a year ago, in an Instagram post on June 14 last year, he stated that he supports the emerging consensus in this country that abortion should be legal up to a certain number of weeks.

Fast-forward to his confirmation again at the Senate Finance Committee a few weeks ago. He was pressed repeatedly by Democrats about his stance on abortion. Instead of clarifying, Mr. Kennedy defaulted to a clearly rehearsed talking point that he repeated over and over again:

I agree with President Trump. Every abortion is a tragedy.

While that answer doesn't give us much clarity, it is certainly telling. Mr. Kennedy has a long history of changing his stance on healthcare issue after healthcare issue to whatever position benefits him at the moment. As long as it earns him power or it earns him a paycheck, as far as I can tell, Mr. Kennedy will believe—or at least pretend to believe—whatever you want him to. He is willing to give up his principles and all his beliefs that women and mothers are better equipped to make their own healthcare decisions than politicians, and it is all about, as we have talked about on this floor, staying in Donald Trump's orbit of power.

While Mr. Kennedy recites rehearsed talking points on the subject, this is an issue that has had real, deadly consequences for women, as Senator MURRAY has said again and again.

Donald Trump spent his first term packing the Supreme Court with right-wing extremists willing to rip away the reproductive freedoms guaranteed to us under Roe v. Wade. In the wake of the Supreme Court's gutting Roe, millions of women living in red States have had their reproductive freedoms ripped away from them, all due to Donald Trump.

In the years since the overturn of Roe, there have been countless headlines about the consequences of these abortion bans: women bleeding out in parking lots or in emergency rooms because they were denied care; women becoming infertile and losing their ability to have kids in the future because they couldn't get care; and, in the very worst cases, women dying.

So it should horrify every American that we don't actually know where Mr. Kennedy stands. The man who could become our Nation's chief healthcare officer—we don't know where he stands on reproductive health, short of perhaps just saying he is a ''yes'' man for anything Donald Trump tells him to do.

So I think at this point, Mr. President, I want to yield the floor to my friend and colleague from Washington State because she knows so much about the challenge of ensuring that women's reproductive health services are being protected. As Secretary of Health and Human Services, Mr. Kennedy could do so much damage to the well-being and health of women.

I am very pleased to be able to yield the floor to Senator MURRAY to discuss that and other pressing issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, thank you to my colleague from Oregon, who has very clearly stated why this nominee is not someone who should be holding the title of Secretary of Health and Human Services, and I appreciate all of his work on this, and his wife's work. I hope everyone heeds them.

The American people are watching now with alarm because the vast majority of people know vaccines are safe, they are effective, and they are lifesaving. But we are now on the verge of confirming as our Nation's highest health official a man who has spent considerable time, money, and effort undermining that basic fact; a man who has abused his platform by refusing to acknowledge the well-established science that shows that vaccines are not linked to autism.

Fear about that point—fueled by RFK, Jr., and others peddling misinformation—is a leading reason that parents do not get their kids vaccinated against preventable, dangerous diseases. That is why elevating a man like RFK, Jr., to lead HHS would be so dangerous. Just giving him any platform to spread vaccine doubt is dangerous. But to give him one of the biggest megaphones in the world?

It is truly shameful that we even are debating this. My colleagues should know better. They actually do know better. They are looking the other way. They are choosing to pretend like it is in any way believable that RFK, Jr., won't use his new power to do exactly the thing he has been trying to do for decades: undermine vaccines.

Never mind the fact that CDC has already modified web pages with information about vaccines and other vital public health information, which a Federal judge has now ordered the Trump administration to restore. Never mind that the Trump administration is also reportedly planning widespread and significant layoffs—layoffs—at CDC and across HHS. This is how RFK, Jr., substitutes his own beliefs for science.

So when the vaccine conspiracies start swirling, and RFK, Jr., turns HHS into ground zero for misinformation, ''I had no idea'' is not going to be an excuse for confirming him, because at the HELP Committee hearing, the chair pressed him repeatedly about the debunked claims that vaccines cause autism. And when RFK, Jr., said he needed to ''see the evidence,'' he was shown the evidence, but to no one's surprise, he did not keep his word, admit he had been wrong, and spread the good news that vaccines do not cause autism.

He has had 2 weeks since that hearing to look at the same settled science as everyone else—crickets. But he won't hesitate to quote the latest anti-vax conspiracy. He is totally up to speed on that front.

Are my colleagues really buying that this guy will take an impartial look at the science?

If you think RFK, Jr., will change who he is, you are lying to yourself. He has given no evidence to suggest that and all the evidence in the world to the contrary.

Given his long and growing track record, we cannot just pretend, if RFK, Jr., finally gets power to undermine vaccines—a cause he has dedicated a considerable amount of time and effort to—that he will just give up. That is not believable.

And I know I have been talking a lot about vaccines because it is so obviously alarming, but the responsibility he would have goes far beyond that.

So let's break some of this down, both the ways he could undermine vaccines as HHS Secretary and the other responsibilities that would be at stake.

To start with, the CDC is under HHS. That means that the Secretary directly appoints people to CDC's vaccine advisory board. That board is responsible for making recommendations about

vaccines, and it is those recommendations that determine whether or not certain vaccines have to be covered by insurance.

So simply put, changing those recommendations will change what vaccines millions of Americans—including kids—will be able to get from their healthcare provider. If he is confirmed, there would be nothing stopping RFK, Jr., from firing the entire board and replacing them all with vaccine skeptics. After all, he has said many times and in many ways that he thinks CDC is corrupt and bought by Pharma—as usual, by the way, without any evidence.

RFK, Jr., would also oversee the Food and Drug Administration—that is another Agency he has repeatedly tried to discredit and attack—where he says he plans to fire—fire—hundreds of scientists on day one, at an Agency that plays the crucial role of making sure our drugs and our treatments, including vaccines, are safe and effective when we purchase them.

Not only would Mr. Kennedy have a key perch from which he would undermine vaccines, on a scale like never seen before, he could also use that platform to peddle quack treatments with no basis in science.

RFK, Jr., would also have jurisdiction over NIH. That alone means influence over billions of dollars in medical research—research that is responsible for a significant portion of our economy and, more importantly, research that patients are desperately hoping will help them find cures. But RFK, Jr., could redirect those funds to promote his favorite pet conspiracies instead of promising cures, or he could make good on his plans to fire hundreds of researchers and pause infectious disease research for 8 years.

It should go without saying that viruses aren't going to take a break.

And here is the thing: The attacks on medical research are now already happening under Trump. From his day one Executive orders, President Trump has already been threatening medical research. Suddenly, all of our grants are at risk because they are looking at addressing barriers to care or understanding why Black and Native American women have higher maternal death rates.

And now President Trump is also trying to illegally, arbitrarily, and suddenly change NIH guidelines to set an unrealistic low cap on indirect cost rates. That will mean researchers laid off, studies canceled—including lifesaving clinical trials—and kids not able to get the treatment they need, all because President Trump and Elon Musk don't seem to understand how we actually fund important research and couldn't even be bothered to find out before taking an ax to our medical research labs.

At a time when lifesaving research like this is already under attack by the President and the richest man in the world, no one who truly values medical research should vote to install one of the biggest attackers of medical science as the Secretary of HHS.

Insurance is another huge portfolio for HHS. Last time Trump was in office, we saw millions of people lose their healthcare coverage. The uninsured rate went up after years of hard-won progress. And we all know he still wants to rip up the Affordable Care Act, which will drive up costs and kick people off their coverage.

There is no reason to think Mr. Kennedy will stand up to that effort. Indeed, there is no reason to think he has the experience and understanding of the system to actually do so.

During his committee hearings, RFK, Jr., confused Medicare and Medicaid. This is basic stuff. He failed to describe the components of Medicare.

And, yes, Mr. President, I do absolutely have to talk about abortion care. This is of grave importance right now.

In his hearings, not only did RFK, Jr., confess to having no real understanding of EMTALA—that is a law which requires patients have access to lifesaving, emergency care, including, in some cases, abortion care—he also showed that he will be totally open to Republicans' fact-free efforts to rip away access to medication abortion.

Like so many other issues that RFK, Jr., is simply wrong about, the science on that has been settled for many years now. Mr. Kennedy made clear, though, he is very open to revisiting access to the abortion pill, based on a Republican argument against the science that basically boils down to ''nuh uh''—''nuh uh.''

Putting up barriers to accessing the abortion pill or ripping it off the market completely, as Republicans have made very clear they want to do, would be absolutely devastating.

And let's not forget about pandemic threats. The lies that RFK, Jr., spread during the last pandemic already made clear he is not the man to do this job. But if that weren't enough, when there was a pandemic threat response planning session for this new administration, he skipped it. He didn't go. It would be almost comical if this wasn't so serious.

Everywhere you look, everything about this nominee is so concerning. We cannot take this man at his word—something he has changed and gone back and forth on time and time again. But we can take him on his record, which is that he has consistently undermined vaccine confidence, and, by the way—note—he profited from that. And we can take the threat of what he might do seriously, especially given the alarming things that are already happening.

If RFK, Jr., gives you his word of honor that he won't freeze research, guess what. We are already seeing the Trump administration totally upend medical research. Thanks to the Trump funding freeze, NIH hasn't issued any grant awards in weeks.

If RFK, Jr., swears he is not going to take down information about vaccines, he is not going to silence experts, well, don't look now, but the Trump administration has already taken down or changed CDC pages about vaccines. They have already silenced public health experts.

If RFK, Jr., pinky-promises you that he won't undermine medical science or studies and he won't ignore global health threats, well, you might want to sit down for this, but President Trump has completely demolished our global health aid work. He has already completely demolished it.

The fallout is utterly heart-wrenching. Already we know of a woman who died because the USAID-supported hospital she went to for oxygen was forced to discharge her because they got a ''stop work'' order from the Trump administration.

It is not clear if she was the first death caused by Trump's complete freeze, but there is no question she will not be the last.

Let me make a really important point here: It is not just people across the world who will be affected by this. There was a study being done on a new HIV treatment with thousands of volunteers—a study being done, already having thousands of volunteers doing the treatment—but now, without their regular injections, which are cut off by Trump's move, there is going to be too little of the drug in their system to protect those people from HIV, but enough of the drug that, if they contract HIV, it could mutate to become drug resistant.

So for all of the absolutely unhinged conspiracies we have heard about medical research from RFK, Jr., and the like, where is the concern of this actual risk in this actual study happening right now, all because President Trump cut off foreign assistance?

RFK, Jr., has been silent about that risk, silent about how wrong that is. And so even as he is making these empty promises on one hand to some of our colleagues, he is already standing by as President Trump breaks them on the other hand.

Oh, and here is one more: If RFK, Jr., says he is going to consult you on healthcare personnel, please do not be fooled.

Look, I don't know why my colleagues need me to tell them this. I like to think we have some pretty smart people around here. But this vote—RFK, Jr.'s own nomination—this is your consultation on healthcare personnel, not some made-up promise for later. This is the point when you have the most power.

Whatever he might say, you don't get to choose who RFK, Jr., will appoint to this or that. Heck, he doesn't get to choose who President Trump appoints. The decision you get to make—that all of us on this floor get to make—is the decision before us right now.

You get to choose whom you vote to confirm, and you will have to live with

that decision. And if you ignore the warning signs and confirm RFK, Jr., then, when the wheels fall off the wagon, you may try to tell yourself you were lied to. But you knew who you were dealing with. You knew who you were dealing with. You knew what he said before and what he has refused to say. You had all the knowledge you needed to do the right thing.

I cannot tell my colleagues enough: This is not a game. This is not a political role without consequence. The Health Secretary has real power over whether Americans can get basic information and care that impacts whether they live or die. As I have tried to drive home throughout this process: Vaccines save lives. That is not a question. It is not a slogan. It is a fact.

If, when parents look to you worried about their newborn, wanting to do what is best for their baby and trusting your advice as a public health leader, if you cannot tell them the same truth that centuries of science and experience tells us, which is that vaccines are safe and effective and lifesaving, then you have absolutely no business leading the Department of Health and Human Services—none.

And so just as I did at the hearing, I want to warn all of my colleagues. By merely voting to confirm Mr. Kennedy, we would be telling our constituents: He is worth listening to on vaccines. That alone will get people killed before he even lifts a finger, because he does not even need the levers of power to get people killed, all he needs is that megaphone to affirm his views by voting to confirm him as our highest health official.

Let's not mince words about what that will mean. When babies die from whooping cough because parents weren't sure if the vaccine was safe, will you be able to look them in the eye? when the flu sweeps our nursing homes? when measles sweep through our communities? Will it be worth it?

I will end on this: I am sure there are plenty of Members who know perfectly well just how dangerous it would be to confirm RFK, Jr. They don't need to hear it from me. In fact, some of them even know the danger better than I do.

Here is what I do know: Conscience is a muscle. Courage is a muscle. The less you use them, the more they fade away. So if my colleagues are feeling the pressure from President Trump or if they are feeling the weight of the richest man in the world on their backs on this vote, I would warn them: This will certainly not be the last test we face here in the Senate. Giving in to this pressure now won't make it go away. It won't soften the pressure you face later, and it will not strengthen your resolve when the stakes are higher. It will just show pressure works.

If you do not draw a line somewhere, you will cross every line you could ever imagine. You will be pushed further and further into accepting things you thought you never would, things you thought you never could.

I think most of my colleagues know what is really at stake here. I think most of my colleagues know what sort of man RFK, Jr., is and what sort of damage he could do if he is confirmed.

There are political realities. We all get that. But there is also right and wrong. There is fact and fiction. There is people staying healthy, and people dying pointlessly, kids dying pointlessly from diseases that we can prevent because they thought Congress took its job of vetting our healthcare Secretary seriously.

So I urge my colleagues to show some courage. I urge them to show some conscience. I urge them to vote no on RFK, Jr.'s, nomination.

Mr. President, I yield 3 minutes of postcloture debate time to the Democratic leader, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Tennessee.

BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I find it so interesting how people are watching so closely to see what this administration does, and I have been so pleased to see that the polling shows, by an overwhelming amount, 70 percent of the American people agree with how President Donald Trump is carrying out his job, getting things done for the American people, things that they voted to see done, and he is keeping those promises.

Now, when we look at the issue of illegal immigration, we see that in his first weeks back in office, what he has done at the top of his to-do list has been to take action to secure this border. The numbers that we are seeing, how they have dropped with the number of encounters, with the number of ''got-aways,'' this is encouraging. The message is out there. The United States is going to protect and defend its sovereignty. We are going to protect and defend our people. That is important, and we are seeing it.

Now, the President has taken some Executive actions that have yielded results. By Executive order, he restored the ''Remain in Mexico'' policy. He restarted the border wall construction—which, by the way, this is something the Border Patrol has told us not for just a few years, but for decades: We need a border wall. That is where the phrase ''build the wall'' came from; it came from people that are down there every day protecting this country from harm.

The President has also ended catch-and-release. Now, that is that practice where somebody comes across, and then they get their paper that they are claiming asylum, and they are told that they can go on into the country and go wherever. And there are nonprofits down there on the border, and they give them a plane ticket and food and a phone and off they go to their desired destination at taxpayer expense. So that has ended.

The President has also sent troops to the southern border and, thank goodness, we are seeing these deportations of criminal illegal aliens taking place.

Yesterday in Nashville, we had eight that were apprehended in a human trafficking ring—eight. Two of them are linked to Tren de Aragua. They were Tren de Aragua gang members.

Now, these are all things that the President is doing to make this country safe, and we have security moms all across this country—and certainly across Tennessee—who are reaching out to us and saying: Keep it going. Deport those who are criminally in this country. Let's carry this out. We are seeing such good results.

In operations across the country, ICE, which is Immigration and Customs Enforcement, has arrested 11,000 criminal illegal aliens, including many violent offenders and gang members. Since inauguration day, migrant encounters at the southern border have reportedly dropped 87 percent. As I said, we are seeing results.

We know that for years, former President Biden allowed more than 10 million illegal aliens to enter the country, including tens of thousands of convicted criminals and more than 1.7 million known ''got-aways.'' And for 4 years, Tennesseans and Americans across the country have suffered the tragic consequences, including rampant migrant crime.

Recently, our Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference released a report documenting the widespread migrant crime in our State during the final months of the Biden administration. Now, the report confirms what we already know, that during the Biden years, every town was a border town; every State was a border State.

So our Tennessee District Attorneys General took the last 3 months of 2024 and they said: Let's look at what is happening in these last 3 months and see how this has escalated.

Now, of course, we know that under Joe Biden violent crime rose 43 percent his first year that he was in office. And what we saw from the District Attorneys' General report is that there were, in 3 months—now this is a 3-month number—there were 2,719 reports of illegal aliens being charged or convicted of 3,854 offenses in the State of Tennessee. Among them, the most common offense was driving under the influence. There were 654 arrests of those illegally in the country driving under the influence. These offenses accounted for more than 13 percent of all DUI arrests across the entire State.

And this problem is a big reason why, last year, my Republican colleagues and I introduced the Protect Our Communities From DUIs Act. This bill would automatically deport any illegal alien who is charged with driving under the influence.

As I have gone across our State, in each of our 95 counties—which I visit every year—in each of these counties, I have heard from law enforcement, from police chiefs, from sheriffs that these DUIs are such an incredible problem,

and the number that are committed by those illegally in the country.

Now, over this same 3-month period, illegal aliens committed hundreds of violent, heinous crimes: 154 instances of domestic assault, 80 of aggravated assault, 21—21—convicted of child abuse, 9 of statutory rape, 8 of sexual exploitation of a minor, 7 of vehicular homicide, 4 of murder, 3 of rape of a child. And the list goes on and on.

As I said, over 2,700 illegally in the country that were convicted of more than 3,800 crimes.

Disturbingly, these numbers are likely an undercount. Only 73 of Tennessee's 95 counties reported data to the District Attorneys General Conference under Biden. National data showed illegal aliens were pouring in from countries all over the world, and the Tennessee Migrant Crime Report also reflects this. There were 92 unique countries of origin—from Mexico and Guatemala, Jamaica, Romania.

Here is the bottom line: Because of Joe Biden's open border policy that was supported by far too many of my Democratic colleagues, thousands of crimes were committed by thousands of criminal illegal aliens in the State of Tennessee over just a 3-month span. And this, my colleagues, is just one State. This is my State, but we know this is happening in communities all across this country.

More than anything, the report underscores the importance of President Trump's mass deportations which are underway. There are many ways that Congress can support these efforts. My CLEAR Act, which I have talked about many times on the floor, would ensure State and local law enforcement officials have the tools to help the Federal Government deport criminal illegal aliens. This is crucial, especially when you have got far-left leaders like the Chicago mayor refusing to turn over criminal illegal aliens to Federal custody.

Now, General Bondi is suing these sanctuary cities for allowing criminal illegal aliens who have no right to be in our great Nation to harm Americans. And thank goodness, she is being tough on crime.

I have also introduced the Preventing Violence Against Women By Illegal Aliens Act, which would allow the deportation of illegal aliens convicted of sexual offenses or domestic violence. Any illegal aliens who commit these heinous crimes should be removed from the country immediately, and I encourage all of my colleagues on each side of the aisle, support this.

And my CONTAINER Act would ensure that border States like Texas have the legal authority to place temporary barriers on Federal land to help stop the flow of traffickers, drugs, and criminals coming across the border.

There are thousands of criminal illegal aliens residing in Tennessee and across the country. We should be using every resource at our disposal to remove them from our country. In many ways, the bills that I have mentioned would help President Trump to get the job done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, it is not often that the stakes of a vote to confirm a Cabinet nominee are this high, but tomorrow, when we vote on the nomination of RFK, Jr., to be the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the stakes will be life and death.

Mr. Kennedy, in his words but more importantly in his actions, has proven over and over again that he is a unique danger to society, but he is on the edge of becoming the country's top health leader, with the power to unleash bygone diseases and undermine trust in science for generations to come.

For the first time ever, we will have a Health Secretary who has actively helped to cause outbreaks instead of to contain them. We will have someone in charge of medical research who has taken every opportunity to undermine science instead of promoting it. We will have someone who has never come across a crazy idea that he didn't like, whether it is that anti-depressants are the cause of mass shootings or that chemicals in the water are turning children gay. This is the Secretary of the Health and Human Services Department. Those two things right there should be immediately disqualifying. This should be 100 to 0.

This guy used to be a Democrat. This guy was pro-choice. This guy was for clean energy. This shouldn't be a partisan issue, except to say, for HHS, you need somebody who has devoted their life and hopefully has some expertise in the area of public health.

It is not just that we didn't get someone who has expertise in public health, we have someone who has caused disease and death. I say those words with precision. I understand that both sides of the aisle are prone to exaggerating their case and being apocalyptic when we describe a pending vote. I have been here for a while, and everything is always the most important vote that we will ever cast. I don't know if this is the most important vote we will ever cast. I do think—gosh, I hope I am wrong; I really do hope I am wrong—I do think this is likely the Cabinet Secretary vote that is likely to age the most poorly because this person has the potential to actually cause diseases like rubella, like mumps, like measles, like polio that have been gone for many generations because we have a vaccine regime.

I want to tell you what he did in Samoa. In 2019, he flew to Samoa to discourage people from taking the measles vaccine. The reason was that he wanted to run a ''natural experiment'' to see how people would fare against the disease without protections.

Some of you may know this. My father was the first whistleblower against the Tuskegee experiments in which the U.S. Public Health Service did a similar thing. They knew that penicillin cured syphilis, and they knew that, for the most part, untreated syphilis caused death. But the U.S. Public Health Service decided to divide a cohort of African-American men into two parts. One would receive the medicine and be safe and be cured. Another cohort would receive a placebo and not get the lifesaving cure for syphilis. Why did they do that? To ''observe the disease process.'' To observe the disease process.

When you investigate whether or not a medicine works, there is a whole process to it—the FDA, double-blind studies, all the rest of it. The basic idea is that you try to get to some level of reliability or statistical significance so you can project out into the population what is going to work and what is not. The sick-in-the-head way to do it is to say you can't achieve statistical significance until you just let a bunch of people get sick and figure out what happens.

The U.S. Congress, led by someone with whom I served for a couple of years, Tom Harkin, when they found out about the Tuskegee experiments, they made a law against U.S. Public Health Service ever doing that again because it is immoral. It is bad science, sure, but more than that—they treated these African-American men as if they were worth experimenting on; as if this category of human beings in the United States was expendable for scientific research purposes. And that is exactly what happened in Samoa. That is exactly what happened in Samoa: 6,000 people got the measles, 83 people died, 79 of them were kids.

It is so chilling to contemplate the idea that someone as recognizable as a Kennedy would fly across an ocean to a small, developing country and basically tell everybody: Be afraid of this lifesaving medicine.

It is not like he did that once and said ''I am sorry, I misunderstood'' or ''I am being misunderstood.'' This dude actually sells onesies on his website saying—I think it is like ''Unvaxxed, Unafraid'' for a little baby. This guy has views that are out of the mainstream of, I would guess, 99 out of 100 U.S. Senators.

I do understand the pressure that some of my colleagues are facing. They are being told: If you vote against one Trump nominee, you will be primaried.

That is not a small amount of pressure. But this one, I just promise you, is not going to age well.

Some of my colleagues are expressing reservations in private. I think that is better than not expressing any reservations at all. Some of them are getting private assurances from Mr. Kennedy that he does not, in fact, hate all vaccines; he just wants to answer questions and all the rest of it. I am not reassured. I think this person has demonstrated over a pretty long career that he says whatever is convenient in the moment.

This is like an unreconstructed—he is a Kennedy. He was running for President in the Democratic primary, and now he is a Trump guy like 10 months later. What does that mean? It means he has no core values. There is just no way to go from over here to over here politically in such a short period of time except that he was offered something, and he was offered this job. Why does he want this job? Because he has a very specific view about public health.

I just want to make one other point. The problem of our food system, the problem of the extent to which we subsidize ultraprocessed foods that are coming from commodities, that are subsidized in the farm bill and causing people to get increasingly diabetic and all the related health problems that happen related to that—that is a really legitimate place to do some good, bipartisan work. I would love to do that. It is also not what the HHS Secretary does. It is what the U.S. Department of Agriculture does for the most part, and it is what the Congress does.

The problem is the farm bill. The problem is, you get what you subsidize, and we are subsidizing all the corn products and all the soy products and all the sugar products that go into the lab-tested, extra-delicious, extra-bad-for-you, extra-addictive stuff that is making us all—even though we are the wealthiest country in human history—a very unhealthy country. If that is all this guy were working on, you could count me in.

But if your idea of public health has to do with healthy food, has to do with prevention, has to do with understanding that our food system and our agriculture system and our USDA and our farm bill process is essentially broken, you don't have to purchase this kind of crazy, evil stuff. You just don't. You don't have to do it. There are lots of good people on the food system side you can work with, work for, cheer on, organize with.

But this man is going around—he is not talking about the COVID vaccine. He is not talking about whether or not it is appropriate to require masks in public, and Democrats and Republicans are still arguing about stuff like that. He is talking about stuff that, like, if you are a parent and now you don't know whether, when your kid goes to school, they have reached herd immunity for stuff that is like way, way, way, generations back in the rearview mirror.

So I don't know if this is going to mark one of the most important public health moments in American history, but I can't think of another time where we actually have the technology, we have the medicine, we have the science, we have the distribution system, we have the public infrastructure to keep people safe, and we just decide by a vote of 53 to 47 to make people unsafe.

Secretary of Defense, DNI—all these are important—Treasury—every Cabinet position is important. It is going to be a little more challenging to know whether your vote is vindicated in the sweep of history. I think this guy is going to age very poorly in the job because I think we are going to see bad public health outcomes very, very shortly. This really is a matter of life and death.

I understand what I have learned over the last 10 days is, if Republicans are going to display courage, it is not going to be on the Cabinet. There are a few that have voted not with their party, but for the most part, they are in line, and Trump is going to get his Cabinet. But let this be a marker for everybody. Let today be a marker for everybody. Even if you voted for Trump, if you didn't vote for Trump, if you are not a voter—it doesn't matter. If you think it is a good idea to leave all of these diseases in the rearview mirror, then this is a very, very bad person to have running the Department of Health and Human Services.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, I had the opportunity to question Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., the President's nominee to serve as the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

I asked Mr. Kennedy, Jr., a simple question: What different vaccine schedule would you say I should have received?

I asked this question because just 3 years ago, Kennedy said:

> We should not be giving Black people the same vaccine schedule that's given to Whites, because their immune system is better than ours.

When I asked him this question, Mr. Kennedy referenced a study by Poland, a study he assured me—and not just me but also my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and the American people watching—that this study asserted that, indeed, certain races required a different vaccine schedule.

That was a lie. In fact, the study's own author stated the data doesn't support a change in vaccine schedule based on race.

Mr. Kennedy's response was damning, and his response was dangerous. So I followed up following the hearing with a letter and with questions. I wrote to Mr. Kennedy:

> During your testimony, you cited ''a series of Poland studies'' that underlie your claims that Black people and White people should have different vaccine schedules. You ended by saying—

In that hearing—

> ''You don't believe the science? The peer-reviewed studies?'' Well, Mr. Kennedy, I do believe in science and [I] did some digging into the studies you referenced. NPR interviewed the authors of the studies you cited—medical experts with years of experience—and they universally disagreed with your assertions. In fact, Dr. Richard Kennedy of the Mayo Clinic, who was involved in a study you mentioned, made clear that ''the data doesn't support a change in vaccine schedule based on race.'' Dr. Kennedy also stated that your suggestion would be ''twisting the data far beyond what [the studies] actually demonstrate.''
>
> Dr. Gregory Poland, who you mentioned by name during the hearing as doing research supportive of your claim, told NPR that his team ''found 'no evidence of increased vaccine side effects' and that any claim of 'increased vulnerability' among African Americans who receive the rubella vaccine is 'simply not supported by either this study or the science.' ''
>
> NPR quoted Dr. Carlos del Rio of Emory University as saying [that] your conclusion was 'taking it to a very unsafe place' because Black children already have lower vaccination rates than their peers. That is why I said your claims on this issue were dangerous.

[I have to ask you, Mr. Kennedy]: Do you still believe that Black and White individuals should have different vaccination schedules?

Now, you would think that the man who wants to serve as the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the man who wants to be tasked with the mission of HHS, which is improving the health, safety, and well-being of America, would provide a thoughtful and nuanced response. It was anything but because, let's be clear, Mr. Kennedy is not a doctor; he is not a scientist. In fact, his only tangential connection to the world of health and science is decades-long activism in questioning the efficacy and safety of vaccines. Maybe I shouldn't have been surprised at his curt and dismissive response.

Mr. Kennedy wrote:

> If confirmed, I will do nothing as HHS secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking the vaccines but instead seek transparency in these products.

Yet another lie.

Mr. Kennedy's life story is one riddled with quackery and laden with conspiracy theories.

I quote him; when he said:

> There's no vaccine that is safe and effective.

I quote:

> None of the childhood [vaccines] have ever been studied.

He also said:

> They get the shot; that night, they have a fever of 103; they go to sleep; and 3 months later, their brain is gone. This is a Holocaust, what [this country is doing].

I quote:

> Autism comes from vaccines.
>
> The polio vaccine given to his generation caused cancer that ''killed many, many, many, many more people than polio ever did.
>
> The COVID vaccine was the ''deadliest ever made.''

He also said:

> COVID–19 is targeted to attack Caucasians and Black people. The people who are most immune are Ashkenazi Jews and Chinese.

He also said:

> There's no vaccine that is, you know, safe and effective.

These are all statements made by a man who is asking to be held responsible for a singular mission. The mission of the U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services is to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans by providing for effective health and human services and by fostering sound, sustained advances in the sciences underlying medicine, public health, and social services. It is a task of epic responsibility; a serious job that, when done well, can save hundreds of thousands of lives; a job that, when done poorly, will most certainly cost American lives.

Let us not speak of Mr. Kennedy in a vacuum. We have now held the floor multiple times over the past week over a string of nominees that are dangerous to the American people not because—and I cannot stress this enough—we disagree with their politics or their worldviews. We can have robust policy debate. We can have robust scientific debate. In fact, robust debate has the potential to move us forward as a country. Respectful debate is the hallmark of this body. It is a crucial component of free speech.

I went to law school, and I spent years in the courtroom trying cases and making my arguments before a jury of my peers. Grounding my arguments was a basic set of evidentiary facts. But what we are dealing with here isn't a debate; it is a popularity contest and a test of loyalty.

Mr. Kennedy is not in this position today as the nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services because of his vast experience in medicine. Mr. Kennedy is not in this position today because of his deep scientific knowledge. Mr. Kennedy is not in this position today because he has respect for the scientific method. Mr. Kennedy is not in this position today because he respects medicine. Mr. Kennedy, like many of his fellow nominees, is in this position today because of his deep loyalty to the President of the United States.

What makes our job increasingly difficult as Members of the U.S. Senate is that we have the duty to advise and consent. It isn't just a privilege of this Chamber; it is a responsibility to speak for the people of our States as well as the American people as we evaluate the qualifications, the experience, and the temperament of a President's Cabinet nominees.

What is happening on the part of my Republican colleagues is not advice and consent. The sole qualification being assessed is loyalty—not loyalty to country, not loyalty to the American people, not loyalty to the duties and responsibilities we have been entrusted with by the voters in each of our States. The sole qualification up for assessment is loyalty to the President, and Mr. Kennedy has that in spades.

But loyalty to this President comes at a cost—not a cost to the billionaires, not a cost to the people in this body but at a cost to the American people—Democratic Americans, Republican Americans, Independent Americans, Americans who voted for this President, Americans who did not, and Americans who did not vote at all.

The President has been consistent that he believes the American people delivered him a mandate to carry out his agenda. With respect to the health, safety, and well-being of America—the purview of Health and Human Services—the President believes that cutting funds for medical research into things like cures for cancer is apparently a part of that mandate.

Just this weekend, the President announced massive cuts to NIH—an Agency which I am proud to say has its home in Maryland. The mission of the National Institutes of Health is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability. It falls under the very Agency Mr. Kennedy is seeking to run.

Here are what some scientists—people I implore Mr. Kennedy to listen to despite his apparent distaste for the profession—had to say about these massive cuts:

Dr. Richard Huganir, professor and chairman of the Department of Neuroscience at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in my State of Maryland, said:

> We were all just dumbstruck. I'm calling it the apocalypse of American science. This will basically change science as we know it in the [United States]. . . . The bottom line is that we are going to have a lot less resources, which obviously means we are going to have to lay people off and research will be slowed down.

Dr. Otis Brawley, professor of oncology and epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and the Bloomberg School of Public Policy, said:

> We're going to see health research kneecapped.

Dr. Brawley has actually overseen grants at the National Cancer Institute, which is part of the NIH, as well as received them for his cancer research.

He went on to say:

> People who are getting treated in clinical trials now for cancer will find many of those trials will close down.

Dr. David J. Skorton, president of the Association of American Medical Colleges, said:

> These are real consequences—longer waits for cures and for diagnosis, slower scientific progress, losing out to competitors around the world, and fewer jobs. Those who are facing any health challenges will suffer from less biomedical research.

Dr. Robert Lefkowitz, a Duke University—my alma mater; go Blue Devils!—professor of medicine who won the Nobel Peace Prize in chemistry in 2012, said:

> I think the American people need to understand how devastating it would be if this goes through. A lot of research would just have to stop; I can't imagine that the shortfall could be met from other sources.

NIH funding supports over 600 current and ongoing clinical trials at Johns Hopkins in Maryland. The NIH supports hundreds more critical research projects and clinical trials at the University of Maryland—clinical trials in cancer, pediatrics and children's health, heart and vascular studies, and the aging brain; research on traumatic brain injury to members of the military, suicide prevention, addiction, and patient safety.

Clinical trials support over 23,000 jobs and $5.7 billion in economic activity in Maryland. These massive cuts will lead to over $200 million in losses to Hopkins and over $50 million in losses to the University of Maryland.

I may not be a Republican voter, but I can assure you, Republicans across our country aren't seeking to stymie progress on a cure for cancer.

By putting the NIH in his crosshairs, the President is targeting some of the most vulnerable Americans: the young child suffering from sickle cell disease; the working mom who is also struggling to care for a parent with Alzheimer's; the family member suffering from an opioid addiction; the father dying of lung cancer—all diseases being actively researched by the NIH.

Disease and suffering do not respect the boundary of partisan politics; they impact each and every American family. It falls in part to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to do everything in his power to get us closer to cures. Instead, I fear we have a nominee before us who is more interested in getting us closer to conspiracies.

With loyalty to the man in the White House as opposed to the health and well-being of the American public, Mr. KENNEDY is likely to follow his boss in supporting attacks on Medicaid. This administration and my Republican colleagues are seeking to upend Federal Medicaid financing and are considering per capita caps and repealing Medicaid expansion funding.

Let me make this simple. The Republican framework to cut Medicaid puts nearly 435,000 Marylanders at risk of losing coverage. It will lead to major gaps in healthcare coverage and undermine family economic security. It will put quality care out of reach for more families.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, these are Democratic families; these are Republicans families. That shouldn't matter to the President or to the nominee for the Department of Health and Human Services. All that should matter is that these are proud American families.

The administration's attacks on Medicaid would kick millions of people off their health coverage and force States to make deep cuts to benefits, eligibility, and reimbursement rates. My State can't afford these cuts. Maryland's families can't afford these cuts, as 96 percent of eligible children in Maryland are supported by Medicaid and/or CHIP. Cuts would disproportionately hurt children with the lowest incomes and the highest healthcare needs.

At a time when Americans are struggling under the weight of inflation—scraping to pay for food, gas, and housing—we cannot strip away or cut their health coverage. That is a cruel move that will certainly bankrupt many individuals and families. Many Americans are one catastrophe away from financial ruin, and if you take away their coverage and access to affordable care, it will be realized.

Don't just take it from me; Marylanders have been calling and writing in, demanding that Congress do everything it can to fight against attacks to Medicaid.

Jacqueline from Baltimore shared this with us:

One day, I was at work and passed out in the bathroom. Had to be cut out of the restroom by the firemen. After being in a coma for 12 days, it was determined that I am a diabetic. Having Medicaid saved my life. If I did not have Medicaid or any insurance, I would have been sent home, and who knows what would have happened?

Another constituent from Ellicott City shared this:

My 22-year-old son has autism and a significant cognitive disability. He is a happy, affectionate person who loves being around people and being physically active. Due to behavioral challenges at home, he lives in a group home. This environment is one in which he can be safe and thrive. He also attends a program licensed by the state's Developmental Disability Administration Mondays through Fridays, 9–3. This program provides meaningful day services. Both his group home and day program services are funded through DDA's Medicaid Waiver. Given the cost of my son's services and the services of many other individuals with developmental disabilities, a limit on federal Medicaid dollars would no doubt force Maryland to reduce services. If my son was not able to continue living in his group home, he would become homeless. Another impact of Medicaid cuts could be his healthcare, as he is fully reliant upon Medicaid for his health insurance. He will never be able to work enough hours to draw health insurance benefits, due to his disability.

Such an anecdote should stir all of us to action. It should stir the Members of this body to take more seriously our duty to advise and consent, to push back against a nominee who sees his role as a loyal foot soldier to one American who sits in the White House and not the millions of Americans whose health and healthcare are on the line.

Last week, I looked Mr. Kennedy in the eye, and said I would not be supporting his nomination. I said that his views are so dangerous to our State and to our country; that his voice would be a voice that parents would listen to.

I honored my constitutional duty of advice and consent.

On behalf of every single Marylander who has lost a loved one to disease, every single Marylander who works at NIH or is actively researching cures, every single Marylander who has been led astray by a snake-oil salesman peddling quackery instead of science, I will be voting no on Mr. Kennedy for them.

To my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I urge you to think long and hard about the phrase that you believe encapsulates your mandate—''America First.'' If we are not putting the people of this country first, then we are most certainly not putting this country first. ''America First'' cannot exist if the people in this country are too sick to be strong. And when you have someone like Mr. Kennedy responsible for the health of our citizenry, I fear that is where we are headed—dead last, literally and figuratively.

I may not be able to stop this nominee from being confirmed, but I want every Marylander to know that I will never stop fighting for your health and for the health of your loved ones.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor to join my colleagues with a great deal of concern to discuss the Trump administration's nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to be the next Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

To put it very simply at the outset, Robert F. Kennedy—RFK, Jr.—is unfit to lead the highest health office in our Nation.

First of all, RFK has no—let me repeat, no—health or medical experience. That, in and of itself, should be a redflag on this nominee, who is supposed to be tasked with leading our Nation's health Agency.

But, sadly, that is not where the redflags end.

From his radical and dangerous opinions on vaccines and public health to his promises to cut medical research, to his ever-changing position on women's rights to access reproductive healthcare, he has proven that he lacks the credibility, the knowledge, and the capability to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Let's take a step back. When President Trump ran his campaign, he ran a campaign on lowering costs for working Americans. Well, where has that promise gone?

We saw today that inflation has gone up in the last quarter. It is over 3 percent now. And we have seen nothing from President Trump's first weeks in office that addresses the high cost of healthcare, of food, of housing, of childcare.

Two weeks ago, this administration, including the Health and Human Services Agency, halted funding across the board for programs like our community health centers and substance use treatment programs. These centers are often the main source of healthcare for their communities. They serve the people across the States of this country.

In our office, I heard from programs like Coos County Family Health, a community health center that provides lifesaving care to rural patients across the northern part of New Hampshire, what we call the North Country. Their programs for training new doctors and providing services for victims of domestic violence were, and still are, at risk, thanks to Trump's Executive orders and funding freeze.

I heard from Navigating Recovery in Laconia. That is a substance use treatment service that depends on Federal funding for more than 50 percent of its budget. They are worried about keeping their doors open. This is an organization with providers who will literally sit with a patient by their hospital bed, following an overdose, to make sure they are getting the best guidance, the best treatment, and the follow-on services, like housing and childcare, that allows them to start their recovery.

This is a real issue for us in New Hampshire, where we have been hit very hard by the opioid epidemic.

The Trump Executive orders and funding cuts will force Navigating Recovery to lay off staff and to curtail assists, should those funding cuts continue.

These are actions on the part of the White House that don't lower costs for family. They do just the opposite. They put people out of work, and they weaken our ability to care for our most vulnerable populations.

But when he was asked if he would reverse this policy of cutting funding for programs like substance use recovery, RFK refused.

The thing is, we should be taking steps right now to lower costs for families and children. Half of the uninsured Granite Staters site costs as their reason for not being able to afford health insurance. More than two-thirds of people in New Hampshire have delayed care, and another 25 percent have delayed buying needed prescriptions or said they have to ration their meds.

We could help these people right now. We could pass the Healthcare Affordability Act, which would make permanent premium tax credits in the Affordable Care Act that have cut healthcare costs for 24 million Americans, nearly 70,000 from New Hampshire.

Passing that bill would directly help constituents like the man in Newmarket who contacted our office. He is 55 years old. He is a patient at Lamprey Health Care, which is a community health center. He had been uninsured and avoided going to a doctor his whole life. But, sadly, he was recently hospitalized for 10 days because of complications from untreated diabetes. He had sepsis, and he had an infection in his foot.

Unfortunately, he didn't have insurance when he was hospitalized. But, luckily, Lamprey Health Care sat with him and helped him purchase health insurance on healthcare.gov, helping him avoid potentially devastating medical debt.

These tax credits are vital to his and to millions of Americans' ability to afford healthcare. But, again, when asked about these tax credits, RFK refused to say that he would support extending them—so much for any concern about lowering costs for families.

Now, if this administration is not trying to lower costs, what are they doing to help the people they swore an oath to serve?

Last Friday, our research institutions got a notification almost overnight that their funding through the National Institutes of Health would be gutted. This decision threatens our ability to find cures for diseases, to get ahead of public health crises, and to hire and retain talent. I think it was made rashly and irresponsibly, without really understanding what the impact would be.

Slashing those funds won't make research more efficient. Instead, it is going to cripple our ability to treat and cure horrific diseases.

Dartmouth College, which is in Hanover, NH, is one of our preeminent research institutions in the country. Last year, Dartmouth received nearly $100 million in NIH funding to help with its cutting-edge research to treat diseases like diabetes, cystic fibrosis, and Alzheimer's. This NIH decision—this decision by the Trump administration will cut Dartmouth's funding by $38 million. And we don't know what the future impact of that would be.

Will we miss the next cure for pediatric cancer? Will we fail to advance treatments in Alzheimer's?

What we do know is that this has an immediate impact on the people living in the Upper Valley of New Hampshire. More than 1,300 employees are supported by Federal grants at Dartmouth, and the vast majority of these are supported by the National Institutes of Health. The job loss, the economic impact that will result from this decision will be devastating.

And, sadly, once these jobs are gone and the researchers leave, there is no going back because they are going someplace else. They are going overseas.

But we, unfortunately, know that RFK supports this decision because he has publicly supported gutting NIH staff and research. If Robert Kennedy is confirmed, I fear he will do nothing to push back or to reverse these reckless decisions.

The Secretary of HHS also holds immense power over ensuring that women in our country have the ability to access reproductive health services, including abortion. Interestingly, I thought this was something that RFK and I agreed on, but now I am not clear what he supports.

He used to proudly say that he was pro-choice, but since being nominated, that belief seems to have disappeared overnight. The only thing I think he truly believes is in his desire to do whatever Trump wants, even if it means compromising his own values.

Women in this country need to know that the Secretary of Health and Human Services will defend our rights to access all the healthcare we need. But at every turn, Republicans and the Trump administration have pushed forward dangerous policies intended to threaten access to full reproductive care.

They put on the Supreme Court the Justices who overturned Roe v. Wade, and at the State level, they have instituted draconian abortion bans that threaten the lives of mothers.

Women are literally dying—dying—from a lack of care because of these bans on our health. This is 2025. How did we get here? I remember before Roe v. Wade. I remember when hundreds of thousands of women died from backally abortions. Are we back to that point?

Everyone knows that banning abortion and making women seek dangerous options does not stop abortions. It makes them more deadly. But with RFK at the helm, that is the grim reality we face.

He is not someone I trust to defend a woman's right to access reproductive healthcare. He is not someone I want leading Health and Human Services.

One of the few issues that we have some actually insight into are his views on public health. His dangerous, radical, and wrong beliefs about vaccines are well documented. Every child who gets sick or dies from a disease that could be prevented by a vaccine is a tragedy.

RFK will not only undermine public confidence in vaccines; he indicated that he intends to continue to profit from anti-vaccine lawsuits. It is shameful, and it is corrupt.

We have also heard reports that the Trump administration plans to cut as much as 50 percent of Health and Human Services' staff and decimate the work of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC is our first line of defense for public health, most importantly tracking and responding to outbreaks of diseases not only domestically but abroad as well. The Trump administration has already taken steps to gut our global health and aid efforts, from withdrawing from the World Health Organization to cutting the CDC and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

They argue that these efforts are wasteful and unnecessary. But just last Friday, we were notified in New Hampshire that we had only the third confirmed case ever in the United States of clade I monkeypox, or Mpox. The case is travel-related, meaning the patient caught the disease abroad and brought it home.

Sadly, these diseases don't just stop at countries' borders. They don't just happen overseas. They affect us here at home. The Trump administration's efforts to eliminate our public health infrastructure doesn't make America safer, it doesn't make America stronger, and it doesn't make America more prosperous. It does the exact opposite.

And Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is complicit. He is complicit in these efforts, and he will only continue them should he be confirmed.

America deserves a leader at HHS who values science, who protects public health, who defends women's rights to reproductive care—to the full range of reproductive care—and who upholds the integrity of our country's core health systems. RFK, Jr., has shown time and again that he is not that leader.

His dangerous rhetoric on vaccines, his reckless plans to gut critical Agencies, and lack of understanding of basic healthcare make him uniquely unqualified to advance the well-being of all Americans. I urge my colleagues to reject his nomination for Secretary of Health and Human Services.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I yield 30 minutes of postcloture debate time to the Democratic leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s nomination to serve as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, also known as HHS.

Throughout his entire nomination process, it has become clear that Mr. Kennedy is wholly unprepared to lead this Department, which is charged with promoting, as well as protecting, the health of all Americans.

If confirmed as Secretary, he would be tasked with managing programs that millions of Americans depend on each and every day, including Medicaid and Medicare; the Centers for Disease Control, or CDC; the Food and Drug Administration, or FDA; the National Institutes of Health, or NIH; as well as a number of other initiatives aimed at preparing for and responding to public health and medical emergencies. In total, HHS has a nearly $2 trillion budget and manages more than 90,000 employees. HHS is an extremely, extremely complex organization that requires a leader with expertise on how these critically, critically important programs are actually administered.

Yet, during his hearings before the Senate Finance and HELP Committees, Mr. Kennedy showed his severe lack of knowledge and understanding about the most basic of Federal health programs. Mr. Kennedy could not answer the most basic questions about how the Medicaid Program works or how it benefits more than 70 million Americans who depend on health insurance.

At a time when Republicans are proposing drastic cuts to the Medicaid Program to pay for their tax cuts to billionaires, we need a Secretary who not only knows how the program works but will protect the access to healthcare services it provides for children and some of the most vulnerable people in our country. It is very clear Robert Kennedy, Jr., is not that Secretary.

During his nomination process, Mr. Kennedy also made it clear he does not understand the differences between the

various components of Medicare, a program that keeps our seniors cared for well into their golden years and often plays a key role in a person's decision about whether or not they can retire with dignity.

Amid ongoing threats from Republicans to privatize Medicare, we need a Secretary who will protect this program that generations of seniors have counted on to get care and generations to come that are paying into that fund for their future.

Mr. Kennedy's lack of experience and basic understanding of our Nation's healthcare system is, to say the least, extremely alarming. We cannot confirm a nominee who doesn't even know the most basic answers about programs that he is actually in charge of administering.

Since Mr. Kennedy was nominated to lead HHS, I have heard from thousands of my constituents from every corner of Michigan—from densely populated cities to some of the most rural areas in our State—who are deeply concerned about how his plans for the Department would impact families. For example, I have heard from countless folks about the rising cost of healthcare that is squeezing Michigan families' budgets. Healthcare prices are rising faster than inflation, making it even harder for people to get the care that they need.

I have heard from a constituent who has operated a food pantry in her community for 13 years. She worries about what will happen to the people that she serves if they do not have access to the food security programs made possible by HHS. In her letter, she shared that most of the people in her pantry services are literally one ER visit or one car breakdown away from being able to feed themselves or their families.

Public health initiatives are a lifeline for so many in Michigan as well as across our country. When our neighbors have access to basic health resources, it allows them to focus on improving their lives, whether that is gaining meaningful employment or getting an education. So we need an HHS Secretary who is focused on improving access to Medicaid and expanding the premium tax credits for the Affordable Care Act that allows millions of Americans to access affordable healthcare.

That clearly is not Robert Kennedy. He would not be that Secretary. Instead, he believes that Americans would rather be on privatized, for-profit healthcare.

HHS is also in charge of providing mental health services and support to communities all across our country. Unfortunately, we have a mental health crisis impacting Americans today, with record high levels of mental illness and suicides, especially among our youth.

I received a letter from a social worker in Michigan who helps students who were traumatized by the horrific shootings at Oxford High School in Michigan and at Michigan State University. She is worried that, without proper mental health resources, Americans who have been impacted by senseless gun violence—whether at school, at their places of worship, at nightclubs, or at shopping malls—will grieve and struggle alone.

Unfortunately, Mr. Kennedy has only further stigmatized these important resources, even making comments during his confirmation hearing linking an increase in school shootings to an increased use of antidepressants. Mr. Kennedy's ideas would only worsen the mental health crisis that we are seeing today.

Instead, we need a Secretary who will invest in SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. We need a Secretary who will ensure that everyone has access to the programs and health professionals needed to address this mental health crisis. Robert Kennedy, Jr., is not that Secretary.

HHS oversees our Nation's major medical research, helping to advance breakthroughs in science and development of new treatments for deadly diseases, from childhood cancers to Alzheimer's. Research institutions across my home State of Michigan are conducting critically important research to improve health outcomes for Americans who suffer from these diseases.

A Michigan scientist who specializes in CDC research contacted my office. They fear that if Mr. Kennedy is confirmed, it could impact their ability and the ability of thousands of researchers all across our country to conduct medical research that is literally saving lives.

In a matter of weeks, we have already seen the Trump administration freeze funding and halt critical work at the National Institutes of Health and its research partners across the country. We need a Secretary who will fight to do this important research moving forward, research to cure cancer, to treat deadly viruses, and to address cardiovascular disease. Mr. Kennedy is not—he is not—that Secretary.

Advancing medical research is especially important today as we face increased cases of vaccine-preventable infectious diseases like measles. And despite this, Mr. Kennedy has time and time again sown doubt and promoted dangerous lies about the safety of vaccines.

My constituents are alarmed at what that will mean for their families. A concerned mother-to-be—who wrote to me and my office when she was 38 weeks pregnant—told me that Mr. Kennedy's long history of spreading dangerous medical disinformation and undermining public health initiatives is directly at odds with how she plans to keep her future child from infectious disease.

I also heard from a constituent who was born before the polio vaccine was approved. She said that, to this day, she can still remember the relief on her mother's face when the polio vaccine became available. This moment has stuck with her throughout her 30-year career as a registered nurse, where she has made it her life's work to study and safely administer vaccines in her community.

Let's be clear. Let's be absolutely clear. Vaccines are scientifically proven to protect against diseases like chickenpox, polio, influenza and, yes, COVID–19.

We have eradicated deadly diseases and protected our children due to incredible scientific advances in vaccine research. But now vaccine skeptics like Mr. Kennedy have risen to prominence, discouraging people from getting safe, proven vaccines, and putting every American's health at risk when it comes to infectious diseases.

We need a Secretary who understands the effectiveness of vaccines and who will do more to prevent these diseases through routine childhood immunizations. Mr. Kennedy is not that Secretary, and, if confirmed, Mr. Kennedy has made it perfectly clear that he will stand in direct opposition to this evidence-based medicine.

Mr. Kennedy's falsehoods about basic public health practices have impacts that stretch far beyond our physical health. Another constituent, a clinical therapist, said she is seeing firsthand the devastating impacts that misinformation can have on mental health, adherence to treatment, and overall patient well-being. Specifically, she mentioned that ''the spread of falsehoods about vaccines, psychiatric care, and medical service fuels distrust in lifesaving interventions, exacerbates existing mental health crises, and hinders efforts to connect patients with effective, evidence-based treatments.''

I have even heard from parents who are concerned about Mr. Kennedy's narrative suggesting vaccines cause autism. Because he has given credibility to these lies and questioned facts from scientists and doctors, these parents worry that their children will not receive the most basic, routine care they deserve.

In the midst of so many healthcare challenges, from prescription drugs to mental health, to various public health threats, we cannot afford to have someone as unprepared as Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., in charge of all these public health Agencies.

Even well-respected organizations know that Mr. Kennedy would be an absolute disaster for our public health. Take the American Public Health Association, for example. In a letter, they said:

> To effectively lead our nation's top health agency, a candidate should ideally be trained in health administration, clinical care, or a related field and must believe in and follow the scientific evidence that serves as the basis of our nation's system to protect and to promote the public's health from the many threats we face.

We simply cannot afford to have someone as unqualified as Robert Kennedy, Jr., be in charge of our top public

health Agency. He has failed to exhibit even the most basic knowledge of how HHS programs are administered to the millions of Americans who depend on them each and every day. He has misrepresented scientific evidence that is at the foundation of what HHS sets out to accomplish, which is keeping Americans healthy and protected from disease. He has demonized doctors, scientists, researchers, and medical professionals who, unlike him, have actually done the important work to keep our communities safe.

I urge my colleagues to judge Mr. Kennedy on his lack of qualifications. It is clear he simply does not have the expertise, the training, or even the leadership skills necessary to lead a Department as important as HHS.

We need a Secretary who will protect the health of Americans. Robert Kennedy is not that Secretary, and if he is confirmed to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, the American people will ultimately pay the price with their health.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting no.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, just over 5 years ago, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., traveled to the Pacific island Samoa. Mr. Kennedy was on a mission to spread baseless and debunked conspiracy theories about the safety and efficacy of children's vaccines.

Trading in his esteemed family name and peddling himself as some sort of expert, Mr. Kennedy discouraged parents in Samoa from vaccinating their children. The impact of Mr. Kennedy's visit was undeniable. Health providers in Samoa reported that anti-vaccine voices ''got louder'' after his visit, and the rate of measles vaccinations for eligible 1-year-olds in Samoa fell to under 33 percent—well below herd immunity.

Five months after Mr. Kennedy's visit, Samoa had a massive measles outbreak, with 5,000 of its citizens contracting the disease and 83 Samoans dying, the vast majority of whom were children under the age of 5.

During his recent Senate confirmation hearings, Mr. Kennedy doubled down on his denialism, claiming, ''We don't know what was killing'' those children in Samoa.

Mr. Kennedy also claimed in written responses to Senate questions that ''my words had nothing to do with vaccine uptake in Samoa or with the 2019 epidemic.'' But the current top health official in Samoa has denounced Mr. Kennedy's characterization of the measles outbreak in his country and Mr. Kennedy's role in it as ''an outright lie'' and ''a total fabrication.''

As someone with a background in science but more importantly, just as a father of two young men, I am horrified by this story. The measles vaccine has been one of the most successful public health and science stories of the last century. One vaccine administered in two doses now provides protection against four devastating diseases: measles, mumps, rubella, and chickenpox.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, nearly twice as many young people died from measles as from polio. Thanks to incredible scientific research and medical advances, we now have a vaccine that is proven to be safe and effective at protecting our kids from these deadly diseases. This vaccine has largely eradicated the measles outbreaks that used to result in the devastating loss of babies and young children—that is, until anti-vaccine crusaders like Mr. Kennedy started promoting phony science and conspiracy theories in places like Samoa.

Over the last two decades, thanks in large part to Mr. Kennedy, this anti-science movement has moved from the darkest corners of the internet into the mainstream. The Samoan story provides us a heartbreaking example of just what is at stake if we give this movement's leader a national platform to spread his junk science.

I hope all of my colleagues take seriously what it would mean to confirm this anti-vaccine, anti-science, snake oil salesman as our next Secretary of Health and Human Services.

As the leader of the largest anti-vaccine organization in the country, the so-called ''Children's Defense Fund''—and I use air quotes for a reason—Mr. Kennedy has repeatedly pushed junk science studies to spread fear and skepticism of vaccines. And it is not limited to the measles. Mr. Kennedy has repeatedly and falsely alleged that safe and effective vaccines for tetanus, for the flu, for COVID, for HPV are dangerous to human health.

Mr. Kennedy has even promoted the completely discredited conspiracy theory that vaccines lead to autism. I want to be really clear that decades of extensive, peer-reviewed, scientific studies have found no connection—zero connection—between vaccines and autism. When he was pressed about this during his confirmation hearings, Mr. Kennedy continued to promote junk science studies rather than walk back his misinformation.

In response to Mr. Kennedy's words in his confirmation hearing, Christopher Banks, the president and CEO of the Autism Society of America, said:

> The Autism community deserves leadership that prioritizes evidence-based policies and respects the lived experiences of Autistic individuals and their families. The continued promotion of debunked vaccine theories only serves as a distraction from the critical research needed to better understand Autism and provide support for the Autism community today.

I completely agree with Mr. Banks.

Financial disclosures from his confirmation process have also revealed that Mr. Kennedy has made millions of dollars in referral fees from law firms suing vaccine manufacturers based on baseless conspiracy theories. If confirmed, his own personal financial interests could still be tied to these anti-vaccine lawsuits.

At the height of the COVID–19 pandemic that led to more than a million deaths in the United States alone, Mr. Kennedy campaigned to end the nationwide vaccination effort that helped us save millions more lives. He continued his well-worn and, again, completely evidence-free message that no vaccine is safe and effective. And just like with all vaccines, the COVID vaccines went through independent review and extensive trials to ensure they were safe and effective. If Mr. Kennedy had had his way, we might still be losing thousands and thousands of our family members and neighbors to that virus.

Mr. Kennedy has, again, without any sound evidence also pushed conspiracy theories claiming that antidepressant medications cause mass shootings and chemicals in our water make children gay. If those claims sound nuts, it is because they are.

Mr. Kennedy has said that he is opposed to promoting prescription medications to treat chronic diseases, including anti-obesity medications like Ozempic that are currently used by millions of Americans.

Mr. Kennedy has said that he would eliminate the entire nutrition department at the Food and Drug Administration, jeopardizing the safety of our Nation's food supplies.

Mr. Kennedy has said that he supports gutting the National Institutes of Health, which supports the development of medicines to treat diseases and delivers untold resources to healthcare institutions in New Mexico and every other State in this country.

During his confirmation process, Mr. Kennedy also reportedly made commitments to my Republican colleagues to support restrictions on mifepristone, a medication abortion and miscarriage management drug. Mifepristone has been approved by the FDA for 25 years.

It is true that Mr. Kennedy has made a number of conflicting statements in the past about his personal views on women's reproductive healthcare, but during his confirmation process, Mr. Kennedy signaled to Republican Senators that he will go along with whatever President Trump wants to further roll back women's reproductive rights.

Mr. Kennedy is not who any of us should want to put in charge of our Nation's health and food safety. The Department of Health and Human Services oversees health coverage programs that serve half—half—of all Americans. HHS plays a critical role in overseeing Medicare, overseeing Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act. HHS also supports the medical research that helps us to develop the next vaccines, prevent the next pandemic, and find cures for cancer and chronic diseases like diabetes.

We have already seen President Trump, Elon Musk, and his DOGE minions target scientific and medical research at Agencies like the National Institutes of Health. Just last week, we saw them announce an estimated $4 billion cut for health research at universities across the Nation, including

an estimated $17 million impact at the University of New Mexico alone. And just like many of the unilateral and illegal actions of this emboldened Trump administration, this one received a temporary halt from a Federal judge 2 days ago.

But whether this particular attack holds up in court or not, the Trump administration's intention is clear: dramatic cuts to medical research into treatments and cures that countless Americans are depending upon to save their lives. Mr. Kennedy plans to lead this effort and even to expand on it.

Mr. Kennedy is not who my constituents in New Mexico want to see leading our Nation's health Agency. In fact, New Mexicans have raised their concerns in letters and emails and phone calls day in and day out, and I am going to take a few minutes to read to you from some of these New Mexicans who are terrified about the danger that Mr. Kennedy would pose as our Nation's healthcare Agency leader.

Melissa from Albuquerque is concerned that Mr. Kennedy's past of promoting misinformation about vaccines and his lack of experience will endanger Americans.

Melissa said:

This role demands a leader who relies on evidence-based decision-making, upholds public trust, and prioritizes the health and safety of all Americans. RFK Jr.'s history of promoting conspiracy theories makes him fundamentally unfit for this critical position. If RFK Jr. were confirmed to head HHS, millions of American lives would be put at risk. His policies would jeopardize public health and undermine efforts to protect our communities from preventable diseases and health crises.

William from Albuquerque, a retired University of New Mexico health communications professor and longtime NIH principal investigator, knows that Mr. Kennedy's harmful rhetoric and lies will hurt public health efforts and lead to unnecessary deaths.

William said:

My research team and I have had to continually battle anti-vax misinformation. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is often at the center of that misinformation. I urge you in the strongest possible terms to oppose his nomination as Secretary of HHS. The damage he would do will take decades to undo and will lead undoubtedly to US morbidity and mortality increasing due to infectious diseases.

Jane from Albuquerque is concerned that Mr. Kennedy's lack of experience will negatively impact the health of New Mexicans.

She said:

The administration has nominated manifestly unqualified individuals and those openly hostile to evidence to head the Department of Health and Human Services and the individual agencies that are charged with protecting the health of everyone in the U.S. This abdication of responsibility will undoubtedly impact vulnerable populations most profoundly, including those living in New Mexico.

Mark from Albuquerque, a survivor of polio, knows that the polio vaccine effectively eradicated this relentless and deadly disease. He is worried that Mr. Kennedy's confirmation could stifle future vaccinations like the one that saved his life.

Mark said:

I am a polio survivor. I know that I was very fortunate in my recovery and I also know that the vaccines effectively eradicated this relentless and deadly disease. So, I ask that you do whatever you can to prevent RFK Jr. from overseeing the healthcare of all Americans!

Lori from Las Cruces is also worried that Mr. Kennedy's history of spreading misinformation could harm Americans.

Lori said:

If the Senate confirms RFK Jr. to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, Americans' health care will be put at risk and we'll be ill-prepared for another public health catastrophe. We need to push for a qualified, trustworthy nominee to lead America's health policy.

Meghan from Albuquerque, a primary care physician, is worried that Mr. Kennedy's lack of experience and disregard for evidence-based medicine pose a danger to Americans.

Meghan said:

As a primary care physician in New Mexico, I am also very worried about the possibility of RFK Jr. being confirmed as HHS Secretary. His past actions have shown that he has little regard for research, evidence based medicine or the expertise of scientists and physicians. He is dangerous to the American people.

I agree with these New Mexicans that Mr. Kennedy is unprepared, he is unqualified, and he is dangerously unfit to be confirmed as our next Health Secretary—unfit to protect our kids' health from debunked conspiracy theories, unfit to defend women's reproductive rights, unfit to safeguard the future of Medicare and Medicaid, and unfit to continue lifesaving medical research and medical care in my State and across the country.

For all of these reasons, I would urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting no on confirming Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, I really care about science. I spent my career as an engineer, as a Navy pilot and a test pilot, and as an astronaut—three jobs where facts matter, where you make decisions based on science, not superstition, because when you are launching off of an aircraft carrier or orbiting the Earth at 17,500 miles per hour, there is no room for conspiracy theories; you have to deal in reality.

In my career, relying on science literally meant the difference between life and death. The same is true for the person who is responsible for our Nation's health. The Secretary of Health and Human Services is responsible for making sure that the best science guides our healthcare, from developing lifesaving medicines to preventing deadly diseases.

This job requires a commitment to science, facts, and to public health, but the nominee before us today, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., has spent much of his career doing the exact opposite—rejecting science, spreading conspiracy theories, and putting public health at risk. That is not someone that I want in charge of keeping Arizonans healthy.

That would be his job, by the way—responding to disease outbreaks, approving new medicines and treatments, overseeing healthcare coverage for millions of Arizonans and millions of Americans. So this isn't just some bureaucratic decision that we are about to make; this is about whether the next HHS Secretary will protect public health or undermine it with dangerous misinformation.

Let's be clear about Mr. Kennedy's record. This is not someone who is simply asking questions about vaccines. Healthy skepticism is one thing, and I always told my space shuttle crew members to tell me when they thought I was wrong, to constantly question the way we were doing things. We should be doing the same thing here in the Senate.

But what Mr. Kennedy has engaged in goes far beyond that—far beyond that. Even when presented with definitive science, he has doubled down on conspiracy theories because, for him, that is what paid the bills. He was the chairman of the most well-funded anti-vaccine organization in the country. The group he led has spread false claims that vaccines cause autism, that vaccines cause cancer, and that they cause autoimmune disease. This organization has filed lawsuits to block children from getting vaccinated.

What happens when people believe that? We get outbreaks of disease that we thought was long gone in the rearview mirror.

In America Samoa, he spread misinformation about vaccines during a measles outbreak that killed 83 people. Instead of helping families get lifesaving care, Mr. Kennedy sowed fear and doubt, and then he had the audacity to question whether measles was really the cause of those 83 deaths.

In Texas, right now—right now, today—there is a measles outbreak. It is in a county that has low vaccination rates. So far, all of the cases are in unvaccinated people. Now, we know exactly what causes these outbreaks. It is not science; it is misinformation. It is people like Mr. Kennedy telling parents they can't trust their doctors.

I am thinking about this nomination not as a Senator but as a father and a grandparent. I know how much Arizona families care about their kids' health. All they want us to do is do what is right for their family and for their kids. And I know what it means to trust doctors, to trust medicine, to trust science.

I want my granddaughter Sage to grow up in a world that is safer and healthier than the one before her, where we don't have to worry about diseases that we already know how to prevent. I think about my daughter, her mom, who, like any first-time parent, is doing everything she possibly

can to make the best decisions for her child, and that is already hard enough. The last thing parents need is one more loud voice—especially one in a position of authority—pushing conspiracy theories that make it harder to know what is true. It is bad for kids across Arizona and across the country.

When he spreads these conspiracy theories about vaccines and autism, it has cascading effects. Senator HASSAN made this point, I think, better than anybody else could. Just last week or the week before, after speaking about her son, who has cerebral palsy, Senator HASSAN said:

> The problem with this witness' response on the autism cause and the relationship to vaccines is because he's relitigating and churning settled science. So we can't go forward and find out what the cause of autism is and treat these kids and help these families.

She continued. She went on and said:

> Sometimes science is wrong . . . but we make progress, and we build on the work, and we become more successful. But when you continue to sow doubt about settled science, it makes it impossible for us to move forward . . . and it freezes us in place.

So, you see, the job of HHS Secretary isn't about chasing conspiracy theories; it is about making sure families get the best care possible based on the best science available so we can make progress and live healthy lives.

Folks, here is what makes this even worse—like, a lot worse: Mr. Kennedy—get this—Mr. Kennedy vaccinated his own kids while telling other parents not to. His own cousin, Ambassador Caroline Kennedy, called him a predator for what he has done. That is not leadership, folks; that is hypocrisy.

Here is what Ambassador Kennedy wrote:

> Bobby prays on the desperation of parents of sick children—vaccinating his own children while building a following by hypocritically discouraging other parents from vaccinating theirs.

She went on:

> Even before he fills this job, his constant denigration of our health care system and the conspiratorial half-truths he has told about vaccines, including in connection with Samoa's deadly 2019 measles outbreak, have cost lives.

She continued:

> And now we know that Bobby's crusade against vaccination has benefited him in other ways, too.
>
> His ethics report makes clear that he will keep his financial stake in a lawsuit against [the] HPV vaccine.
>
> In other words—

This is Ambassador Kennedy's words.

> In other words, he is willing to enrich himself by denying access to a vaccine that can prevent almost all forms of cervical cancer and which has been safely administered to millions of boys and girls.

That was a quote from his own cousin.

The Senate cannot ignore this massive conflict of interest. Mr. Kennedy has personally made millions of dollars from lawsuits attacking vaccines, including the HPV vaccine, which prevents cervical cancer.

And, if confirmed, he would oversee the FDA, the very Agency that regulates the vaccines that he is suing over. That is a direct financial incentive to undermine vaccines, even if it puts people's lives at risk. And he wouldn't commit to removing himself from this equation.

And it is not just vaccines. Mr. Kennedy has made a career of embracing conspiracy theories over facts. He claims—it would be funny in another context. But Mr. Kennedy—get this—claims Wi-Fi and 5G cause cancer. He thinks the COVID vaccine is part of a government plot. He suggested that vaccines are a holocaust.

But, of course, when he was confronted about that, he said he didn't recall saying it. He believes that the people who are running our vaccine programs should be in jail. And when asked about 9/11, one of the most defining moments in our Nation's history, he refused to say who was responsible. And his response? He said:

> It's hard to tell what's a conspiracy theory and what isn't.

Well, Mr. President, we cannot put somebody in charge of our Nation's healthcare who doesn't know how to separate fact from fiction. No one in the Senate should be comfortable with that.

But the dangerous misinformation doesn't stop with vaccines. Mr. Kennedy claimed that anti-depressants, not guns, are to blame for school shootings. Let's be clear, folks. There is zero—zero—evidence to support that—none. What we do know and what the data tells us is that in every other developed country, they also have anti-depressants. What they don't have is America's level of gun violence. The difference is not mental health treatment. It is easy access to guns for kids, for criminals, and for dangerous people who shouldn't have them.

Mr. President, my family and I have lived with the consequences of gun violence. My wife Gabby Giffords was nearly killed by a gunman when meeting with her constituents outside a grocery store in 2011. Six people died; 12 were injured. You won't find anyone at that grocery store who believes that an excess of mental health treatment was responsible for that tragedy—not one.

Gabby and I have sat in living rooms of parents who have lost their children in mass shootings, and we have fought for real, commonsense gun safety laws that can save lives.

Just like Senator HASSAN, I will not stand here and let conspiracy theories distract from real solutions. And this is the core of the problem. Mr. Kennedy treats healthcare like it is a conspiracy theory.

Mr. Kennedy is not the person who should be running the Department of Health and Human Services. It is very clear. If Mr. Kennedy was simply a private citizen saying these things, that would be one thing. It would still be a problem, by the way. But this is someone who wants to be in charge of all of our healthcare.

And if his dangerous views weren't enough, he doesn't even understand the weight of the job he is applying for. In his confirmation hearing, he didn't know the difference between Medicare and Medicaid. He didn't understand the different parts of Medicare and what they provide for seniors. He didn't know what a community health center was. He couldn't articulate a basic managing plan for HHS's $2 trillion budget.

He wouldn't answer as to whether he will negotiate for lower drug prices for seniors. And that means, if you are a senior, with him in charge you might see higher drug prices.

Mr. Kennedy does not have a medical degree, and he has no experience—zero experience—in healthcare policy. So this isn't just about bad ideas; it is about dangerous ideas and the fact that he is completely unprepared to do this job.

We also learned at his confirmation hearing that Mr. Kennedy won't make decisions based on science, data, and facts or what is best for our public health. Instead, he will do whatever President Trump tells him to do. Over and over again, when asked about his policies, he didn't give answers based on what he believes is right. He said:

> President Trump has not told me what his policy is.

On reproductive health:

> Trump has told me to look into it, but I don't know what his policy is.

This is a nominee who traffics in conspiracies, who doesn't know much about the Agency he is nominated to lead, and who has said he will just do whatever he is told which, considering what we heard all along, that President Trump has a ''concept'' of a healthcare plan—it is not a real plan. But we still don't know what that is. Now, that, to me, feels like a big problem.

Mr. President, we need an HHS Secretary who will lead with facts, not fear; who will lower the price of prescription drugs or fight to do that; and fight to reduce healthcare costs and not to go along with efforts to take health insurance away from kids and people with disabilities; who will build trust in our healthcare system, not undermine it.

Mr. Kennedy has built a career out of rejecting science, spreading misinformation, and profited off of fear. He has compared vaccine scientists to Nazis. He has refused to say if 9/11 was a conspiracy theory. And when it comes to leading this Nation's healthcare system, he has no plan, no knowledge, and no independence; and he says he will do whatever President Trump tells him to do.

So my colleagues, we all have to ask ourselves: Are we really willing to put the health of American families in his hands; are we? I know my answer, and I urge everyone in this Chamber to think very hard about theirs.

Mr. President, I yield 30 minutes of postcloture debate time to the Democratic leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, if you go back exactly 20 years ago today, I could tell you exactly where I was. I was a patient at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

I was staring at the beige-colored walls. And amidst the pain in every inch of my body, I was trying to muster the strength to sit up or to take a step or even just to breathe. I spent months and months and months in that hospital room, hooked up to machines, getting wheeled in and out of surgeries, learning how to live again in my new post-shoot-down world.

But despite it all, looking back, I consider every one of those days in that hospital room lucky days because, when the worst happened to me—when that RPG exploded in my lap in Iraq and I needed serious, sustained medical attention to survive the hour, the day, the year, I had healthcare I could rely on.

The same cannot be said for countless of Americans—Americans whose health costs have already been too high and whose access to care is at even greater danger if this Chamber is foolish enough to confirm Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., as our next Secretary of HHS. Put simply, Mr. Kennedy cannot be trusted with the grave, grave responsibility that comes with this job. He cannot be trusted with our lives. He is focused on pushing his agenda, regardless of the cost to middle-class Americans. And if this man is confirmed, more Americans will die preventable deaths because of his policies.

Next month will mark the 5-year anniversary of when COVID shut down our Nation. In this moment, it is dangerous, reckless, and heartless to everyone who lost a loved one in the pandemic to even consider nominating a guy who has stated that ''no vaccine is safe and effective.''

And if our Health and Human Services Secretary refuses to ensure children are protected against ''preventable yet deadly'' diseases like measles, RSV, whooping cough, or polio, it will be our kids, not Mr. Kennedy, who pay the price.

I have gotten letter after letter from my constituents, begging me to try to reason with my colleagues, to do whatever I can to prevent a man so ignorant of all things science and medicine from holding a position of such power over our children's next breath.

One pediatrician in Illinois wrote to me:

I will always remember the 9-month-old infant with whooping cough who could not be saved despite every high-tech ventilator and medication we had available.

Another said:

I recall a father screaming and punching a hole in the wall when his 4-year-old son died of chicken pox.

The stories, the letters of avoidable tragedies go on and on. Imagine how much worse the heartbreak will become under a guy who acts like the term ''vaccine'' is a swear word.

The only reason that Kennedy is even up for confirmation is because he, like Elon Musk, decided to throw his dignity to the wind and bow down at Trump's altar. And because of that, he gets to be yet another rich guy with too few qualifications and too much power, somehow now charged with leading our government.

Trump is running this country like the mob: Kiss his ring. Pledge your unyielding loyalty. Get made.

It is just that, this time, you get made into a Cabinet Secretary.

Well, Kennedy has given Trump his fealty. So why would any of us ever think he would have the courage to stand up to Trump if the President issues an order that actively harms everyday Americans? How could any of us actually believe that Kennedy would fight back against Trump's worst instincts when Kennedy himself has proven, time and again, that he believes more sycophancy than science?

Now, Americans are going to be the ones to suffer because, now, with Kennedy's confirmation, even programs as popular, effective, and vital as Medicaid will be in even greater danger.

The Republicans told us in Project 2025 that they would come for Medicaid, and this is the rare case when the GOP has actually kept its word—putting at risk roughly 80 million Americans who rely on Medicaid, Americans in red States and blue, in big cities and small towns, and folks who may have never heard of RFK, Jr., but who will certainly feel the effect when he rips away the healthcare their family so desperately needs.

Medicaid is a lifeline for kids, for pregnant women, for people in nursing homes, for Americans with disabilities. The Republicans don't seem to care about any of that. It is obvious that Donald Trump has never stayed up late at night, hunched over the kitchen table with a calculator in one hand and a medical bill in the other, praying to figure out a way to afford his child's insulin. No, of course not.

With every passing day, it becomes clearer and clearer that Republicans care more about tax breaks for the billionaires they pal around with on the golf course than prescriptions for the middle-class folks who actually work at Mar-a-Lago. While that teacher in Peoria lies awake at night trying to work out how she can afford her father's home care now that he can no longer get those services through Medicaid, while that new mom in Chicago who has just learned she has stage 3 cancer and is trying to find a second job so she can afford both diapers for her newborn and her own chemotherapy, Donald Trump and Elon Musk will be too busy lining their already full pockets to care.

To my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I am sure many of you have faced health crises of your own. I am sure many of you have had a parent who has been sick or a nephew who has been in a car crash or a spouse who has been in need of an emergency C-section or a child who has relied on an autoimmune injector. Imagine if your loved ones hadn't had care they could rely on in the moment, and then ask yourself how you can sleep soundly tonight if you vote to further the agenda of a couple of rich guys who so clearly don't care about making America healthy. They only care about tipping it even more in favor of the wealthy. They are not bringing back the good old days of Reagan; they are just bringing back the days of dying from the measles. And they are certainly not making America great again; they are making America sick again. That is the Trump-Kennedy promise.

I care about my constituents' ability to afford their prescription medications, their ability to get the vaccines that will keep them alive through the next pandemic, their ability to survive those worst-case scenario health moments without going broke in the process.

So for all of those reasons and a thousand more, I will be voting no on Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s nomination. If my Republican colleagues care about any one of those things, too, then they will have no choice but to do the same.

Mr. President, I have received a number of messages from my constituents describing what access to Medicaid means to them and their families. I would like to close by asking unanimous consent that they be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

Tom, age 60, Clinton County—Medicaid is keeping Tom alive. After working in construction his whole life, Tom, age 60, experienced a series of heart attacks. He cannot return to work with his current disabilities, and Medicaid is the only health insurance available to him. Medicaid covers his cardiologist visits and the eight medications he needs to stay alive. Tom has applied for Social Security disability benefits, but has not been approved. If Medicaid work requirements were implemented, Tom doesn't know how he would prove that he is disabled and cannot work since his disability application is still pending. The uncertainty of whether his state would even approve an exemption adds to his stress. He knows he cannot afford the care and treatment he needs out-of-pocket.

Beth—Medicaid pays for my 25-year-old autistic son to attend Community Day Services. Without this financial help my son would not be able attend. It is CRUCIAL that he has a routine. Without this his behavior would be terrible and it would affect his and our family's live horribly. He is not independent enough to work. Cutting off Medicaid would harm him. I hope President Trump comes to realize the damage that would be done if he cuts it off.

Brian and Janice—Alex genetic disability requires many doctors' visits and tests and medication. She also requires physical therapy and occupational therapy. Medicaid is her health insurance for these things. Due to her disability she can only work a little bit

not enough to pay insurance costs or her bills. I am her mom plus caregiver. She relies on me for help with basic needs and she can't drive, so I have to get her to work and appointments. She will never be able to live alone. She will always require a caregiver. Medicaid provides caregivers. In the future Medicaid will provide day programs, when I am not physically able to care for her and her brother becomes her guardian. Medicaid provides for needs now, so she can have a good life and will provide for her needs in the future, as a parent of a child with a disability this relieves our stress. As a parent we won't live forever, and it gives us peace of mind to know she has these services to live a fulfilling life!

Diane and Erin—Medicaid helps me take care of my daughter with a disability. It costs over $350,000 per person per year in an institution. Medicaid provides a much better quality of life for people in the community for 7% of that budget. My daughter can work in the community because she lives in the community. She is able to enjoy the hobbies she loves, attend college to pursue a degree in dance, and maybe, thanks to Medicaid's support, maybe even live independently.

Neomi—My son suffered a brain injury at birth. He is g-tube dependent and teach/vent dependent. Medicaid covers the copay costs and items necessary that aren't covered by private insurance, Medicaid covers his in-home nursing that allows him to attend school and access our community. The Medicaid waiver program has granted him the means to enter his home, family vehicle and a home generator to ensure his life sustaining equipment can always run and to help maintain his environment. With out Medicaid, my son would have to live in a hospital.

Casandra—My medically complex son was born with Wolf Hirschhorn Syndrome. He has required a tremendous amount of medical care since birth that we were not planned for. We were initially denied Medicaid and the final burden for resources he needs were a lot for a family to handle with only one parent being able to work while the other has to provide care for him. As care became harder, we were approved for Medicaid. Medicaid picks up the expenses our primary insurance does not cover. It has also allowed us to have in home nursing which is necessary for him to be able to attend school and allow myself a little bit of a break. Cade has a very serious case of seizures that can become deadly quickly which is why he needs nonstop supervision. He also has stage 3 kidney disease, heart defects, cleft palate which causes feeding issues therefore he is g-tube dependent, severe apnea requiring CPAP and oxygen, immune deficiency requiring immune therapy on a weekly basis, many hospital stays for seizures and illness. He has around 15 specialty doctors at our children's hospital. He is 7 years old, nonverbal and can not walk alone. He works hard daily to continue his development through therapies.

Debra—I adopted two medically fragile children from foster care. Both have Medicaid as their primary and only insurance. They both receive services through the Division of Specialized Care for Children in Illinois. My daughter has a MFTD waiver. They require 19 daily prescription medications. My son requires a nightly injection that is $4,000 a month. My daughter requires multiple pieces of expensive medical equipment. I would never have been able to afford to adopt them with all these needs without knowing they would be able to receive Medicaid. I am so proud of how much they have accomplished thanks to the therapies Medicaid has provided. Medicaid is a vital, life saving program for thousands of children like mine. We need to fight to keep Medicaid accessible for all who need it.

Gayle and Kelly—Medicaid provides my supplemental health/medical insurance. In addition, Medicaid funding provides services and supports that help me reach my employment and independence goals. With Medicaid, I have the opportunity to live with dignity and purpose.

Tessa—Medicaid helps my son receive services that are imperative to his daily living without interruption. It allows our family to operate on a stable foundation to make sure our sons care is fully supported while being a mother to my other children as well.

Dyan—My daughter Caity was born with Down Syndrome. She has a trache and vent to help her breathe and a g-button to help her eat. We use Medicaid to cover the costs our insurance doesn't cover for her medical needs. As well my daughter needs nursing to go to school and help her live day to day. Without Medicaid, Caity would not be living and would not be able to go to school.

Tommi—Medicaid allows me to keep Amanda home. It also provides a piece of mind knowing that we always have extra help covering her astronomical medical costs. Amanda has Spina Bifida and other anomalies and relies on life sustaining equipment such as 24/7 oxygen, tube feeds and ventilator to sleep; without Medicaid, the copay for these items would be so costly our family would not be able to afford to survive. Medicaid has not only allowed us to keep Amanda home so we can care for her; I am sure, because of this, Amanda is still alive. I am confident the care she receives at home far surpasses the care she would receive at a care facility, (if we could find one that could provide for her high level of needs), or she would have to be hospitalized, putting her at risk for major complications due to infections and other ailments that are picked up in a hospital base setting. I am paid as Amanda's caregiver thanks to Medicaid; this allows me to provide the best care possible for Amanda to give her the best quality of life possible.

Sarah—My son has a rare genetic syndrome, Ayme-Grippe, with many medical complications. He has a tracheostomy tube, a gastronomy tube, cochlear implants, contact lenses, and seizures, to name a few. Medicaid supplements our private insurance and allows us to keep nursing hours staffed, our prescriptions filled, and all necessary tests and interventions performed, which in turn, keeps Beau out of the hospital or an institution, and home where he belongs. Along with the host of medical features, Beau also has the warmest smile, the best twinkle in his eyes, and the softest touch when he holds your hand. He deserves everything this world has to offer, and Medicaid helps us give it to him.

Rebekah—Care for my disabled child at home. If we did not have Medicaid our daughter would be living in a hospital. We use in home nursing services to help care for her. Medicaid has also provided us with medical supplies and equipment to ensure we give her adequate care and to keep her safe. Miracle has a Trach, feeding tube, central line and is TPN dependent. She is also type 1 diabetic and depends on her medications and blood sugar monitoring devices and supplies.

Jane—Medicaid helps me send my son to an adult day program that helps be an active member in our community It supplies a safe place for him.

Jill—It allows me to work while my adult son attends a day program where he gets social interaction and life skills.

Ally—Keep my son with complex medical needs at home (with home nursing) and out of the hospital/long term care.

Lindsay—Keeping my son at home. Medicaid provides nursing care to give us a mental break and prevent caregiver burnout. They also help us get him to his many appointments and therapies. If we lose Medicaid, we would have to put my son (14 years old) in a hospital or turn him over to the state to be put in a nursing home. We can't afford monthly feeding enteral supplies. That alone is $8,500 a month. We would have to file bankruptcy. Most private insurance companies won't pay for feeding supplies. There is already a nursing shortage, and he needs someone by his side 24/7, which can't happen in a hospital or nursing home.

Mary—My child has Septo Optic Dysplasia and cognitive delay. He has a tracheotomy tube to breathe and a feeding tube to eat. He is Nonmobile and requires 24/7 care. Medicaid provides in home nursing for his care; otherwise, he would need to live in a long-term facility. Medicaid is vital to our family staying together as a family.

Maximilian—Participate in day programs and activities that give me meaningful life and community experiences.

Erika—Care for my medically complex child at home. Medicaid helps me acquire critical supplies my son requires to stay healthy such as tracheostomy, g-tube, and daily care supplies. It also helps us receive medications such as antiepileptic medications. This is just a fraction on ways Medicaid supports the quality of life for my child.

Tara—Medicaid has been a lifeline for our family for the past two years. My daughter has a rare condition called Aicardi Syndrome. She suffers from a whole slew of medical issues. Two years ago, her health took a nosedive, and we were faced with an incredibly hard decision. Due to her being in the hospital frequently and needing 24/7 medical care, we were forced to have me quit my job as a nurse to become her nurse at home. We barely made it by with two incomes, let alone one. I found the MFTD waiver through DSCC, and we found a way to care for our daughter like she deserves. Medicaid pays for nursing that our primary insurance does not cover. The state allows me to be paid as her nurse so we are able to financial pay for our daily needs, home, and wheelchair van to transport our daughter. It helps to pay for all the supplies and monthly fees associated with her equipment she needs to help her eat and breathe. With Medicaid funding we were able to get a generator for our home, so when the electricity is out (we are rural and it can take many hours to restore), we do not have to take her to the hospital immediately to get the equipment she needs to live. We were able to fund a wheelchair accessible van to transport her safely. Without Medicaid, we would not have access to medications, equipment, supplies, and nursing. These are the things that keep my daughter alive.

Christina and Emma—I have a trach and a g-tube. I am nonmobile and nonverbal. I use an eye-gaze device to communicate. Home Nursing makes it possible for me to go to school!

Jenni—Give support to my child so we can work and earn a living to care for our family. Medicaid's also allows her to attend a day program when she exits school in 2 years so we can work and earn a living. Selena has severe epilepsy and intellectual abilities that prohibit her from being able to work, speak or care for herself.

Alaina and Ayla—Get all of the supplies I need to help me eat and breathe at home. It also helps me get the equipment I need to make me stronger and work on my standing. Medicaid pays for my therapists that I love that teach me new ways to move around in my own way and interact with my siblings and friends.

Yvonne—Medicaid helps me keep my loved one at home, as healthy and connected to his family and community as he can be. Medicaid helps me provide him with the doctors, therapists, and medical equipment that he needs to grow and develop. Without Medicaid, my son would not be here.

Tifanny—My daughter was born with several congenital abnormalities and has no unifying diagnosis. She is a rare medical case; we still have no understanding for. Without Medicaid programs and grants, she would not be able to receive her at home nursing or care from her many physicians. Graylinn would not be alive today or live in her home with her family if it wasn't for her Medicaid programs providing her with in-home nursing services. She would be living in the hospital. She would not be able to have life experiences such as attending her older sisters sporting events and family holidays.

Sarah—Take care of my child. My child is on seizure medications to help control seizures. A ventilator to help with breathing and keeping lungs inflated. A feeding tube and formulas and has many health issues. Medicaid helps with all of those things and in-home nursing so that my child does not have to be in an institution. Many of the things needed are very costly. If it wasn't for the help, our family would not be able to provide these things, and our child would no longer exists. Please consider all that are affected by these decisions.

Yanet—I'm the mother of a girl with special needs. With the Medicaid, We Get to go to doctors' visits. We get Medicine that my family needs. Without the help of Medicaid, I would not be able to go to my doctor or get the medicine or services that I need. Like psychological help for my depression that has help the whole family. I won't be able to Get the audiologist services or physical therapy my 9-year-old son needs.

Andrea—Take care of my daughter, who is 11 years old and medically fragile. Medicaid paid for her specialists, hospital visits, and medical services so she doesn't live in a hospital—which would be catastrophically more expensive. Because of this, she thrives, and I'm able to work and serve my community.

Denise—Our son Andrew, who goes by Drew, is 29 years old and has Down syndrome. Medicaid is his health insurance provider. He has a permanent pacemaker, and it work 80% of the time, causing his battery to drain quickly. Without his pacemaker, he would at best have a very poor, even more disabled, quality of life; at worst, he would die. He has a congenital heart defect that requires ongoing monitoring, as well as thyroid disease also requires monitoring. He is employed part time but would not qualify for health benefits, nor would he be able to afford them. Our son was pulled from the PUNS list at age 25, and that pays us as his parents and legal guardians to provide his care at home, rather than placing him in a group home. Taking away that would take away ½ of our income.

Lindsey—Provides nursing allows which allows me to live at home and my parents to work. It also covers all my medical appointments and therapies, and my gastronomy tube, formula and other medical supplies.

Mary Anne—Pay for community day program services for my 23-year-old son, who has autism and intellectual disability. Aidan loves his day program, and going there is fulfilling and gives him purpose each day. At the day program, Aidan is given the opportunity to learn, socialize, gain new skills and be a meaningful part of his community. We are grateful the Medicaid waiver funding exists to keep these programs functioning for our most vulnerable loved ones like my son. Loosing Medicaid funding would be devastating to Aidan and many others like him.

Robin—Provide care for my son. So I can work and provide for our family. So Colin has health care and the medication he needs for his epilepsy. Provide personal support workers that work with him daily. Behavioral therapy.

Suzanne—Without Medicaid funding, my day program would not be able to operate, my tuition would be unobtainable, and my family and I would be stuck at home with no options for my current daily life or my future.

Drew—Medicaid is the reason that my husband and I are able to care for our son at home. It provides his food. He is nourished through a G-tube, it provides tracheotomy supplies. It provides oxygen to help him breathe, a nebulizer, chest therapy and other pieces of equipment that without these he would have to be hospitalized. The cost of hospitalization is very expensive. Medicaid helped to provide the vertical lift to get my son in and out our house for his appointments. It helps to cover nursing expenses to care and help my husband and I care for him in our home. It covers the numerous medications that are necessary to keep our son alive and out of the hospital.

Jaclyn—Medicaid helps me to care for my daughter at home, where she belongs. It provides the critical support Ava needs—ventilator care, nursing, and medical supplies—so she can grow, learn, and thrive with her family. Without Medicaid and the MFTD waiver, keeping Ava home wouldn't be possible. It allows us to give her every opportunity to reach her full potential while keeping our family together. Medicaid isn't just a program—it's a lifeline for families like ours.

Maria—I never imagined that I would become disabled, especially at a young age. I had been working since my early teens, believing that if I worked hard, I would always be able to provide for myself and my family. But by 25, my body was in complete flare-up, and I found myself unable to work while raising two small children as a single parent. Then came the life-changing diagnosis—a brain tumor. Without Medicaid, I would not be here today. Medicaid has provided me with the lifesaving medical care I need to survive and be there for my children. It has allowed me to continue my advocacy work, where I fight for disability rights and support the most vulnerable in our communities. My life has meaning, just like the lives of millions who rely on Medicaid. Cutting Medicaid would be devastating—not just for me, but for countless others whose survival depends on it. Please, don't take away our lifeline. Our lives depend on it.

Todd—I am a Medically Fragile Technology Dependent person. Medicaid is the only reason I can live with my parents and not have to live in a hospital or institution. Medicaid pays for me to have my ventilator, oxygen, suction machine and all the supplies necessary for me to be able to live in my home with my family. I have ROHHAD Syndrome, an extremely rare medical condition that only about 100 or so children have ever been diagnosed with. Medicaid also pays for my private duty nursing so that I can go to school and work in the community. Without Medicaid's support, I would have a tragically horrible life in a cold and uncaring institution somewhere, away from my family. I need Medicaid so that I can live a life that I love, with the people I love.

Illinois Provider—I want to share the story of two young clients, aged 3 and 5, who were diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA). SMA is a genetic condition that causes progressive muscle weakness and atrophy due to the loss of motor neurons in the spinal cord. These children were born without any initial concerns, but as they grew older, they began to lose their motor skills. Despite having typical cognitive abilities, they became extremely fragile. They could no longer attend school or leave their hospital beds on the main floor of their home, as they were dependent on machines to help them breathe and unable to move independently.

Illinois Provider—Their mom was a single parent and could not leave them even to go to the grocery store. They were unable to find consistent nursing care due to nursing shortages, so their mom became the expert. Due to their needs, she was unable to work. I came into the home as the speech-language pathologist with Early Intervention, which allowed me to see the younger child until her third birthday. However, her older sister no longer had care as there were no providers who accepted Medicaid insurance in the area. I was able to help the younger child learn how to use a speech-generating device funded by Early Intervention. This allowed her to communicate with her mom and sisters using her eyes to activate words on her communication device. Not only was she able to ask for suction to clear her airway when her breathing was compromised, but she was also able to ask for her mom to come and play with her when she was lonely or bored—both of which are desperately important communication needs.

Julie, Chicago—Medicaid has been fabulous—helped me through breast cancer, and still helping me. We cannot afford not to be able to take advantage of this benefit. I worked and paid taxes for my entire life.

Susan, Chicago—Pre-ACA, I couldn't get healthcare at any price for 5 years due to a pre-existing condition. In the meantime, my body started failing me to the point where I couldn't work and wound up on disability. After 6 months, I became eligible for Medicare, which was life-changing. A few years ago, I was able to get Medicaid, as well, after the Medicaid Expansion. It enables me to have a caregiver twice a week. I'm a Senior. I've often wondered if I had had access to healthcare earlier, if it would've meant I could keep working. I think that would have made a huge difference in my life. I'm doing much better now, and I volunteer when I can. It's my way of giving back.

Gail B., South Holland—Gail B., RN is a home health and hospice staff educator and mother of three. She knew all about Medicaid throughout her career, but never thought she'd need it or qualify for it herself. When doctors removed a lump in her breast, they discovered she had treatable breast cancer. Privately insured through her employer, Gail, who had previously survived cervical cancer, underwent a painful radiation regimen, which left her with oozing underarm burns. She could barely keep her eyes open when she got home after her 50-mile roundtrip commute, let alone try to prepare a meal for herself. Still, she felt fortunate to have insurance. But near the end of her treatment, she was laid off—losing her job and her insurance. Unemployed, uninsured, and ill, Gail didn't know what to do or where to turn, until a friend recommended she apply for the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program, which provides treatment through Medicaid. Sheepishly, Gail visited Mercy Hospital in Chicago, where a staff 'navigator' helped her enroll for Medicaid. Her doctors quickly accepted her new insurance coverage, enabling Gail to schedule follow-up appointments for that same week. Gail finished her treatment as a Medicaid beneficiary and returned to the workforce cancer-free just a few months later. While she is no longer on Medicaid, she credits it with saving her life and supporting her through her time of crisis. These days, Gail also volunteers as an ambassador for breast cancer survivors in her spare time.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I yield 30 minutes of postcloture debate time to the Democratic leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, today, we are here to discuss President Trump's nominee to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

If confirmed, Mr. Kennedy would be in charge of a Department with the power to, well, regulate the food we eat, the medicines we take, and the vaccinations we depend upon. He would oversee Agencies that provide healthcare to almost 170 million Americans, including hundreds of thousands of Nevadans who are on Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

I am here today to oppose Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., as our next Secretary of Health and Human Services. Confirming him would have disastrous consequences for our public health, for our seniors who rely on Medicare, and for our families who get their healthcare through Medicaid.

Let's start out with his lack of qualifications. Mr. Kennedy has never worked in healthcare or the Federal Government. He is probably best known for his skepticism of vaccines and spreading dangerous conspiracies and outright lies. Mr. Kennedy's history of promoting anti-vaccine misinformation is well-documented and deeply troubling.

Vaccines have saved millions of lives throughout history, and they remain one of the most effective tools we have to protect public health. Yet Mr. Kennedy has spent years promoting debunked claims linking vaccines to autism, cancer, allergies, and autoimmune diseases. He has spread lies about vaccine safety, making people fearful and increasing rates of unvaccinated people, which put all of us—all of us—at risk.

He has previously stated that ''no vaccine is safe and effective.'' He said that the polio vaccine ''killed many, many, many, many, many, many, many more people than polio ever did.'' Mr. Kennedy has called the COVID vaccine the ''deadliest vaccine ever made.'' This rhetoric isn't just reckless; it is dangerous.

If Mr. Kennedy had been around during the first Trump administration, he would have undermined President Trump's Operation Warp Speed and efforts that helped us end the pandemic.

He doubled down during his confirmation hearing. Even though he was asked multiple times, Mr. Kennedy refused to acknowledge that vaccines don't cause autism.

He has also engaged in Holocaust distortion to push his dangerous views. While attending an autism conference, he was asked why the CDC wasn't acknowledging autism as an epidemic.

He said:

To me, this is like Nazi death camps, what happened to these kids. . . . I can't tell you why somebody would do something like that. I can't tell you why ordinary Germans participated in the Holocaust.

Frankly, these aren't the words of someone you want to be in charge of America's public health. These are not the words of someone you want anywhere near the White House or anywhere near our healthcare, our safety.

He has even gone so far as to falsely suggest that certain antidepressants are behind the rise in school shootings and that certain chemicals in the water might be part of why more young people are identifying as transgender, neither of which is backed by any science. We can't allow someone who spreads this kind of vitriol and dangerous misinformation to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, but his problematic views are just the start.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Kennedy was also asked about his understanding of Medicare and Medicaid. He was just asked if he knew about it. Well, he struggled—struggled, mind you—to remember which program covered older and disabled Americans. He struggled to remember which program provided for low-income people. This is Medicare and Medicaid—not something that is so brand new. Even Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., should know what it is because Medicare and Medicaid are not mere government programs; they are a lifeline for millions of Americans, including our seniors, our parents, our grandparents, people with disabilities, families in need, including half of all children and around 40 percent of all babies born in this country. Why would we trust someone with the future of Medicare and Medicaid when he doesn't even understand the basics of the system he would oversee? This makes no sense.

We can't overlook the broader impact of Mr. Kennedy's and President Trump's proposals on medical research, safety, and innovation. We are already seeing devastating attempts to go after the National Institutes of Health, or the NIH—the very institution that has pioneered lifesaving research in areas like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. This is not just any research; this is lifesaving research. We are talking about research and clinical trials in my home State, at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and at the University of Nevada, Reno, to better understand Alzheimer's disease and improve care for patients. We are talking about advancing breast cancer therapy at the University of Nevada, Reno, and clinical trials on treating and preventing cancers at the Southern Nevada Cancer Research Center.

You know, I lost my mother to cancer, and I lost my brother to leukemia. I think it is shameful that this administration, enabled by RFK, Jr., would target research into these deadly diseases which have cost lives in my family. I don't want anyone to go through what I went through. I want other people's families—their parents, their siblings, their friends—to be able to live, and we know lives are saved every day because of investments in research and those clinical trials and what the NIH does. I want people to live because of the research. It matters.

Mr. Kennedy has also proposed radical changes to the Food and Drug Administration—the Agency in charge of the food we all eat and keeping it safe. Just like many of the other reforms proposed by Mr. Kennedy, his suggested changes to the FDA, while they are based largely on the conspiracy theories he peddles, include clearing out entire Departments, like the Food and Nutrition Center, which is responsible for preventing foodborne illnesses and ensuring that chemicals in food—the food we all eat, every single one of us all around this country, every day, from young to old and everywhere in between—that our food is safe. How does dismantling this keep any of us safe? How does it keep any of us healthy?

Mr. Kennedy has an overarching plan to gut the funding for the FDA, which will severely limit regulation and safe implementation of new drug trials and medications. This could lead to dangerous drugs flooding the market, putting countless lives at risk.

The role of the Health and Human Services Secretary is one of profound responsibility, and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., has undermined the very foundations of our public health system. Mr. Kennedy's vision for the future of our healthcare system—well, it was to undermine Medicare and Medicaid. He wants to slash cancer research funding. He wants to push dangerous public health conspiracies. These are visions and these are things that I cannot support and that no one should support.

We all want a healthier future for America, one that both prevents diseases and where we can think about curing diseases, where we can do preventive medicine, curative medicine, where we can have that hope for folks whose mother gets lung cancer in the future, that she might live, or leukemia in the future, that their brother might live. Mine didn't, but I hope that they didn't die in vain because the research that goes on will help others, and I want us to be able to cure diseases for the ones we love.

So that is why I cannot in good conscience support Mr. Kennedy's nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. The stakes couldn't be higher. Our very lives and the lives of our loved ones may just depend on it.

Mr. President, I yield 30 minutes of postcloture debate time to the senior Senator from Oregon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I stand here in strong opposition to the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to serve as the Secretary of Health and Human Services for the United States of America.

The American people know that our healthcare system is broken. Families have to work through too much health insurance redtape, only to be denied care or forced to pay out of pocket.

Medical debt is the leading cause of bankruptcy in the United States. Families are saddled with medical debt from prices that are too high and burdened by quality of care that is too low. When they need to get an appointment, they have to wait months, drive hours, or simply go without the care which they need.

Pharmacies, hospitals, and community health centers struggle to keep their doors open, and communities are watching health providers and workers burn out under the strain of a healthcare system that is increasingly being sold out to greedy investors and the billionaire class.

The American people deserve a real healthcare system, not the current sick care system. And they deserve leadership who will recognize all of these problems and commit to solving them.

Instead, Donald Trump and Elon Musk are only making things worse.

To Elon Musk, ''move fast and break things'' is not in the U.S. Constitution. That is why these Federal district court judges are stopping your actions.

In Trump's first 3 weeks in office, he has taken illegal and unconstitutional action that disrupted lifesaving health research, sent Musk and his DOGE acolytes to make cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, cut off Federal funding for community health centers, and used discriminatory fearmongering to threaten Federal funding for hospitals and health providers just trying to provide care for their patients.

Every chaotic decision, every cut, every illegal action are all to make it easier for this administration to work alongside congressional Republicans to slash and burn our core healthcare programs. They are not doing this to make things better for everyday Americans. It is Robin Hood in reverse. They are working to take from those who need it the most just to give billions more in handouts for defense contractors and their billionaire donors.

They want hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks for billionaires. They want to increase defense spending by $150 billion—more nuclear weapons, more. But then, in turn, they say: Where are we going to get the money? They say: Ah, we are going to Medicaid. We are going to the Affordable Care Act. We are going to community health centers. We are going to go to the programs that actually do protect people.

More nuclear weapons aren't going to protect people; it is having access to the healthcare system that can help protect their families.

Trump and Musk and Republicans, they are going to call it ''efficiency'' or they will call it ''transparency'' or they will say it is just adding basic requirements to Medicaid. This is all code—the code for ''cuts.''

Efficiency, transparency are—just be honest about it, Elon; just be honest about it, President Trump—cuts to programs.

They keep saying there are all kinds of waste in the system. Well, point it out to us; we will cut it out for you. Give us the list of the programs you want to have cut because there is waste, and we will do it. But do you want to know what they don't want to say? They don't want to say that they want to cut Medicaid. They don't want to say they want to cut clean air, clean water—the programs that protect ordinary people. They want to call it waste. We are going to call it out for what it is.

Where are they going? They are going to the programs that help provide the healthcare for ordinary Americans—cuts to healthcare that ordinary Americans rely upon. And when Americans have to wait longer for care, when they have to pay more, or watch the only hospital in their community shut down, the blame for what will happen will lay at the feet of the politicians who put self-interest above the interest of the American people.

Rather than consider a nominee who would seriously protect and preserve the health of the American people, Donald Trump nominated yet another enabler to his Cabinet, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who, instead of standing up to the Trump-Musk chaos, will only add fuel to Donald Trump's ''Make America Sick Again'' campaign because that is what it is, ''Make America Sick Again.''

Ralph Waldo Emerson from Massachusetts, he said: Health is the first wealth. Well, that first wealth is going to get looted so billionaires get even richer.

Serving as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services is an immense responsibility. The Agency oversees the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the Food and Drug Administration; the National Institutes of Health, which is made up of 27 institutes and centers. Each decision that a HHS Secretary makes would have a huge impact on our healthcare system.

Run well, HHS ensures medications are safe and effective; keeps workers and students and seniors safe; protects the public from global pandemics or disease outbreaks; guarantees hospitals, doctors, and community health centers provide safe quality care; and funds research that will build the foundation to accurately diagnose patients, better treat cancer, cure Alzheimer's, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. That is what it is supposed to be all about, not freezing that funding, not cutting that funding, but ensuring that the researchers have the funding they need because researchers' medicines fields of dreams from which we harvest the findings gives hope to families that we will find a cure for those diseases that have run through their family's medical history.

We know that HHS as Health and Human Services, but it also stands for ''human health security.'' The stakes of leadership are life and death. But instead of nominating a serious and qualified candidate, Trump selected a candidate who questioned the well-proven conclusion that HIV causes AIDS, made millions by spreading lies about vaccines, compared vaccine mandates to Nazi Germany, said Wi-Fi in cell phones caused ''leaky brains,'' threatened to remove fluoride from drinking water, and made baseless claims about medication for depression, that it would lead to mass shootings.

Mr. Kennedy's track record shows that he is a danger to the health of America. He would make America sick again.

In June of 2019, he went to Samoa on a trip arranged by anti-vaccine activists. He used that trip to spread lies about the measles vaccine to the Samoan Prime Minister and Director General of Health. He and the organization he led amplified activists who spread false information about the measles vaccine. And after a measles outbreak broke out in Samoa and 16 people died, rather than intervene and help, Mr. Kennedy sent a letter to the Prime Minister to blame these deaths on the vaccine rather than the absence of vaccines.

The death toll in Samoa grew to 83. Volunteers in New Zealand sent tiny coffins to help bury the dozens of children who died. A New Zealand vaccinologist later said the impact of Mr. Kennedy's role in the outbreak was ''devastating.'' In a moment, when Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., could have used his influence for good, he fueled disinformation that cost lives.

When Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., was asked about Medicare and Medicaid, he could not answer questions in his confirmation hearing, the most basic questions, demonstrating that he would be at HHS only to make whatever cuts that Trump and Musk and DOGE dictate at the expense of the healthcare of the American people. Now he is in line to be the No. 1 healthcare official in the United States. That would be a disaster.

Mr. Kennedy has reportedly given reassurances on his position on vaccines or on his position on food and chronic disease.

To my colleagues, I would say this: We cannot address chronic disease if we are slashing Medicare and Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act or recklessly cutting off funding from hospitals and community health centers.

If we are battling vaccine misinformation, it will make it much more difficult to take on chronic disease, like heart disease or diabetes. The long-term impact of food on children's health doesn't matter if children are dying from preventable infectious diseases because their families believed misinformation spread by the nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Even with the promises he has made on the vaccine misinformation, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., has not demonstrated that he will fulfill his promises. He has used his position to lead people down the dangerous path of vaccine misinformation. And when asked about his role in the Samoa measles outbreak, he lied. The stakes are too high to take a risk on this nominee.

I hear from people in Massachusetts who rely on our healthcare system: single mothers of disabled children relying on Medicaid—also called MassHealth in Massachusetts—to make sure their child gets care. I hear from people living with cystic fibrosis or parents of children on the autism spectrum or with Down syndrome who could only afford their medication or coverage with MassHealth Medicaid coverage. For them, Medicaid is the lifeline. And when that lifeline is cut, their lives get harder. That is what this administration is aiming to do with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., in the lead.

The American people deserve more than what they have now. They should be able to get healthcare when they need it, and they should not have to worry that it is available. They should be able to go to their doctor or to their pharmacy without running up their debt or being forced to choose between paying their rent or a medical bill.

They should have health providers who aren't too overworked and burned out to provide them quality care. They should have primary care, mental health care, addiction care, dental care, and cancer treatment more available to them without waiting months or traveling for hours or being left to hope for an available clinical trial.

Americans should have unquestioned healthcare access and quality, and I want to deliver on that for every single American. But Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., will only make this harder by embracing Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and the spread of vaccine disinformation.

I am not alone in my concern. I have received over a thousand calls and emails to my office opposing his nomination. I have also received letters from over 20,000 physicians, including thousands of pediatricians, internal medicine and emergency medicine doctors, representing all fifty States and Puerto Rico, over 800 public health officials; 75 Nobel Laureates oppose his confirmation. Chairs of pediatric departments across the country; statements from the Massachusetts Teachers Association, representing over 11,000 educators; and the national nurses union, representing 225,000 nurses, all oppose Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Every single one of them expressed concern and dismay about having a Secretary of Health and Human Services who doesn't believe in vaccines that save lives.

We need to listen to the people on the frontlines: the health providers who have dedicated their lives to serving their patients; the researchers, who have committed to finding lifesaving treatments and cures; and the educators who care for our Nation's children each and every day. They are all saying no to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. He is unqualified, and his confirmation would be dangerous to the health of our Nation.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I come to the floor with sadness and anger because we are here to consider the nomination of a person who, very practically and unfortunately, is unworthy and unqualified and unprepared for this position.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., will, in fact, betray the trust and credibility of the office he has been nominated to fill. He has already shown that he lacks the trust in science and the adherence to the truth that is so important because this office is, fundamentally, about advocating for public health, informing the public, and speaking truth to the American people when there is so much misinformation and disinformation about what will keep Americans healthy and make them healthier.

And he threatens, literally, to make America sick. Whether it is ''Make America Sick Again'' or just ''Make America Sicker,'' the fact is he has supported conspiracy theories and distorted views of what is important in public health that threaten the American people.

The Nobel laureates, the healthcare professionals, the members of his own family—and, in a certain way, I would say, if you have any question about Mr. Kennedy's qualifications, you should listen to Caroline Kennedy and her very powerful comments on his nomination. The fact is that her comments are an indictment. They are literally a warning against his nomination, stating that he is ''addicted to attention and power'' and that he has already denigrated our healthcare system by championing beliefs that cost lives.

Ultimately, the confirmation process so far has confirmed what we already know: that as a source of information, advocacy, and truth, he is less than Americans deserve.

Americans deserve someone who believes in the Affordable Care Act and its premium tax credits that reduce healthcare costs for millions of Americans who otherwise would be left uninsured and unable to afford healthcare. Americans deserve a Secretary who will advance research into lifesaving medicines, treatments, and vaccination.

He is not that person.

Americans deserve a Secretary who will protect Medicaid, which provides healthcare to nearly 1 million Connecticut residents, including 350,000 children—at the very least, someone who knows the difference between Medicaid and Medicare.

He is not that person.

And Americans deserve a Secretary who will protect the sensitive health data of millions of people across the country. When the Department of Government Efficiency, which is an unregulated and potentially unsanctioned organization, gained access to millions of seniors' records at Medicare, Mr. Kennedy purposefully said nothing.

And, at the very least, we need someone who will stand up to President Trump when he spreads misinformation from the White House, someone who will stand up to him when he asks that his Secretary of Health and Human Services do something illegal or immoral. And, clearly, Mr. Kennedy is not that person.

There is a reason that he lacks support from all of these professional organizations and is actively opposed by them—by healthcare professionals, Nobel laureates, and his own family—and that is that he fails the basic test of what Americans deserve: a Secretary that believes in science and advances in modern medicine; a Secretary who won't profit off of the lies he tells about vaccines and science; a Secretary who will not instigate fears of lifesaving vaccinations, while, at the same time, ensuring that his own children are vaccinated and protected; a Secretary who will protect women and reproductive rights; and someone who knows the difference between Medicare and Medicaid.

The kind of leadership that is required from the Secretary of Health and Human Services has never been more important, and that truth-telling advocacy, informing of the public, is more vital than ever.

Now, HHS is a massive Department. The management challenges alone are fierce. He has no qualifications or experience that would justify his appointment.

He would oversee health insurance for millions of people through Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Affordable Care Act. He is responsible for promoting the economic and social well-being of children and families, combating the opioid epidemic, supporting people with disabilities, and strengthening the Nation's public health system and emergency response.

The HHS Secretary is responsible for advancing innovative medical research through the National Institutes of Health; the Food and Drug Administration, responsible for ensuring our food and drugs and medical devices are safe and effective; and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which strengthens our public health system and responds to disease outbreaks.

This Agency is a sprawling, massive, challenging management task, and his nomination has spotlighted not only his lack of experience in management but also his long history of dangerous, delusional, and misguided beliefs that would be detrimental to the public and, in fact, a betrayal of public health.

The focus has been on Mr. Kennedy's views on vaccinations and his public denial of well-recognized science. His—

really—frightening views, which he has used to make money and have endangered the lives of countless children and families, ought to be disqualifying on their own. He admits to vaccinating his own children. Vaccines are safe and effective enough for his family but not others, it seems.

The fact is, vaccines are safe and effective. To be clear, over the last 50 years, vaccines have prevented 154 million deaths, including 146 million among children younger than 5 years old. They undergo exhaustive tests and trials and independent review to determine whether they are safe and effective, and they continue to undergo rigorous review even after approval.

This system works, but Mr. Kennedy has a long history of weakening and weaponizing parental instincts to protect their children and to spread disingenuous and life-threatening misinformation. These lies are attributable to his bad judgment as well as self-enrichment—exactly the opposite of what a Secretary of HHS should exemplify.

He has supported the dangerous, unproven lie that African Americans can use weaker vaccine schedules because Black people have stronger immune systems. This disgusting, appalling claim has been disavowed by the medical community and renounced by the authors of the studies that Mr. Kennedy has incorrectly cited in espousing these lies. But these lies exacerbate racism, and it is a weakness in our public health system that this racism may continue to exist. To exacerbate it threatens people's lives.

The anti-vaccine group he founded has maintained that the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine is linked to higher rates of autism in Black children—again, a flat-out lie, racialized comments that are intended to stoke fear in the public health system and exploit the very caution that many communities of color approach the healthcare system with. His lies will, again, exacerbate the clear disparities that exist in healthcare for different racial groups, and the inequity of those disparities is a glaring weakness in our current healthcare system.

But he will be spouting those kinds of disinformation—spouting on podcasts, espousing in the media as the highest ranking health official in our country. The notion that the public health of the Nation—credibility, trust, truth-telling—would be put in the hands of this man is truly frightening.

Now, he has attempted to backtrack since his nomination. He is claiming he is not anti-vaccine. But when he was asked point-blank, under oath, during confirmation hearings, in effect, he ducked and dodged.

Some of my colleagues have claimed that Mr. Kennedy privately told them he will work with existing vaccine approvals and safety networks and that he won't undermine vaccines in his role overseeing them. In private, that is what he said. Why wouldn't he make these commitments during public confirmation hearings? Why couldn't he make them when he was under oath?

The threat is that he will do exactly the contrary.

The American people deserve more than back-door, private, confidential conversations and quiet promises about what the HHS Secretary will do. And the fact is, he has pushed these kinds of debunked theories linking childhood vaccinations to autism, claiming that COVID–19 vaccines were weaponized against specific ethnic and socioeconomic groups, and profiting off lawsuits against lifesaving vaccines that prevent deadly diseases like cervical cancer, measles, tetanus, and chickenpox.

There is no argument from me that there needs to be testing and review and clinical trials for vaccines to be proven safe and effective. But once those tests and trials and independent review take place and are judged to be sufficient to show a vaccine is safe and effective, undermining them is simply contrary to public health.

Now, Mr. Kennedy would also threaten reproductive care and reproductive freedom. During his 2024 Presidential campaign, he consistently downplayed the importance of reproductive health, claiming that abortion was ''just a little issue.''

Abortion was hardly ''a little issue'' for women across the country, especially women who have literally died or come close to death as a result of denial of this essential healthcare and freedom.

The Americans deserve a Secretary of Health and Human Services who respects women and who works against politicians telling women what they can do with their bodies and trusts women to make decisions about what is right for them.

The HHS Secretary, as a matter of fact, oversees the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, a Federal law that mandates that women who need emergency care are entitled to it, whether that emergency care be an abortion or some other treatment.

When he was asked if a woman bleeding out in an emergency room is entitled to emergency care under this law, Mr. Kennedy responded, ''I don't know.'' He should know. Whether sheer incompetence, utter confusion, or just an unwillingness to agree to uphold Federal laws protecting women, that comment and response alone should be disqualifying. It is dangerous, and confirming him in this position could be deadly to women who depend on that program.

He has refused to say that he will protect access to medication abortion. Instead, he has said he would reevaluate the drug. Now, this drug has been safely and effectively used by millions of women for decades. His response is code for making it harder to access or ban it altogether.

He won't commit to protecting women who need emergency medical care. He will not commit to keeping safe and effective abortion medication available. He will limit access to abortion services. His confirmation poses the danger of catastrophic consequences for women.

How can women trust him to protect their interests and safeguard their health? The women of America deserve better.

Mr. Kennedy has a long history of making baseless and damaging claims about the LGBTQ+ community, including the absurd lie that environmental chemical exposure somehow causes children to become gay or transgender. Boggles the mind. Incredibly dangerous to the health and safety of LGBTQ+ youth, but it is his stated belief or has been at various times in the past, and adding to those harmful ideas is his belief that HIV does not cause AIDS.

He has supported bans on gender-affirming healthcare for transgender individuals and spread misinformation about what gender-affirming care actually looks like in the real world. If he continues to spread this unscientific rhetoric as Secretary of HHS, he will cost people their lives.

Members of the LGBTQ community already experience significant health disparities, and Mr. Kennedy's false views on health, sexual orientation, and gender identity would make these disparities—like racial disparity—even worse.

To serve in this position, Mr. Kennedy need not be the world's greatest scientist or the most erudite professor or the most astute researcher, but he needs to have a respect for science and medical professionals. He lacks it.

He made it abundantly clear during his confirmation hearing that he has none of those qualities and, in fact, demonstrated an inadequate understanding of the very programs he is supposed to be administering if he is confirmed, like Medicare and Medicaid.

You know, we have reviewed a lot of nominees as Senators, and we know that they are prepared—they are extensively ''murder-boarded,'' as they say—asked questions in preparation.

You would expect that the nominee to be HHS Secretary would understand the difference between two of the most important and largest health insurance programs in the country that serve millions of Americans every day. He didn't.

The American people deserve better. His decisions, if he is confirmed, will have long-lasting impacts, and he lacks the expertise to lead this Agency and lead America as an advocate, as an informer, as a truth-teller.

Lest you think he will rely on good people who will help him in administering this Agency, he has pledged to fire hundreds of National Institutes of Health employees. He told the Food and Drug Administration workers to ''pack their bags.'' He would like to clear entire Departments of the Federal Government, including the nutrition department at the FDA. He is in

no way going to rely on career professionals who truly understand the policies behind the programs that he knows so little about.

Mr. Kennedy claims to support improving nutrition and combatting chronic diseases, and many of us support those programs to eliminate additives, for example, or provide better nutritional information, front-of-package labels showing nutritional content, and enabling Americans to be healthier by eating better and by being better informed. But instead of surrounding himself with experts, his potential top advisers include people who want to change or abolish the nutrition guidelines, like the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which will bolster industry profits, not health.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans provides science-based advice on what to drink and eat to meet nutrient needs. They promote health. They reduce the risk of chronic disease. This dietary guidance is critically important because three in five adults live with chronic disease. Let me repeat. Three in five adults live with chronic disease that could be improved with better nutrition.

It informs all Federal nutrition programs, meaning that these dietary guidelines impact one in four Americans through programs like the National School Lunch Program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. These programs follow those dietary guidelines because they are based on science. But Mr. Kennedy lacks respect for science. The fact that he espouses better nutrition isn't translated into real-world support for actions that benefit Americans. His opposition to those guidelines benefits the food industry.

Having a science denier surrounded by potentially lobbyists at the helm of this Agency is not going to make Americans healthy again; it is going to make them sicker. It is going to potentially sell them out for profit.

I am disappointed that we are here, as I said at the outset, to be considering someone who is so deeply unqualified and unprepared for a position that is an enormous potential opportunity to improve the health of America. His advocacy could spread the truth, could hold the food industry or pharmaceutical drug industry to higher standards to provide more medicine and treatments and cures at lower prices. He could support research through the NIH instead of advocating that it be cut. He could enable women to have reproductive care instead of dodging or diminishing its importance. He could help eliminate racism and bias against LBGTQ+ people in our healthcare system. There is so much opportunity squandered in this nomination.

I will vote no on Robert Kennedy, Jr. I urge my colleagues to heed the warnings from Americans much better qualified than I am to make this judgment—those Nobel laureates; the professional organizations; the healthcare experts; and, of course, his family, who knows him best—Caroline Kennedy, who spoke with such eloquence and insight. Her incisive and heartbreaking video should be watched by everyone who is about to vote on this nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, in Hawaii, thousands of our keiki—children—attend Head Start, setting them up for lifetimes of success. After the devastating wildfires on Maui in 2023, the U.S. Public Health Service was on the ground within days, providing care to survivors and first responders. On Oahu, the University of Hawaii's Cancer Center is leading on critical NIH-funded research on breast, liver, and lung cancer, studying diseases that disproportionately impact the Native Hawaiian and Asian-American communities. All of these programs are vital for people in Hawaii, and they are all made possible by the Department of Health and Human Services, or HHS.

HHS does critical work across our country keeping communities healthy and researching deadly diseases, from cancer to COVID and so much more.

Americans trust HHS because their mission has historically been guided not by politics but by science and data. But already Donald Trump is taking a sledgehammer to HHS and the essential work it does.

For weeks, HHS employees have been prohibited from making any external communications and have been directed to withhold grant disbursements—illegal, by the way—halting critical updates on emerging public health threats and delaying or denying funding for community health centers without explanation.

These edicts are already forcing clinics to consider reducing services and staff or, worse, closing these services, endangering healthcare access for our most vulnerable populations. And just last Friday, the National Institutes of Health, or NIH, announced it would slash indirect cost rates nationwide—funds that keep the lights on and the bills paid at America's medical schools, hospitals, and research institutions, enabling our country to lead globally on biomedical research.

This is lifesaving research. These across-the-board cuts aren't hypothetical. They will harm real people in need of help.

Just yesterday, I spoke with the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine, who explained the catastrophic consequences this cap would have. This illegal action, as I mentioned, would compromise plans for the U.H. Cancer Center to begin offering phase 1 clinical trials in Hawaii for the first time.

What does this mean for the people of Hawaii? For the first time, people in Hawaii will not have to go to the mainland to participate in these trials. But with the help of this NIH funding—now being slashed—for the first time, people of Hawaii would be able to stay in Hawaii to participate in these very important clinical trials.

If allowed to stand, these actions will be catastrophic for our country and for global efforts to combat the spread of diseases, and all of these actions have been taken without a confirmed Secretary in place at HHS.

One would hope the President's nominee to lead such an important Department would be a level-headed individual guided by science and data. Instead, Donald Trump has nominated the total opposite: Robert Kennedy, Jr.

Mr. Kennedy is an anti-vaccine activist who peddles and profits from conspiracy theories and has a troubling history of misconduct. In his confirmation hearings, Mr. Kennedy appeared not to know the difference between Medicare and Medicaid, essential programs that 66 million and 72 million people, respectively, rely on for access to healthcare.

Mr. Kennedy purports to be a proponent of bodily autonomy when it comes to vaccines, as if we know better than scientists about the efficacy and safety of medical treatments.

But Mr. Kennedy's commitment to bodily autonomy suddenly flies out the window when it comes to women's rights to control our own bodies. He has shown he will do Donald Trump's bidding in his war on women and our freedom—where is our bodily autonomy?—as they work to reverse the FDA's approval of mifepristone, which has been used safely for medication abortion for more than 20 years—so much for bodily autonomy.

And it is clear Mr. Kennedy will be guided not by science but by the conspiracy theories he has pursued for decades on vaccines, raw milk, stem cell treatment, and much more.

Vaccines are a modern miracle that have saved an estimated 154 million lives and enabled us to all but eradicate diseases like polio and small pox. But due to the activism of conspiracy theorists like Mr. Kennedy, public trust in vaccines have eroded, endangering countless lives and threatening the herd immunity that protects us all.

I grew up in rural Japan, where we didn't have widespread access to most vaccines. As a child, I remember getting measles, mumps, whooping cough. When one kid in our village got sick, it just spread like wildfire in our village, and all the kids got sick. I know what it means to be vaccinated. To willingly submit our children to such a fate like what happened to us—to me in Japan—would be cruel, counterproductive, and deadly, but Mr. Kennedy seems not to care about those impacts.

We all agree there are things we can do to make our country healthier, and I stand ready to work with my colleagues to do that important work. But eliminating access to healthcare, promoting conspiracy theories, firing researchers, and undermining evidence-

based policymaking will do nothing to make us healthier. It will, instead, unleash chaos on patients, providers, and countless other Americans who rely on the services, funding, and research emanating from HHS.

Mr. Kennedy will not ''Make America Healthy Again''—yet another empty slogan. He will, in fact, instead make us less healthy, less safe, and less prosperous. We know this because it is exactly what happened in Samoa after misinformation about vaccines, pushed in part by Mr. Kennedy, led to a deadly measles outbreak there.

Hawaii's Governor, Josh Green, is also a physician, and he traveled to Samoa at the invitation of the country's Health Minister to help stem the consequences of this deadly misinformation. He recently wrote about his experiences in an op-ed in the New York Times, and I would like to read portions of that op-ed now.

Our Governor wrote:

[W]hen vaccination rates fall, preventable diseases can regain a foothold and pose a new danger. And that's precisely what happened in Samoa, after misinformation spread by anti-vaccine activists eroded trust in vaccines and led to the 2019 outbreak. Thousands of preventable cases of measles sprang up, leading to the deaths of 83 people, mostly children. One of the most prominent voices behind the anti-vaccine campaign was Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Governor Green goes on to say that:

[W]e also witnessed the deadly consequences of the anti-vaccine campaign. We arrived at one home just minutes after a toddler girl had died from measles, her mother bursting into tears as we approached. The child was lying on a makeshift bed in the middle of the family's one-room house, her face still red from fever. I put my hands on her face and could feel the warmth in her skin, but her eyes were fixed and glazed over. My stethoscope confirmed she was no longer breathing.

Governor Green went on to write:

Mr. Kennedy and others fanned the flames of this fear with misinformation. The people of Samoa shared with me that they got very little news from outside their community but that in the months before the 2019 epidemic they were bombarded with social media posts claiming that vaccinations were unsafe and would harm or even kill their children. Activists from other countries, including Mr. Kennedy, claimed vaccines were dangerous. Many Samoans were afraid to vaccinate their children, and by late 2019, the epidemic was raging, overwhelming Samoa's national health care system.

Governor Green concluded by saying:

As we look to the future, the possibility of his being confirmed—

He is talking about Robert Kennedy—

as the secretary of health and human services is cause for grave concern. I worry he would jeopardize half a century of progress and success gained by the United States as a result of vaccination programs. Too much depends on our commitment to truth and the lifesaving power of vaccines to entrust Mr. Kennedy with the direction of these programs. Our children's lives depend on it.

I thank the Governor for his service to the people of Samoa and for so eloquently describing what is at stake with Mr. Kennedy's nomination.

Our Governor was so concerned that he recently traveled all the way from Hawaii to Washington, DC, to speak to as many Senators that he could directly about what is at stake. Governor Green was that concerned about what this nominee could do to HHS.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Kennedy had the opportunity to take responsibility for his role in Samoa's measles outbreak. Instead, he stuck to his old tricks, blaming vaccines and spreading misinformation.

Governor Green is correct. Our children's lives depend on our commitment to vaccinations, and all of our lives depend on the science and research done by HHS. Mr. Kennedy poses a dire threat to that science and, indeed, to the American people.

For those reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote no on his forthcoming nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. I yield 30 minutes of postcloture debate time to the junior Senator from Oregon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues, to join the many Granite Staters who have written my office and expressed their grave alarm in opposing the nomination of Mr. Kennedy as the next Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is without experience or qualification for this post. He is uninformed and apparently uninterested in the most basic elements of healthcare policy. He entertains and spreads conspiracy theories that virtually everyone in this body knows to be dishonest and dangerous.

In a different time, in a different political moment, with a different President, Members of this Chamber would have joined together to resoundingly reject Mr. Kennedy's nomination. In fact, in a different time, where qualifications and character mattered, Mr. Kennedy's nomination would never have made it to the floor. But here we are.

Today, it appears that Mr. Kennedy will be confirmed and that Members of the U.S. Senate—the so-called world's greatest deliberative body—will sacrifice the health of our fellow Americans by failing to stand up for science and for the truth.

For even the most skilled and experienced person, running the Department of Health and Human Services is a really daunting task. We expect and trust the HHS Secretary to direct the administration of critical programs like Medicare or Medicaid; to direct research so that we can find cures for cancer, Alzheimer's, and other diseases; to help bring new lifesaving medications to market; to find ways to make medicine and care more affordable; to help ensure that our children grow up healthy and that our parents age with dignity.

When a crisis hits, we look to the Secretary of Health and Human Services for leadership, to help lead the fight against fentanyl or to protect our communities from a pandemic.

There is, perhaps, no aspect of public policy as complicated as healthcare, and there are few aspects of life as fundamental as being healthy.

And to be sure, there are grave healthcare challenges facing our country. The cost of healthcare is too high; the cost of prescriptions, too steep. While we have made extraordinary progress in recent generations, we know that too many diseases still cry out to be cured, and too many people struggle to get the care that they need where and when they need it.

The challenges are real, but progress is possible.

When I was Governor of New Hampshire, I worked with Republicans and Democrats in the legislature to help our State adopt Medicaid expansion. And during the first Trump administration, we came together to end surprise medical billing with a new bipartisan law. Of course, there is much more work to do. The point is that when we work together, embrace commonsense solutions, and have the right leadership, we can forge progress. But it takes hard work. It takes seriousness to tackle a challenge as daunting as healthcare. It takes experience, talent, and ability. We are talking about the health of our country and of our children.

This is a job that requires us to search far and wide across our country to find the right person; someone who is informed, capable, and forthright; someone who has a proven track record of leadership; and someone willing to tell the truth in service to the goal of helping every American to be healthy.

Instead, the President of the United States offered us Mr. Kennedy. It is entirely unclear to me what qualifications Mr. Kennedy brings to this office. He has never run an organization or a business even one-hundredth of the size of the Department of Health and Human Services. He has no background in medicine, science, health policy, or government. Most concerning, though, is his complete and utter lack of even the most basic knowledge of the Department he is supposed to lead or the health policy debates and challenges that our country has been grappling with over the last several decades.

It is not simply that we have been asked to hope that Mr. Kennedy learns on the job. It is not simply that we are being asked to grade Mr. Kennedy on a curve. It is worse than that because even for his confirmation hearings, Mr. Kennedy couldn't be bothered to even do his homework.

During his confirmation hearing, I asked Mr. Kennedy some fairly basic

questions about Medicare and Medicaid, the most well-known health programs overseen by the Department he seeks to lead, programs which tens of millions of Americans count on for their care. He couldn't accurately identify a single part of Medicare. He got every question I asked wrong.

When it comes to Medicaid, which, among other things, provides coverage for about half of the births in the United States, he wrongly said it was fully, federally funded, which it isn't.

Let me be clear: The administration is asking the American people to place these critical health programs in the hands of a man who has no idea what they even are. That is a big ask. And it is an ask we wouldn't make of our own constituents. No one in this body would hire even an entry-level healthcare staffer who did not understand the basics of Medicaid and Medicare. Why should we exercise a different, weaker standard for the person who is supposed to be in charge of both? Why, with this administration, does the bar go even lower when the office becomes even higher?

If Mr. Kennedy cannot be bothered to learn the basics about Medicare and Medicaid, he will certainly not bother to stand up for them. This administration has made clear that it is willing to gut Medicaid in order to pay for tax breaks for billionaires.

The President's new Director of the Office of Management and Budget has, in fact, proposed that the administration cut Medicaid—a program that provides health insurance coverage for approximately 80 million Americans—by more than one-third. Does anyone think that Mr. Kennedy will be a voice of reason; that he will speak out on behalf of American families and make the case for saving Medicare or Medicaid? He can't even describe what they are.

Mr. Kennedy is an intelligent and educated man. But education and intelligence aren't a substitute for taking the job seriously. If Mr. Kennedy were in the running for a different post, his failure to understand the basics of our healthcare system might not be relevant. But it so happens to be the American people's great misfortune that he is, in fact, being called to serve as the highest public health official in our land.

Mr. Kennedy's lack of qualifications and knowledge about healthcare have real consequences. If confirmed, his lack of preparation, experience, and interest in America's healthcare will leave our country worse off. Our people will be less healthy.

And nobody will feel Mr. Kennedy's careless disregard for the magnitude of his position more than America's women. When I was initially considering Mr. Kennedy's nomination, one mark in his favor was his long record of advocacy on behalf of a woman's fundamental freedom to make her own health decisions. When Mr. Kennedy was in New Hampshire campaigning for President, he told Granite Staters:

> I am pro-choice. I don't think the government has any business telling people what to do with their bodies.

But since he came out in support of President Trump, Mr. Kennedy has made a remarkable discovery. He decided at the age of 71 that his long-held belief in reproductive freedom for women was wrong. All of his principles about women making their own choices were suddenly no longer true.

Instead, as the Nation's leading public health official, he has said that he will faithfully and enthusiastically carry out the anti-choice policies of an administration that continues to dedicate itself to undermining and taking away a woman's fundamental freedom.

This isn't a hypothetical issue. In his confirmation hearing, Mr. Kennedy said that he and the Trump administration would be examining the safety of the drug mifepristone, which is used for abortions and in miscarriage care. During the hearing, I showed Mr. Kennedy study after study—stacks—hundreds of pages of research done over the course of decades, all of which demonstrate the safety of this medication. Let me be clear, the safety has been proven. If Mr. Kennedy and the Trump administration continue to persist in studying a drug that is proven to be safe, it is clear that their objection is not with a lack of research; their objection is to the result of that research. So they want to sow doubt about it. They want to sow confusion. And once they do, they will hide behind the very doubt that they have created as a reason for denying women the most basic of human freedoms: body autonomy.

Mr. Kennedy, having sold out his pro-choice principles, will surely help in that effort. He certainly will not stand in the way of it. The debate about reproductive freedom is fundamentally a debate about whether one believes in the basic promise of our Declaration of Independence that all of us are free and equal. The question for Mr. Kennedy and all those who would deny women this basic freedom is whether they believe that women have the capacity and judgment to make their own healthcare and reproductive decisions just as men do.

Make no mistake, Mr. Kennedy did not have a miraculous conversion something like the Apostle Paul's on the road to Damascus on this issue. He just made a cold-blooded, expedient choice to cut a path to power. He decided that the freedom of women was a small price to pay in order to be able to call himself a Cabinet Secretary. I have had good-faith disagreements with friends and colleagues on the issue of abortion, but Mr. Kennedy is different.

Mr. Kennedy has spent his lifetime arguing for a woman's reproductive freedom. But he now abandons what he used to refer to as a core value for a title and for what he, apparently, thinks is more important than freedom—being in Donald Trump's orbit.

Americans have a particular disdain for those who sell out the freedom of their fellow citizens in pursuit of power. We call such people many things. We seldom call them ''Mr. Secretary.'' Even if Mr. Kennedy was not inexperienced, even if Mr. Kennedy had basic knowledge regarding our health system, even if Mr. Kennedy was not willing to imperil freedom for women, members of both political parties should reject his nomination because Mr. Kennedy, who has forged a career of peddling cynicism and conspiracy regarding vaccines, is, perhaps, the most uniquely dangerous man ever nominated to head America's Department of Health and Human Services.

Vaccines are among the greatest achievements in human history, and America has been at the center of that success. Our doctors and scientists were instrumental in helping vanquish smallpox and banish polio. Because of vaccines, more than 20 million people walk today who otherwise would have been stricken with polio. Hundreds of millions of people are alive today because of vaccines. I am reminded of the words of a previous HHS Secretary:

> Vaccines are some of the most thoroughly tested medical products we have. Vaccines are safe, effective, and lifesaving.

HHS Secretary Alex Azar, who was appointed by President Trump, said those words during his first term. He was right when he said this 6 years ago. But today, Mr. Kennedy asserts that this statement is wrong.

Mr. Kennedy has a long history of dealing in both outright lies and clever half-truths to sow cynicism, mistrust, and confusion regarding vaccines. He has, at various times, discouraged people from getting vaccines for measles and polio.

Mr. Kennedy has led litigation to discredit the HPV vaccine, a vaccine which has led to a dramatic decrease in cervical cancers among young women.

When the pandemic hit, President Trump helped marshal America's scientific resources in Operation Warp Speed to produce a COVID vaccine in record time. This was, in my mind, one of the greatest public health achievements in decades and a real credit to President Trump. But Mr. Kennedy helped lead efforts that attempted to revoke President Trump's COVID vaccine's authorization.

And for more than 25 years, Mr. Kennedy has helped perpetuate the dangerous lie that vaccines cause autism. During his confirmation hearings, my colleagues virtually begged Mr. Kennedy to recant these views. But Mr. Kennedy would not, insisting that if he somehow saw more evidence—only then, perhaps—he might reverse course and tell people he was wrong.

This is a dangerous game that Mr. Kennedy plays. He hides his anti-vaccine conspiracies under a cloak of deniability. Sometimes he outright lies. But most of the time, he insists that he is merely raising questions and that he is simply a man looking for answers. But to borrow from Benjamin Franklin:

Half the truth is often a great lie.

When Mr. Kennedy is presented with facts, he ignores them. He ignored the conclusive data that my colleagues showed him proving that vaccines do not cause autism. He, instead, continued to rely on one tiny, outdated, faulty, disproven study from way back in 1998; a study that the Journal that originally published it has since withdrawn to support his claim, instead of relying on the exhaustive studies that have been conducted since then that prove there is no link between vaccines and autism.

It is fine to ask questions. It is often urgently important. But it is not doctors and scientists who are ignoring Mr. Kennedy's questions; it is Mr. Kennedy who is ignoring their answers. Mr. Kennedy's vaccine conspiracies are not a quirky personality or harmless eccentricity, but especially with the authority and megaphone he will have if he is confirmed, it will be a grave danger to the health of our people.

Mr. Kennedy has already spent much of his career taking legal action against safe and effective vaccines. With the full power of the Department of Health and Human Services, it stands to reason that he will use his post to limit access to certain vaccines, pull FDA approval of others, or change guidelines and recommendations concerning what vaccines children should receive.

But more than that, with the platform of HHS Secretary, Mr. Kennedy will undermine public trust in vaccines and will discourage a growing number of parents from getting their children vaccinated. As for Mr. Kennedy's insistence that is simply raising doubts about the safety of vaccines doesn't mean that he is urging people not to get their children vaccinated—well, Mr. Kennedy may be unqualified, but he is not naive. He knows full well that millions of people listen to his words. Millions more will listen should he be confirmed to this office.

And so what happens? How much, Mr. President, does a lie about vaccines truly cost? Let us say that a greater number of Americans become wary of vaccines due to Mr. Kennedy's musings from the seat of the most powerful public health perch in the world. A greater number of families decide that their kids don't need vaccines. Sometimes that will mean just skipping one vaccine. Sometimes it will mean skipping all of them. These parents aren't necessarily conspiracy theorists themselves, but they have read some scary, if untrue, stories online, and as they try to figure out what to do, the most important public health authority in the land chooses to give credence to the lies rather than reassure parents with the truth.

Maybe, as is true with every parent, these parents are worried about their child developing a disability, and now they hear Mr. Kennedy suggest that vaccines maybe cause autism, so they hesitate. They don't return to the pediatrician's office for the next dose of a vaccine that will prevent their child from getting a deadly disease.

As more and more children become unprotected and as Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., fails to advocate for safe, effective, lifesaving vaccines, children get sick, they spread the disease, and all of a sudden, we are back to the kind of deadly disease outbreaks that doctors used to witness in the early decades of the 20th century—a time long enough ago wherein many Americans don't realize what it was like to lose a loved one to an illness like measles. There will be more measles outbreaks like the one going on right now in West Texas, or maybe, instead of measles, it will be polio. People will get sick, and people will die. Take a look in a museum at a rusting iron lung. Go to the graves of the unvaccinated measles victims in American Samoa. That is the cost. That is the price of this particular lie.

I also take issue with the notion that Mr. Kennedy's anti-vax cynicism is somehow advancing scientific progress or healthy debate. The truth is that Mr. Kennedy's conspiracies are not particularly new. They are old theories that have been disproven but that Mr. Kennedy keeps alive by continuing to recycle them long after the debate has been concluded. So, no, I don't object to engaging in new debates on unproven science; I object to rehashing old debates on proven science.

Remarkably, during the hearings, Mr. Kennedy and some of my colleagues sought to place Mr. Kennedy in the tradition of great scientific minds like Galileo and Newton, who dared challenge the scientific status quo with their own provocative questions. There is, of course, a key difference. The difference is that Galileo and Newton were right, and Mr. Kennedy is wrong. The evidence vindicated Galileo. The evidence refutes Mr. Kennedy. That difference is what separated Galileo from the village crank. That difference is what separates a witch doctor from a real one.

This never-ending cycle of cynicism—of relitigating old debates about whether vaccines cause autism—doesn't further scientific progress. It doesn't unlock new truths or cures. It keeps us stuck in the past, stuck having the same debates over and over and over again. All that changes is that the mound of evidence disproving Mr. Kennedy grows higher and higher.

In his hearing, Mr. Kennedy said that he wouldn't apologize for asking what he called uncomfortable questions because ''we have massive health problems in this country that we must face honestly.''

The problem is not that Mr. Kennedy is asking uncomfortable questions; the problem is that Mr. Kennedy himself is not willing to accept the answers to them. The problem is that Mr. Kennedy is wasting our time and our money with dishonest and already settled debates, debates that distract us from the task at hand—the task of tackling the real and significant health problems that are facing our country—because in his lifetime of fearmongering, what good has Mr. Kennedy actually contributed to the mission of public health?

Mr. Kennedy says he wishes to make America healthy again, but when Mr. Kennedy suggested that the polio vaccine gave people cancer, what child did he make healthier? Mr. Kennedy says he is trying to promote vigorous scientific debate. When Mr. Kennedy suggested that the United States of America develop Lyme disease as a bioweapon, what medical breakthrough did that yield? What disease did he help cure then? Mr. Kennedy's vaccine fears garner him headlines, but have they made healthcare more affordable for a single American family?

Think about the hours and resources that Mr. Kennedy has urged his followers to invest in relitigating proven science and what progress could instead have been made if that money were invested in finding treatments and cures to diseases. That is the price of Mr. Kennedy's insistence that we remain frozen in time in our understanding of science.

Mr. Kennedy has not made America healthier in his career thus far, nor will he if he is confirmed. He will make America less healthy, more doubtful, more divided, more cynical, and further away from finding cures and making scientific progress.

We have real healthcare challenges in this country. The American people need healthcare costs to come down. They want to stop having to make impossible choices between making ends meet and getting their children the medications they need. They want it to be easier to get a prompt appointment with a good doctor in their neighborhood who talks with them and doesn't rush them out the door. They want better mental health care in our schools. They want cures. They want their loved ones to stop being held back by chronic diseases. They want to say fewer early goodbyes because of cancer, Alzheimer's, and other diseases. They want to be able to age at home with dignity and high-quality home care.

Making our country more healthy is no small task, but we can do it. We live in a great country. The American people are talented and imaginative. When we work together, we have the capacity to do extraordinary things. We can make our country better. We can save more lives. But we cannot move forward if we confirm a Cabinet Secretary who engages in the same, tired debates over and over again, if we confirm a Cabinet Secretary who goads us into fighting each other rather than fighting for cures or for lower healthcare costs.

If this body confirms Mr. Kennedy, it will, in effect, be declaring that experience doesn't matter and qualifications do not count. It will be ignoring plain truths and suspending our capacity for

reasoning—all because a President demanded that the majority of this body do so.

If this body confirms Mr. Kennedy, it will be betraying who we are as Americans. It will be sacrificing a better future for the sake of needlessly relitigating the past. It will be confusing a charlatan with a prophet and cynicism with wisdom.

In the end, if this body confirms Mr. Kennedy, more parents will reject vaccinations for their children, more people will get sick, and a growing number of children will likely die.

The exact impact of Mr. Kennedy's confirmation in terms of lives lost or progress thwarted will, of course, be hard to quantify. Regardless, what we do know for certain is that Senators on both sides of the aisle are willing to denounce the lies that Mr. Kennedy has spread, and we saw that in our hearings. But, colleagues, the issue in this moment isn't whether you will stand up against lies; the issue is whether you will stand up to the man who tells them. And in this moment, in this Chamber, it appears that not enough of my Republican colleagues are willing to do that. I hope I am wrong.

I urge my colleagues to reject Mr. Kennedy's nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I, too, rise to oppose the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

I can only hope that I am half as eloquent and moving as Senator HASSAN has been not just here on the floor today but in committee during the confirmation hearing.

I oppose this nomination for his wildly misinformed beliefs and his utter lack of experience. I believe he is fundamentally unfit and unprepared, and Americans will be less healthy if he is confirmed.

Let's begin with, for years, he has made conspiracy theories and anti-vaccine misinformation his calling card, from false accusations that vaccines cause autism to lies that the COVID–19 virus targets specific racial groups. He has founded his own anti-vax organization, authored several books pushing public health conspiracies, and has made millions off anti-vax lawsuits. It all points to a dangerous principle at the core of Mr. Kennedy's beliefs: ''There's no vaccine that is safe and effective.''

As the Presiding Officer knows, my background is in engineering. I am not a scientist, but I am an engineer. As an engineer, I trust the experts who have spent their lives researching, conducting clinical trials, and collecting data.

Through the decades of life-changing discoveries and scientific breakthroughs, one thing has become increasingly, undeniably clear: The single best way to protect the Nation from viral disease is to get vaccinated. It is the reason why, today, hundreds of millions of Americans can live freely without having serious concerns of contracting polio, of contracting smallpox, or of contracting hepatitis.

That used to be a source of pride for the Nation, but in the face of all of the proven science—proven again and again science—Mr. Kennedy has chosen to profit off of fear, and countless parents are being misled into making dangerous decisions for their children.

Look, I get the fear. I am proud to represent California in the Senate, and I am proud to have an engineering background, but I, too, am a parent of three boys. I remember what it was like to hold a baby in your arms and to worry every time there was a sniffle and a cough. I would do anything to protect my children, just as you would do anything to protect yours. But where families have reasonable questions on everything from doctors to diets, Mr. Kennedy simply sees dollar signs.

Now, today, we find ourselves in yet another viral outbreak. A bird flu has shown some early signs of transmission to humans.

I can't think of a worse idea than to install an anti-vaxxer as Secretary of Health and Human Services. His beliefs alone make him unfit to lead HHS, but in addition to that, he is simply unprepared to lead.

Nearly 16 months ago, I was proud to cofound the bipartisan Senate Mental Health Caucus.

Thank you, Senator TILLIS; thank you, Senator ERNST; and thank you, Senator SMITH, for being cofounders of this caucus.

In the time since then, we have made some significant strides. But before Americans can ever reach out for help in a time of crisis, they have to know that they can access help. So that is on us to make sure that the support, the services, the programs are there for Americans when they need them. We know that Medicaid is the single largest payer of behavioral health services in the Nation.

So at a time when Republicans are looking to cut funding for lifesaving services, I would rather see a fierce defender of Medicaid at HHS. Yet, during his confirmation hearing, Mr. Kennedy failed to show even a basic understanding of Medicaid—not the sources of funding, not the benefits. At one point, he even seemed to confuse Medicaid and Medicare.

Colleagues, I shouldn't have to say this: This is not a ''learn on the job'' nomination.

Well, President Trump knows just how unprepared Mr. Kennedy is for this job. Reporting from Semafor just a few days ago tells us that during Mr. Kennedy's confirmation hearing, President Trump was watching. He saw just how poorly the confirmation hearing was going for Mr. Kennedy. So what did President Trump do? He does what he does best. He leapt into action to distract and divide. He held a press conference simply to throw out the latest controversy to reporters, and it took the attention off and the pressure off of this dangerous nominee.

That is what we are up against, colleagues. Over the next several months, our Nation will face a critical test for some of the most important public health systems in our country.

In the House, Republicans are already floating cuts to Medicaid to pay for even more tax breaks for the rich.

In the White House, President Trump and his shadow president Musk have proven they will shutter any Agency that stands in their way.

Today, we are left wondering who will speak up to protect the health of millions of Americans? Unfortunately, Mr. Kennedy has already shown he is not up to the task.

So, colleagues, I urge you to join me in fighting to protect the health of our constituents and oppose the confirmation of Mr. Kennedy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I join my last two colleagues, the Senator from New Hampshire and the Senator from California, in echoing some of their concerns, because I also rise today to oppose President Trump's nomination of Robert Francis Kennedy, Jr., to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

It has been less than a month since Donald Trump was inaugurated. It feels a bit longer for some of us. Yet already, we have seen this administration attack nonpartisan civil servants, illegally freeze Federal funding, and gut the independent oversight bodies that crack down and protect Americans from corruption.

That would mean, now more than ever, the Senate needs to confirm nominees who want to make the government more efficient, yes, but who are also willing to work in good faith to advance their missions, regardless of political ideology.

Unfortunately, I don't believe that Mr. Kennedy is that nominee, and I fear that he will serve as a rubberstamp to the chaos and disruption that the Trump-Musk administration brings.

The past couple of weeks have made it clear that Elon Musk and his DOGE bros have a disturbing scheme to undermine the government's ability to operate, all in the name of efficiency.

We have seen Musk take a hatchet to USAID, ceding soft power and, frankly, 70 years of bipartisan leadership in that domain, to China.

We have seen that same attack to limit our ability to fight terrorists and, unfortunately, turn our back—which we have never done, even with Presidents of Democrat or Republican affiliation—turn our back entirely on the international community.

We have seen Mr. Musk take a hatchet to the CFPB and leave consumers to fend for themselves, giving a pass to

scammers and institutions that defraud Americans.

We are starting to see Musk take aim at the Department of Education.

We cannot allow this pattern to continue at the Agency tasked with keeping people healthy and safe.

As folks in my State may remember, earlier this month, the President issued an illegal order to freeze all Federal spending. Fortunately, the funding freeze order was rescinded after a major public outcry and the threat of losing in court. Yet, even with the order rescinded, real people's lives were fundamentally changed.

Across Virginia, for example, three community health centers had to close during the funding freeze, and now they won't be reopening because of uncertainty. They are not sure the money is even coming back.

These health centers, which provide primary and preventive care for the underserved populations, feel they can no longer rely on the government contract or the government to keep its word or meet its obligations.

In rural Buckingham County, a health center is having to put off replacing the only machine in the county that provides breast cancer screening.

Who suffers? Well, it is not Mr. Musk. He is the richest man in the world. I imagine he and the young men who work with him get pretty good and timely care.

But if we would just end it there, that wouldn't be all that we would potentially be putting Mr. Kennedy into. We have already seen some of the foreshadowing of what is to come if Mr. Kennedy is confirmed as the HHS nominee.

Take the NIH for example—National Institutes of Health—something broadly supported in a bipartisan way. NIH is one of the many important Agencies that is tasked with advancing medical and public health research in the United States. And, literally, in the years that I have been here, it has been Republican Members who have often taken the lead in championing existing and increasing funding. Unfortunately, many of the medical achievements which started off as NIH grants, from cancer immunotherapies to heart valve replacements to medications for many health conditions, all started at NIH. Yet earlier this week, the Trump administration put forward a plan to cut $4 billion in Federal funding for research at hospital and universities, like those in Virginia which conduct some of our Nation's top research. This basically cuts the legs out of a lot of NIH funding.

This illegal and shortsighted maneuver could decrease the kind of work that leads to medical cures and scientific breakthroughs. It could devastate a major research ecosystem in Virginia, eliminate 21st century jobs, and hurt countless American families who have been touched by cancer and other devastating diseases.

I have no earthly idea why the President would choose to cede American R&D leadership in bio at this moment to China. But what I do know is that Mr. Kennedy will do nothing to stop it.

What we need at HHS is a nominee who is willing to go in with a scalpel, not a hatchet, to make our healthcare system better. We need someone with the preparedness and experience necessary to safeguard a woman's right to reproductive care; to support healthcare systems in their fight against cyber attacks; that would protect both Medicare and Medicaid, and ensure that American families can count on good health insurance.

Rather than focusing on any of these things, Mr. Kennedy, as you have heard from my colleagues, has expressed that he would like to gut our Nation's top health Agency. Specifically, he said he would like to oust 2,200 nonpartisan health experts at HHS.

At his hearing before the Senate Finance Committee, I asked him a very simple question: Which ones? Which of these nonpartisan health officials have you got slated for the chopping block? I wondered, was it the folks who keep our food safe from salmonella? The individuals who examine medications we give our kids? He couldn't even answer the question who he wanted to cut.

Now, I do appreciate Mr. Kennedy's concern with chronic illnesses and the obesity epidemic. I also agree that not enough Americans have access to healthy food. However, having met with Mr. Kennedy in private and having questioned him in the hearing, I don't believe he is the right person to tackle these complicated issues.

I don't have the confidence that he will be willing to consider the science or consult nonpartisan health experts when necessary. I certainly don't have the confidence that he would ever be willing to stand up to Donald Trump or Elon Musk.

Frankly, at least in Virginia, I am not the only one who feels that way. Let me take a moment to share some concerns I have heard from Virginians.

Katherine, an ICU nurse in Charlottesville wrote:

> I cared for critically-ill and dying patients during the COVID–19 pandemic, while public health conspiracies were spread by figures like RFK, Jr., with no scientific or medical training. I have seen the potentially deadly consequences of spreading misleading health and safety information.

Take Talia, an Alexandria resident who suffers chronic illnesses. She wrote:

> My ability to access effective treatments relies on accurate research and development of medicine.

She fears, if nominated, Mr. Kennedy will cut progress in science and medical research.

Another constituent from Nokesville wrote:

> My mother contracted polio at age 2. . . . She is now 92 and has spent her life dealing with the pain of post-polio symptoms. RFK, Jr.'s stance on vaccines is dangerous to people of all ages.

A doctor from my hometown of Alexandria wrote:

> As a pediatrician for almost 50 years, I have seen many diseases nearly eradicated, thanks to vaccines. Mr. Kennedy would reverse that trend. In my care, I have seen children become profoundly impaired—unable to talk or care for themselves as adults—due to preventable infections. I have seen three children die from ''harmless'' childhood diseases like measles and chickenpox. I never wish to see that again.

A cancer survivor from Virginia Beach wrote:

> Cancer survivors like myself count on public health initiatives and scientific research to ensure the effective long-term treatment and prevention of serious diseases. I do not believe Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.—a man who lacks any credentials and credibility in this field—will have those interests in mind.

The writing is on the wall. This nominee does not have the right experience, credibility, or motivations to be running a government Agency of this size and importance. That is why I will be voting no on Mr. Kennedy's nomination to be Secretary and urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I would ask unanimous consent to be able to use a prop during my speech.

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

FEDERAL FUMBLES

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, in Oklahoma, if you were to go to any house anywhere in the State right now and ask them how their money should be spent, they would probably smile at you and say: I would like to decide that, not somebody else.

That would be a pretty common conversation, I would bet, in most every State.

For a lot of folks in my State that make $55,000, $60,000—make enough to be able to get by, work hard, take care of their kids and their family—it is a challenge for them from day to day, so every single dollar counts to them. They think about how every single dollar is spent or saved.

That is why it is surprising, in all the dialogue right now about government waste—there is a big dialogue about how do we handle waste and how do we cut back and how fast should we cut back and what should that look like.

But Oklahomans that I talk to are not offended that we are actually cutting back on waste. Now, they may have questions about how it is done and the speed and where it comes out. Those are all reasonable questions we should have a national dialogue on. But when Oklahomans hear that USAID last year did a grant of $32,000 to create a comic book about transgenders in Peru, they would say to me: Hey, I would like to be able to spend that $32,000 myself rather than the transgender comic book in Peru. If the folks in Peru want that comic book, maybe they should pay for it, not American taxpayers.

The folks in Oklahoma, if I were able to talk to them about the same issue,

would ask me questions about the $2.5 million grant that was given to Vietnam to be able to fund the construction of electric vehicle battery recharging stations—which, by the way, $2.5 million that was given by USAID to Vietnam to do that created one charging station which so far has saved a total of 260 gallons of gas equivalent—$2.5 million. It might have been cheaper just to send them 250 gallons of gas than it is to send them $2.5 million to be able to do that.

Now, if I were to talk to Oklahomans, they would tell me they want to be able to be more in charge of that money, not sending it to do that.

They would do the same thing when they find out that $10 million in food aid that was supposed to be going to Syrian refugees was actually diverted to a terrorist group linked with al-Qaida, and they would want to ask USAID why that was done.

They would ask some basic questions: why almost $1 million was sent to a group linked to Hamas just the week before the October 7 attack was actually done.

All those things are reasonable conversations to have that are really, honestly, not partisan conversations in this room. I don't find anyone that thinks that is a partisan issue. Everybody just says: How do we go after that waste, and what do we do to be able to stop it?

For the last 10 years, I have stood in this room and I have talked about my ''Federal Fumbles'' book. We just released the latest version of my ''Federal Fumbles'' book today. The ''Federal Fumbles'' book that we put out each year is not trying to be overly critical of government. We have released it under Republican and Democrat Presidencies and Congresses. We have said: Why don't we spend time—quite frankly, as I ask every year—why doesn't every single Member of this body assign their staff to go look for areas of waste and regulatory inefficiency and just ask some very basic questions: How could we do this better?

Every business asks that question all the time. They ask the question: How can we be more efficient? How can we do things better?

But we in government ask more ''What can we do next?'' and very seldom stop to evaluate what has already been done. That is all ''Federal Fumbles'' is saying: This is the money that was allocated. How was it actually spent?

Over the years, we have engaged in things to be able to identify some areas of waste and to be able to put a stop to them. We stopped the funding that was going toward drag shows in Ecuador that we used to fund in American tax dollars. That is not happening anymore. We stopped the funding that was being sent to France to help preserve the secret language of French Parisian butchers. We used to fund that. We don't anymore. We stopped the funding that was going to research the Russian wine industry after we exposed that. We even stopped the funding that was going to the border to be able to fund Shakespeare all along our border. There might be other ways to be able to spend our money better at the border other than doing performances of Shakespeare with Federal tax dollars.

This year, we are spending some time actually focusing in on what can we do better; what has already been done that the money has gone out the door or how can we do things better. One of them, interestingly enough, has been one of the areas that are being talked a lot about more that we have already focused on, and that is FEMA and disaster relief. Now it has suddenly become a big topic of conversation over the last couple weeks. But we ask a very simple question: When a community experiences a hurricane, a tornado, a flood, and they want to engage with the Federal Government for disaster relief, this is what they confront: 30 different Agencies, 30 different processes for aid coming to their community, most of them having a different way to actually sign up for them, different deadlines, different information that is needed, and also different percentages. Some of them pay 90–10. Some of them pay 85–15. Some of them pay 50–50. They have to know this intricate set of rules in the middle of cleaning up from their disaster to be able to get relief.

This is a disaster, and it shouldn't be a partisan issue for us to be able to look at it and to say: We can do better. When a small, rural community faces a devastating flood, why are we asking the mayor of that community to figure this out to be able to get aid? They won't be able to. They are trying to help their neighbors dig out. We can do better on this.

So we exposed the 30 different Agencies and the spaghetti map of how to be able to get aid and to say: Let's work on this. We exposed some of the inefficiencies that are out in our Federal Government right now, even for things like permitting.

We all talk about energy production, and I know we have differences of opinion on where that energy should come from, but when we start talking about the permitting to go get energy—whether that is lithium or whether that is natural gas—we get into a conversation about how do you permit to actually go get that resource.

Well, right now in the United States of America, it is taking 29 years to go from the beginning process where a critical mineral is mined to actual production. We are on the same international ranking for efficiency of regulations on mining as Zambia.

If we go into our northern border, to Canada—now currently, apparently, referred to as the 51st State—if you go into Canada, it takes 3 years for them to be able to permit a mine. And they go through all their environmental reviews. They go through their legal challenges. They do all those things in 3 years, what is taking us 29 in current structure, if it ever gets done at all. We can do better on that.

If we want to increase our use of American-made minerals and our American-made production on that, we as the Federal Government, we as the U.S. Senate, have to be able to reform the way we are doing our permitting processes so that we can produce that American energy.

If we have some belief that China or Central Africa or the Middle East is producing energy cleaner than we are, we are kidding ourselves. We will produce it cleaner if we can get to it at all.

In this ''Federal Fumbles'' book, we walk through a lot of areas of waste we have identified and said: Hey, let's find some common areas of agreement that we should all be able to look at.

Let me raise one that is controversial: the SNAP program. I don't know a person in this room that would say they want to end the SNAP program. That is food stamps, for some people that still use the old term. But over $10 billion was actually allocated in the SNAP program last year of what they called improper payments; that is, we don't know if they qualified or not for the program.

Now, a lot of folks in Oklahoma would say: I don't mind people getting some help when they need it, but for folks that don't qualify, why are they actually getting access to that?

We have the same issue in the Medicare and Medicaid Program. We don't want to do anything to be able to hurt that program. We have a lot of things we need to do better in that program to deliver. But over $100 billion in Medicare and Medicaid last year was designated as improper payments; that is, we don't know if it is an appropriate payment that was done or not.

That is something we should spend some time investigating. Mr. President, $100 billion seems like real money to me.

Last year, there was a billion dollars that was allocated in subsidies to a Chinese solar manufacturing facility—a billion in American taxpayer subsidies.

If I went to the folks in Oklahoma and said, ''Where should we get solar power?'' Not a one of them would say China. And if they did, they certainly wouldn't say: We should give a billion dollars to a Chinese company to be able to subsidize them to be able to send solar panels to us.

If I were to walk around Washington, DC, right now, current stats are there are 17 Agencies in Washington, DC, that are using 25 percent or less of their real estate. Seventeen of our Agencies are using 25 percent or less of their occupancy building space. That is billions of dollars in costs in electricity; that is billions of dollars in costs in furniture—for a simple question, because it is not a business. They are not having to pursue efficiency. We have 75 percent of the building unused.

That is an area that we should actually ask some very simple questions about and just say: What can we actually do better on this?

Listen, these aren't partisan things. If I sat down with my Democratic colleagues, they would nod their head and say: Let's take a look at that. Let's figure it out. The most simple thing that we do every year when we bring out this ''Federal Fumbles'' book is say: Here are things we can talk about.

Now, I understand the DOGE conversation has become controversial with Elon Musk and some of the tactics and the speed that they are moving. I completely understand that and respect the conversations about that. But government inefficiency shouldn't be partisan. It shouldn't be controversial.

And for those that have joined all of us that have worked on this for years to expose waste in government, welcome to the club. We are glad to have folks engaging on this. I am not critical. I am excited that you are here because we need more help, because when the Federal Government fumbles taxpayer dollars, people in Oklahoma, in my State, lose their hard-earned tax money on things that aren't education, aren't roads, aren't national defense. They are waste, and that is what people want to see stopped.

So I not only encourage people to be able to just take a glance—it is easy reading, lots of pictures. I not only encourage people to take a glance at our ''Federal Fumbles'' book, now that it is released, but I encourage every Member of this body to assign their staff to go look for waste. And then let's sit down together and see if we can figure out how to make it stop. We should waste less and save more. It shouldn't be that hard.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today in strong opposition to President Trump's nominee for Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

The Department he has been picked to lead is charged with protecting the health of all Americans, from safeguarding Medicare and nursing home care for seniors to investing in medical research, to safeguarding the Nation's food supply and supporting public health programs such as lead poisoning prevention and suicide prevention.

One of the most important public health inventions of the last century is vaccines, making many deadly and debilitating diseases a thing of the past. The Secretary of Health and Human Services has an outsized role in making vaccines available to children and adults throughout the country, and that is something that gives me great pause about Mr. Kennedy's nomination.

For those of us who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, polio was an insidious threat that sent fear literally through every home in this country until Dr. Salk invented a vaccine. And it literally saved the lives—many, many lives—of generations of Americans. It was approved, and then it went forward. But I can recall lining up—in fact, my parents pulling me along and urging me to stand in line to get the first shot, and then the following year, get the next shot, because to them it was not just a medical routine. It could eliminate the constant worry and concern that one day their child could be subject to polio. So this notion of vaccine that is prompted by Mr. Kennedy is, I think, contrary to the great experience, at least, of those who have been through that period of time.

Mr. Kennedy has spent the last decade or more spreading lies about vaccines and encouraging families not to vaccinate their children. He is not just an advocate with a loud bullhorn spreading that message. Indeed, Mr. Kennedy has made a living making millions of dollars, no less, questioning the safety of vaccines—safety that has been proven time and time again.

Mr. Kennedy chaired one of the most prominent anti-vaccine organizations, the Children's Health Defense, for almost a decade, stepping aside only to run for President in 2023.

Mr. Kennedy had a long and successful career as an environmental lawyer, and he has a compelling personal history overcoming addiction and should be commended for that. However, Mr. Kennedy's only work in the health space has been deeply detrimental to the public health of the United States and, indeed, across the globe. There is no starker example of this than his work in Samoa 5 years ago.

In 2018, in a tragic mistake, two infants in Samoa died after receiving their measles vaccine. The vaccines had been improperly prepared—improperly prepared—with a muscle relaxer instead of water. To be clear, nothing about the vaccine itself killed these children. Indeed, two nurses were imprisoned for 5 years for the mistake they made that day.

Children's Health Defense, again, chaired by Mr. Kennedy, seized on the opportunity and began questioning the safety of the measles vaccine online. Between the tragic accident and the spread of misinformation, the vaccine rate in Samoa fell to dangerously low levels.

Children's Health Defense pressed on, paying for Mr. Kennedy to travel to Samoa, with a prominent anti-vaccine activist, to meet with the Prime Minister and other government officials, as well as other anti-vaccine activists.

And the damage was done. A measles outbreak began a few months later and, with such low vaccination rates, spread rapidly. By January 2020, there were almost 6,000 cases of measles, which resulted in the death of 83 people, and nearly all of the deaths were in children under the age 5.

Two truly tragic deaths spiraled into over 80 deaths, mostly of young children. And really think about that: children dying of a vaccine-preventable illness, with a vaccine widely available. And Mr. Kennedy was one of the leading voices opposing vaccination, encouraging places like Samoa to embrace a natural experience to see what happens when we stop routine vaccinations.

We have seen what happens. Children die.

And on top of that, Mr. Kennedy not only maintains no wrongdoing; he takes no responsibility. He denies the reality of what happened. In his confirmation hearing, he claimed that the cause of these children's death wasn't clear. Nothing could be further from the truth. We know exactly what happened, and Mr. Kennedy is still peddling misinformation to the U.S. Senate and to the people of America.

Now, I mentioned that Mr. Kennedy stepped down from Children's Health Defense in 2023 to run for President, which leads me to my next concern. It has been reported that Mr. Kennedy, in fact, approached both the Trump and Harris campaigns offering his support if he could take on a prominent role in the winning campaign's administration.

Then-Candidate Donald Trump took him up on his offer. In short order, Mr. Kennedy abandoned his campaign, endorsed President Trump, and, it appears, agreed to do whatever President Trump would demand of him in the new role as Secretary of HHS.

The American people, I do not believe, can trust Mr. Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy has proven, time and time again, that he will bow to President Trump and his reckless agenda.

For example, Mr. Kennedy has a long, lifetime record of being prochoice. Yet he said at his confirmation hearing that he will do whatever President Trump wants on issues of reproductive health, perhaps taking away lifesaving care for women.

During his confirmation hearings, Mr. Kennedy downplayed the work that he had done discrediting vaccines, no doubt to secure the votes he needed to get confirmed in this role. When asked about his affiliation with Children's Health Defense, which, again, promotes anti-vaccine views widely and he chaired for almost a decade, he acted like he had barely heard of it.

When asked about his previous statement sowing doubts about vaccines, he claimed it was taken out of context or misrepresented. Yet these anti-vaccine statements are not things he has said once or twice; they are deeply held views that he has spent a lifetime pushing.

In 2015, for example, Mr. Kennedy falsely associated autism with vaccines, saying:

> They get the shot, that night they have a fever of 103 degrees, they go to sleep, and three months later their brain is gone. This is a Holocaust, what this is doing to our country.

He did later apologize for equating autism with the Holocaust, but he has

only doubled down on his lies about vaccines and autism. As recently as 2023, in an interview he said:

I've read the science on autism and I can tell you, if you want to know. David, you've got to answer this question: if autism didn't come from the vaccines, then where is it coming from?

Well, ask scientists, not Robert Kennedy.

However, this wasn't the first time he had made references to such despicable examples as Nazi Germany when talking about childhood immunizations.

When speaking at a conference in 2013 about his claim that vaccines cause autism—a claim that has been debunked decades before and many times since, he stated:

To me this is like Nazi death camps, what happened to these kids.

When asked why the CDC would cover up the supposed link between vaccines and autism, Mr. Kennedy said:

I can't tell you why somebody would do something like that. I can't tell you why ordinary Germans participated in the Holocaust.

This is not the language of a thoughtful, insightful person dealing with a subject so critical to our country as vaccines. This is inflammatory, outrageous, and I think consistent with his behavior, unfortunately.

Now, Mr. Kennedy has also said that vaccine scientists should be imprisoned for their work. At the same conference he said of vaccine researchers:

Is it hyperbole when I say these people should be in jail? They should be in jail and the key should be thrown away.

In 2021, speaking on a podcast about how he encourages people not to vaccinate their children, he said:

If you're walking down the street—and I do this now myself, which is, you know, I don't want to do—I'm not a busybody. I see somebody on a hiking trail carrying a little baby, and I say to him, ''Better not get him vaccinated.'' And he heard that from me. If he hears it from 10 other people, maybe he won't do it, you know, maybe he will save that child.

In case it wasn't clear, he repeated his position later in the same podcast saying:

If you're one of 10 people that goes up to a guy, a man or a woman, who's carrying a baby and says, ''Don't vaccinate that baby,'' when they hear that from 10 people, it'll make an impression on 'em, you know. And we all kept our mouth shut. Don't keep your mouth shut anymore. Confront everybody on it.

In the summer of 2023, speaking on a podcast, he was asked if there was any vaccine he thought was good, and he responded:

There's no vaccine that is safe or effective.

That says it all. He has a long, long record of opposing vaccines and discouraging families from getting vaccinated.

But now that Mr. Kennedy is facing a nomination vote in the Senate, he changes his tune. Mr. Kennedy said in his own confirmation hearing that he did not oppose vaccines and had, in fact, gotten all of his kids vaccinated.

That is a hard pill to swallow for the families in Samoa whose children died after Mr. Kennedy and his organization convinced them not to vaccinate their children.

If confirmed to this role, I don't know which Robert Kennedy we will get: the pro-choice, environmental lawyer with a penchant for conspiracy theories and pushing anti-vaccine propaganda or a mouthpiece for President Trump, pushing an anti-choice agenda, putting women's lives at risk, advocating for an end to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act, and allowing Elon Musk and DOGE to undermine HHS at every turn.

Either outcome is dangerous to the American people and their health, and I will oppose the nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise to share my deep concerns about entrusting our Nation's ability to respond to another pandemic, our world leading medical innovation infrastructure, the ability of women in my State to choose a medical abortion, and continued research for healthcare of millions of Americans, putting that in the hands of the HHS Secretary nominee, Robert F. Kennedy.

We all agree that our healthcare system could be reformed. It can be bloated; it can be maddening. Too many people have gotten the dreaded letter from an insurance company telling them: ''Sorry, your procedure isn't covered.'' And if you don't have insurance, you avoid that doctor visit, and you pay out of pocket, or maybe you wait until you end up in the emergency room and have to deal with medical debt. And we all know the cost of prescription drugs are too high.

We agree that we are spending way too much and that we need better outcomes. So you only have to look at the health outcomes of virtually every other industrialized nation to know that they spend less and get better results. But rather than choose a new leader for the Health and Human Services Agency that would lead us down that better path, President Trump's nominee would get us stuck in conspiracy theories that would cost us lives.

The nominee has been a purveyor of disinformation. As my colleague from Rhode Island just mentioned, sowing doubt about lifesaving vaccines, he said, ''[. . .] the COVID 19 was a bioweapon that spared Jews and the Chinese [. . .].''

Achieving better health outcomes, both today and in the future, happens when we follow science—not conspiracy theories, but science. I happen to represent a very innovative science State, and right now, it is a choice about innovation versus the skepticism represented by this nominee.

Instead of speeding up innovation, under Mr. Kennedy, we would be taking a risky step backwards. The COVID pandemic showed us, in my State, one of the first—actually, the first in the Nation known cases of a COVID–19 case.

And 5 years ago this month, some of the first deaths occurred in my State. Sadly, there were many more. And trust me, I came back here to Washington, DC, and people talked as if business was usual, all the while it was spreading across my State.

Ultimately, this pandemic killed more than 1.2 million people, and it devastated our economy, it had an impact on our children's education, and it has long term healthcare effects on millions of survivors.

Now, we are at the possibility of the beginning of another crisis, the avian flu. This crisis is yet another reminder of the importance of medical research and collaboration. But these two stories were on the front page of the Seattle Times just yesterday, the cost of eggs skyrocketing, caused by the avian flu, and the proposed cuts to NIH.

Now, what do people not understand? Does it make sense to cut science at the time we might have another pandemic? Does it make sense to continue to cut the collaborative efforts of research? This Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at Washington State University is on the frontlines of the avian flu.

One of my institutions is on the frontline. They test animals from across the State so they can be identified and stop the flu from spreading. And we want to cut those dollars?

Americans already see the impact of the avian flu every time they go to the grocery store, and now, people in Seattle and Spokane are saying it costs $7 for a dozen eggs. Some stores are limiting how many eggs you can buy.

So, as you can see, this issue is on the top of mind of constituents, and they want to know what kind of leadership we are going to provide here in Washington, DC, to lower costs, particularly at the grocery store, but to also lower costs in healthcare. Putting someone in charge who is a skeptic of medical science in response to the avian flu is just wrong. It is a catastrophic mistake for America's healthcare.

Now, I will admit my State is a global leader in medical innovation. From research, to biotech, to getting drugs to the market—in 2023, the National Institutes of Health awarded $1.2 billion in highly competitive grants to 65 different organizations in the State of Washington.

This supported about 12,000 jobs and generated close to $3 billion in economic activity. So, yes, we know a little something about global health and innovation. But we know something else, Mr. President, the kind of research we are talking about here is the kind that saves lives, and this, ultimately, is about making an investment in saving the lives of people.

Last Friday, when the Trump administration announced it was reducing

crucial funding for NIH grants, you are talking about our medical institutions that need this to build services and equipment and train the next generation of researchers.

For example, as I mentioned, Washington State University with avian flu, they actually help pay for backup generators. These generators keep the systems working in case of a power outage so the pathogens can't escape. So if you cut the institution and you cut the lab, who is going to pay for these overhead costs? Or will they have to cancel their research or stop training the PhD students?

So, this week, a court stepped in and blocked the NIH head count cuts for now, but believe me, people are afraid that their life's work will be gone.

At the University of Washington Medicine, they are testing treatments for kidney disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and pediatric cancer. So, if the so-called DOGE cap goes into place, these are programs that will see a shortfall.

They tell me they have to stop admitting new patients to clinical trials, that they will have to scale back. And we can't just start and stop medical research like a faucet. Once these people leave, the programs are stopped. It takes a long time to get them started. Once halted, the research data, the clinical trial, the patients, the laboratory, the equipment that led to those innovations will be lost.

Now, if you ask me, that is throwing taxpayer dollars away. When you have an opportunity to cure a disease that affects millions of people and can save taxpayers billions, but somebody is arbitrarily going to cut these NIH funds, thinking they are saving the American people? They are not saving them. They are causing harm.

Cutting NIH and scientific research funding have consequences for every State in this Union. North Carolina is home of the famous research triangle and receives about $2.2 billion in NIH funding. Texas is home of Baylor College of Medicine and receives about $1.85 billion in NIH funding.

As a country, we should be working together to do more research, create more jobs, and decide what are the lifesaving science and medical innovations that we want to invest in and are represented in a budget process here in the U.S. Senate—not the arbitrary decisions of someone who hasn't even been elected to make these decisions.

But the risks don't stop at our medical labs. Republicans are proposing to cut $2.3 trillion in Federal Medicaid funding so the administration can afford to lower taxes on some of the most extreme wealthy Americans.

More than 1.8 million Washingtonians are enrolled in Apple Health, Washington's Medicaid program. So that is one in six adults, two in five children, three in five nursing home residents, three in eight people with disabilities. I am not confident, Mr. President, that Mr. Kennedy understands how critical this process is and the provisions of Medicaid are to people in my State.

We know that we had this debate before and only because a very small bipartisan group of Senators helped save Medicaid from a crazy block grant idea that would have taken a very big building block out of our healthcare delivery system. Thanks to all my colleagues on this side and those on that side who stood up for that and said block granting was the wrong idea.

Well, believe me, they are at it again. There are those who think to give the tax break to corporations, somehow you are going to get it out of the hide of these very individuals that are counting on Medicaid.

I do not believe Mr. Kennedy will stand up to President Trump and be an advocate for those who rely on Medicaid. I know my constituents know what is at stake with this vote, and they know that our healthcare delivery system is about science, it is about innovation, it is about making the investments to keep Americans healthy. I urge my colleagues to vote no on this nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the greatest threat to American prosperity is not food aid to kids in Sudan or a diverse workforce; the greatest threat to our country is the abuse of power by a small group of people—an unelected group of people—who happen to have a billion dollars.

Our Founding Fathers created a government with checks and balances, but they didn't anticipate a U.S. Congress—now currently under Republican control—that would voluntarily give away its constitutional authority. That is where we find ourselves, as hospitals and medical researchers in blue and red States are in chaos over the Trump administration's attempt to usurp Congress's power of the purse.

When Senate Republicans abandon another constitutional responsibility of advice and consent for Cabinet officials, we are presented with such things as the bizarre nomination of Robert Kennedy, Jr., to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

It has been my honor to know members of the Kennedy family and particularly to serve with one of them, Teddy Kennedy. He used to sit right back there. He was an amazing man. He probably had more impact on the legislative agenda and the outcome of legislation than anybody I witnessed in the time I have been in the Senate. I counted him as a friend, and I still mourn his loss. But today we are considering a Kennedy that I don't believe is qualified to follow in his uncle's footsteps.

Health and Human Services is a life-and-death Department of government. Every day, Federal health officials decide whether to approve new medications after they have been proven—clinically tested and proven to be safe and effective. We count on the HHS to initiate recalls of contaminated food. We count on that same Agency to investigate new therapies for cancer clinical trials. We count on HHS to alert doctors about an emergency disease outbreak. Think about the gravity of those situations and how much is vested in the Secretary of that critical Department.

In any of these tasks—critical, often historic tasks—Robert Kennedy, Jr., would find himself unqualified, unfit, and dangerous to lead the Department of Health and Human Services.

Mr. Kennedy masquerades as a crusader for healthy foods and someone who just wants to—''I just want to ask some questions. I just want to study the science.''

America, the Senate, don't be fooled.

Mr. Kennedy has spent the past 30 years ignoring science and lying to parents about vaccines, all the while enriching himself by the doubt he has created.

He declared:

> I see somebody on a hiking trail carrying a little baby and I say to him, better not get that baby vaccinated.

Can you imagine that for a moment, that he would walk up to a person he didn't know and counsel them: Don't vaccinate your child.

Look at this quote. Does this sound like the kind of person you want to lead the premier health Agency of our Federal Government?

He states:

> There's no vaccine that is safe and effective.

No vaccine safe and effective. And he wants to head the Health and Human Services Department?

The organization he founded sells newborn onesies that have printed on them ''Unvaccinated, Unafraid.'' Another one says ''No Vax, No Problem.'' To him, it is a novelty, a game that he can say these things about vaccines that literally have been proven over and over and over again to be safe and save lives.

During his confirmation hearing, Senator BILL CASSIDY of Louisiana, a Senator, of course, and a medical doctor who has the distinguished record of service to poor people in his State, practically begged Robert Kennedy, Jr., to state unequivocally that the hepatitis B and measles vaccines do not cause autism. Kennedy couldn't bring himself to do it.

When confronted during his hearings with false statements he has made linking vaccines to autism, he feigned ignorance to decades of research findings and suggested he just needed to be shown the data. Well, that data has been around for decades.

Mr. Kennedy approaches this job with bias—a deadly, dangerous bias—and he is unwilling to consider information that contradicts his preconceived conspiracies.

If Mr. Kennedy is confirmed, he won't be just speaking to one parent on a

hiking trail; he will be speaking to all American families from a podium with a U.S. Government seal on it. That is a terrifying prospect.

Since 1974, the measles vaccine has saved 94 million lives, and since its creation, the smallpox vaccine has saved 200 million lives—2 proven, successful vaccines, and we have to sell them to a man who wants to head the HHS and says that there is no vaccine that is safe and effective?

Measles is one of the most contagious pathogens on Earth. When I was a kid in the fifties going to school, it was common for kids to get measles. I had them. I stayed home from school a few days and usually got through it all after waiting at home for all those red spots to go away. Yet, with Mr. Kennedy's megaphone online, we are seeing the danger of conspiracy theories.

Last year, a record share of kindergartners across America had nonmedical exemption from vaccines. Right now, there is a measles outbreak tearing through Gaines County, TX. Seven kids are hospitalized—all unvaccinated. Gaines County has one of the highest rates in Texas of school-age children opting out of vaccines. Why are parents in that county in Texas and a few other counties forgoing lifesaving vaccines? Because of fraudsters like Mr. Kennedy.

What about polio? I know that issue personally. I see Senator KING on the floor. He remembers it as well. Since 1955, the polio vaccine has prevented 20 million people from becoming paralyzed and saved 1½ million lives. Most Americans are lucky never to have ever experienced the fear of polio. I remember, as a kid, it scared the hell out of us. A kid could go to school healthy and be paralyzed at dinnertime.

A constituent of mine, Mary Ellen from Union County, wrote to me. Mary Ellen said:

> When I was in kindergarten, my best friend disappeared for weeks. When I asked about her, people shook their heads—saying polio. When she returned, she couldn't walk without heavy leg braces. . . . We could hear her cry and scream with pain.

I remember that era—iron lungs, leg braces, paralysis, and worse.

Had Mr. Kennedy been our Nation's Health Secretary at that time, would American families have access today to lifesaving measles and polio vaccines? I am afraid the answer is clearly no. This isn't speculation; look at the record.

Mr. Kennedy and his associates have filed petitions with the Food and Drug Administration to remove the COVID, hepatitis B, and polio vaccines from the market.

In 2019, Mr. Kennedy flew to Samoa during a measles outbreak to question whether the vaccines themselves were causing the illness. As a result of that, 83 people died in Samoa.

When asked by Senator WARREN, Mr. Kennedy said he would not do anything differently about that dangerous trip. Eighty-three people died as he spread those falsehoods about the vaccine.

Senator CASSIDY aptly wondered:

> Does a 70-year-old man who spent decades criticizing vaccines and was financially vested in finding fault . . . can he change his [attitude]?

Mr. President, I am sorry, but we know the answer.

Listen, I understand we have a great health system in this country, but I also understand it is flawed in many ways. I spent years in my Senate and House career to lower drug prices, rein in Big Pharma's influence, and stop Big Tobacco from peddling poison to our kids. But just because he might talk about the right problems doesn't mean Mr. Kennedy has the right solutions. In fact, over 2 days of hearings, he did not offer a single concrete idea on how to improve the delivery of primary care or preventive healthcare services.

It was clear Mr. Kennedy didn't understand the difference between Medicaid and Medicare. Mr. President, I will tell you, that is an issue that you take up in Congress 101.

Nobody believes Kennedy will stand up to President Trump or Elon Musk on medical research.

I understand the urge to shake things up, to address failures in our healthcare system, but Mr. Kennedy brings an unacceptable prejudice that will only cause harm and be dangerous to American families.

Neil Steinberg writes for the Chicago Sun-Times. He wrote that when you are claiming you want to ''study'' the issue where the science is settled, that is code for dismissing facts that don't serve your personal bias.

I fear there is a sense that being an outsider is qualification enough, but how far could Senate Republicans be willing to go if they pursue that dangerous path? Make no mistake, if the political tables were turned and it were Democrats proposing this man for this job, he wouldn't get a single Republican vote in the Senate. He would be decried as a pro-choice, anti-vax, uninformed, conspiracy theorist who trades on his family name to peddle dangerous misinformation that benefits him financially. And guess what. This nominee is all of those things. But because he was nominated by President Trump and has the MAGA seal of approval, my Republican colleagues can't wait to march down and support his nomination.

Many of them secretly, privately, quietly know better. Some of them are doctors or parents themselves who trusted doctors to vaccinate their kids or people who spent their lives trying to really improve our health system. They know Mr. Kennedy is not the right choice for the job, and they know our children will suffer the most if he becomes HHS Secretary. I hope they will find the courage to join me and reject his nomination.

Let me add this point that is related to this issue, and I will make it brief. On Friday, the Trump administration issued an illegal order to impose an arbitrary cap of 15 percent on ''indirect costs'' that the NIH pays to grantees for essential research expenses.

Without this funding for specialized equipment, data processing, safety materials, and the maintenance of labs, universities and hospitals nationwide will not be able to afford the technology that allows them to continue lifesaving research.

This is a critical moment in America's history. After the progress that we have made, after the leadership we have shown, are we going to, under this new President, turn our backs on medical research? God forbid. If you go through the misfortune of a terrible diagnosis for yourself or someone you love, you pray that you can then ask the doctor: Is there anything—a new medicine, a new cure, a new surgical procedure? And you are hoping that medical researchers lead that answer to yes that one moment in your life.

In 2017—the last time President Trump attempted to cut NIH funding—the now-House Appropriations Committee chair, TOM COLE of Oklahoma, called the proposal ''arbitrary, unreasonable, and ultimately destructive of the research enterprise.'' Chairman COLE understood that cutting funding means clinical trials will be delayed, new breakthroughs in cures will be put off, and promising researchers will get discouraged and leave the field.

A constituent and doctor from Palos Heights, IL, wrote to me:

> I care about this issue because I know new research on immunology kept my stage-4-cancer-patient wife alive for 10 years, enough to see our youngest son graduate from high school.

This sudden, indiscriminate cut to medical research violates Federal law, which blocks NIH from deviating from its current indirect cost policy.

Thankfully, my attorney general in Illinois, Kwame Raoul, and 21 other States filed a Federal lawsuit to temporarily halt this senseless cut.

Remember, tweets from Elon Musk forced a bipartisan pediatric cancer research bill to be cut from a government spending bill just a few weeks ago. Now Mr. Musk is at it again; only this time, he is targeting cancer, Alzheimer's, and diabetes. If Elon Musk were to get sick, I will bet the richest man in the world would find the doctor he wanted. I am sure he would. For the rest of us, for the parents facing a devastating diagnosis of someone we love, this is a cruel political decision.

A University of Chicago researcher put it this way:

> This attack on the very structure of . . . academic research . . . is threatening a system that every other country in the world has tried to reproduce. . . . It seems spiteful and targeted at those of us who just want to contribute to a better society.

Mr. President, I don't know that this will continue to be a problem and challenge, but I promise you this: As long as I have the power to stand and speak out in favor of the National Institutes of Health, I am going to do it.

This country is a great country. It has greatness that includes medical research—maybe the best in the world.

Why in the world would we give up on that? And why would we choose someone so bizarre to head up the Health and Human Services Agency and trust with him life-or-death decisions? It is a bad choice.

I will be voting to oppose Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and doing everything in my power to restore the spending for medical research in America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Mr. President, I appreciate what the good Senator from Illinois has gone through and enunciated in great clarity.

Our government plays a critical role in informing the public. The American people look to us for trust. They look to us for guidance during the roughest points of our history. They look to us for accurate, factual information so they can have the freedom to raise their families without fear and anxiety.

That trust is broken when partisan officials use their platforms to spread reckless and damaging information. They attempt to overwhelm Americans with views that push anti-science narratives or foreign propaganda often that threatens our national security.

You can't go onto social media anymore without running into a fake headline or some hyperbolic clamor with no source. I mean, for so many people, the more you see, the more you believe, and this leaves Americans dazed and confused, unsure of who to trust and where they can go to get accurate information.

Unfortunately, the new administration has shown a bias towards elevating people who peddle disinformation, spreading seemingly random falsehoods about our voting systems, marginalized groups, or our public health. This has real negative impacts on Americans.

Way back in 1980, I graduated with a master's in Earth sciences. I moved west to work as a geologist. Earth sciences is kind of low on the Pavlov pyramid of science, but I published peer-reviewed studies, and I have a reverence for the scientific process. I think I understand how it works, despite the fact that there are not that many of us left around here anymore. I will be the first to admit that science can sometimes surprise us. It is always evolving. It is why the entire field of science relies on constant evaluation and constant research to continue to make new discoveries or deepen our understanding of complex problems.

Leading with science helps us get the most accurate information we can. Yet the Trump administration's appetite for anti-scientific claims and disinformation is something that, in many ways, threatens all of us. It puts our country at risk.

This morning, the Senate confirmed Tulsi Gabbard as the Director of National Intelligence. I voted no on her confirmation. Ms. Gabbard has none of the relevant qualifications or intelligence experience sufficient for this role. Officials from both sides of the aisle have raised concerns about her ability to provide the President with impartial analysis as the Nation's top intelligence officer.

Ms. Gabbard has frequently parroted Russian disinformation. She repeated Russia's erroneous justification for its brutal invasion of Ukraine. She criticized Kyiv's democratic government—a steadfast partner of the United States—and she spread, repeatedly, falsehoods about her own involvement in bioweapons research in Ukraine.

Let's be clear about what this means: An American adversary invades another democracy, and Ms. Gabbard actively pushes their narrative. Either she cannot distinguish fact from fiction or she intentionally chooses to promote false claims. Either scenario should be disqualifying for a Cabinet official, let alone one who is responsible for ensuring the President has accurate and timely intelligence.

As they say, ''He who stands for nothing will fall for anything.''

Regardless of her intentions or what she actually believes, her readiness to champion clear disinformation undermines our national security and puts American servicemembers at risk.

As the Director of National Intelligence, Ms. Gabbard will have full visibility into every threat that the military and civilian personnel who perform these vital missions in Colorado and across the country and around the world are working tirelessly to address. They need leaders—we need leaders—who base every assessment and decision on accurate intelligence, not propaganda, especially not propaganda from one of the most threatening rivals we have.

President Trump's nominee to the Department of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is another clear example of someone who is willing to overlook facts and science when it is convenient. He has a wide following, and many people look to him for guidance and for leadership. In particular, his ideas of a healthier America appeal to many Coloradans. Indeed, they appeal to me as well.

But make no mistake: Our country can and should be healthier, and we all share a vested effort in that direction. There is a bipartisan appetite to get us there. We should provide better food options and keep unsafe chemicals out of the products that we eat, but we have to be able to do it in tandem with fact-based science and thoughtful policy to protect Americans and to keep them safe.

RFK, Jr., has shown a propensity for anti-science claims. One of his most anti-scientific claims is that autism is caused by childhood vaccines. This is a claim that has been spread through many communities for decades. It is all based on a single paper published back in 1998. That paper was retracted years ago, and there have been hundreds of studies on the nonexistent link between autism and the measles vaccine ever since. They have all—I repeat—they have all had a zero connection between vaccines and the cause of autism. Let me be clear: Every single one found a zero connection. It is settled science.

Vaccines are not only extremely safe; they are extremely effective. Every year, they save millions of lives all around the globe. We have effectively eliminated horrible diseases like polio, and we are making considerable progress toward a vaccine for HIV and for AIDS. In the last hundred years, our country's average life expectancy has increased by 30 years, and 25 of those 30 years are largely attributed to vaccine adoption and clean drinking water. Vaccines not only save lives, but they also make lives healthier and happier, which is as they were intended.

Now, some of the damage from disinformation about vaccines is nearly impossible to undo. Why would anyone accept the results of one debunked paper rather than the conclusions of hundreds of studies that have been conducted since?

It is completely understandable for parents to have questions and concerns about vaccines that their children receive. I know I have as a parent. As a parent of two kids—one who just turned 2 years old—I understand the concern that families feel. We want to make sure that we are doing everything we can to keep our kids healthy and safe. We do the best we can with what we have to make them as healthy and happy as possible. People who peddle vaccine skepticism are preying upon parents' very rational fears to advance these conspiracy theories. Parents are trying their hardest to keep their kids safe and healthy, and it is irresponsible for people to plague them with pseudoscience and misinformation when the science has been settled on this for decades. The measles vaccine is safe and does not cause autism.

It is personal for me, too. My son Teddy—now in college—unfortunately, got pertussis, or whooping cough, when he was 4 months old—before he was able to finish his full vaccination schedule—after he interacted with an unvaccinated child. Because of how rare whooping cough is now, it took us a while to get the correct diagnosis.

Finally, when we got him into Children's Hospital, I remember staying up all night for 2 nights in a row to blast little puffs of oxygen into his coughing face—to snap him out of those coughs—about every 10 minutes and to prevent his oxygen blood levels from dropping too low. It is one of the most frightening experiences of my entire life.

Whooping cough—that disease—is rare because of the vaccine and because of the adoption of that vaccine. America was able to almost completely stamp it out of existence. If we backslide in the number of children getting vaccinated, stories like what happened

to my son Teddy are going to become more common and more severe.

When you consistently promote uncertainty in settled science, it begins to raise doubts about all science, and it slows our progress using science against the really big challenges, like a cure for cancer and vaccines for the next pandemic.

In President Trump's first full term—at the height of the COVID–19 pandemic—Operation Warp Speed helped bring vaccines to the public in record time. The National Institutes of Health estimate that Operation Warp Speed saved over 140,000 lives by speeding up the development of vaccines by more than 5 months. When the next pandemic comes along—it is not if; it is when—we are going to need a robust Federal response and preparedness plan. We need the ability to get to a vaccine down to 100 days. We need that plan to be guided by actual science. Otherwise, we obviously endanger the lives and health of all Americans.

The Department of Health and Human Services also oversees Federal medical research as Senator DURBIN pointed out. The research has unlocked groundbreaking achievements in public health and will continue to help us cure diseases and work toward solutions for a variety of illnesses. However, the White House announced late last week that they are slashing funding for the National Institutes of Health.

This will have devastating impacts on research projects in Colorado and across the United States, including places in Colorado like CU-Anschutz, Fort Lewis College, and National Jewish Health. Our Colorado institutions are at the forefront of medical research from everything from clinical trials for veterans who are struggling with PTSD to individuals with Down syndrome. These cuts for research institutions, rural hospitals, and our veterans will impact our most vulnerable communities—all this to give tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans.

Again, I am all for making government more efficient and smaller. If you want to seriously look at how we spend money and where we can cut actual fraud and waste and abuse, I am in. I am game. But I struggle to understand how stripping funding for cancer research or Head Start or hiring programs for law enforcement officers is wasteful. These cuts throughout our government are exaggerated by the extreme nominees who are really ill-equipped and ill-experienced to handle large governmental organizations.

The administration also continues to illegally dismantle Agencies without having congressional approval. They have attempted to freeze Federal funding—something the courts have halted but that the White House continues to pursue. Colorado and the American people are caught in their crosshairs.

I have committed to opposing nominees who pose a genuine threat to Colorado. We have also helped support lawsuits and oppose some of these Executive actions. I would be the first to admit our government isn't perfect. Government never will be. I would be the first to recognize that it takes all of our elected officials to do their duty for the American people and to be truthful and for our constituents to hold us accountable.

The American experiment in democratic government is just too important to confirm people who actively spread disinformation and refuse to follow science. It threatens Coloradans. It puts all of us at risk.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I would like to begin my remarks this afternoon by talking a little bit about the Constitution.

I spent some time last week talking about the Constitution and our failure to observe that the constitutional, fundamental structure of the division of power between the Congress and the Executive is being violated and that Congress is allowing it to happen.

Another provision of the Constitution is the provision in article I about advice and consent. It is a fundamental check and balance built into the Constitution, by the Framers, for a reason. It wasn't a throwaway line or a few sentences that were put in because they wanted to fill the paragraph out. Again, it is part of the structure that was designed to protect us from tyranny. The structure involved the division of power, the separation of power, because the Framers knew, if all power was concentrated in a single individual or a single institution, that that institution or that individual would inevitably abuse our people. That is human nature. That is 1,000 years of human nature. All power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. So the advice and consent provision was in the Constitution for a reason. It was in there for a reason in order to provide a check on the Executive and the people who were going to be put in charge of running the administration.

By the way, I want to stop for a minute and focus on the word ''administration'' and the word ''Executive'' because it really goes to the discussion we are having in this country right now about how our government is supposed to work.

The ''Executive'' comes from the word ''execute,'' and the word ''execute'' means ''to put into action.'' It doesn't mean to initiate the action. It means to put it into action. It is the same for the word ''administration.'' There is a reason we call it the administration. They are to administer the laws. In fact, the obligation on the President in article II is to see that the laws are faithfully executed. It does not give the President the power to ignore laws or to decide which laws he or she thinks are OK; to ignore the responsibility and constitutional authority of the Congress to define spending. It does not give the President that power; although the fellow we approved for the Office of Management and Budget last week thinks he has that power or this President or any President has that power. That is absolutely antithetical to the whole concept of the Constitution as established by the Framers.

So ''administration'' means administer the laws. ''Executive'' means execute the laws, not make them. We make the laws here, and the administration is to faithfully execute those laws.

Now, let's talk about ''advice and consent.'' ''Advice and consent'' means we have a responsibility—a constitutional responsibility—to consider each of the President's nominees for these important jobs. This isn't something that we may do or occasionally do; this is a fundamental part of our job.

We take an oath when we come here to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

I think it is interesting. They knew in 1787 that there was a potential for domestic enemies of the Constitution.

So we have an obligation to take ''advice and consent'' seriously.

Now, I am a former Governor, as is the Presiding Officer. And as a former executive, I believe the executive should have the ability to choose the team that they want, to choose their advisers, to choose the people who they will work with, with some limitations. In other words, I start with the premise that the person elected should—perhaps, ''get the benefit of the doubt'' is a little too strong. But I start with the premise that they were elected, and they should be able to choose the team that they are going to be working with.

However, I think there are two qualifications. And, by the way, this has been my stated position on this subject since I entered the Senate. We should give the benefit of the doubt to the Executive. However, the nominee must be manifestly qualified and not hostile to the mission of the Agency to which they have been appointed—two criteria, two criteria that, for me, give life to the idea of ''advice and consent.''

OK. Let's talk about Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. He, unfortunately, checks both of the boxes as to being disqualified. No. 1, he is not remotely qualified to run an organization of the magnitude of HHS. He has no background in management, no experience in running anything remotely like the scope and scale of the Department of Health and Human Services, no executive experience in that sense.

That is No. 1: Is he qualified? No, he is grossly unqualified.

But the second box is my criteria: Is he hostile to the mission of the Agency? And if the mission of the Agency, HHS, is to protect the health of the American people, I would argue he is manifestly hostile to that mission.

There has been a lot of discussion here today, and I think it is interesting. I don't know how this debate is

going. I haven't heard too many people come up on the floor and support this nominee and tell us why he should be approved, because do you know what? If this were a secret ballot, this man wouldn't get 20 votes. Everybody in this body knows he is not qualified. Everybody in this body knows he has no business anywhere near this position. But here we are; we are going to take a vote. Unfortunately, it will probably be on a party-line basis.

But let me focus on just one little piece. On January 29, barely a week ago, before the Senate Finance Committee, here is what Mr. Kennedy said:

News reports have claimed that I am anti-vaccine or anti-industry. I am neither. I am pro-safety. All of my kids are vaccinated.

I bet that came as news to a lot of the people he has been leading astray over the last 25 or 30 years.

All of my kids are vaccinated, and I believe vaccines have a critical role in healthcare.

I am reminded of Saul on the road to Damascus—a miraculous conversion. A bright light was shown, and, suddenly, the scales fell from his eyes in his confirmation hearing.

Let's go back, a little over a year, to July 6, 2023. This is a quote—a direct quote:

There is no vaccine that is safe and effective.

He later said on the podcast:

Vaccines are inherently unsafe.

This man shouldn't be confirmed because he told the committee and the Senate something diametrically opposed to the position he has taken the last 30 years, all of his adult life.

Maya Angelou said if somebody tells you who they are, you should believe them. And he has told us repeatedly.

And he has acted on his vaccine skepticism. This isn't something that was rumbling around in his head. He has traveled the world. He has written articles. He has gone on podcasts. He has gone on TV. And he has discouraged people from being vaccinated. And now he has this miraculous conversion 10 days ago:

All my kids are vaccinated, and I believe vaccines have a critical role in healthcare.

The same thing during COVID—he said:

It is criminal medical malpractice to give a child one of these vaccines.

Wow, criminal malpractice.

And, of course, as has been discussed, he said:

I do believe that autism does come from vaccines.

In July of 2023, there was one study in England—I think it was in 1998—that purported to show a tenuous connection between vaccines and autism. I am reasonably confident that one of the authors of that study recanted it. It was withdrawn, and it has been debunked over and over and over again. But this man has been peddling this lie for 20 years. Who knows how many parents have fallen for that, and who knows how children have paid the price.

Just to talk about vaccines, at one point during the pandemic, there was a survey in July of 2021. Remember, that was the height of it. They surveyed 50 hospitals in 17 States. Ninety-four percent of the patients hospitalized in July of 2021 were unvaccinated. What does that tell you? Vaccinations worked, and people who were unvaccinated were at an enormously higher risk—94 percent of the people were unvaccinated.

In addition to the vaccination issue, this man doesn't respect the FDA, the Agency that was put in place to protect our health, to regulate us, to be sure that we are getting safe medications, to deal with some of the awful problems of the potential of harmful medications literally getting into America's bloodstream.

In December of 2024, barely 2 months ago, he said he would fire officials at the FDA. And in October 2024, he said on X:

FDA's war on public health is about to end. If you work for the FDA and are part of this corrupt system, I have two messages for you . . . Preserve your records, and . . . pack your bags.

He didn't say a certain office in the FDA or a certain part of the FDA or maybe there was one provision or part that he didn't think was helpful. He said: ''If you work for the FDA''—that is everybody—''preserve your records, and . . . Pack your bags.''

This man is not only unqualified; he is anti-qualified. He is a danger.

We have physicians in the Senate. I believe that the Hippocratic Oath, ''Do no harm,'' should apply to Senate votes. You should not be voting for somebody who you know is going to do harm to the public health.

So this is really a kind of surreal debate because everybody in this Chamber knows this man should not be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Now, I want to end with a personal story. One of the few advantages of being older is that you have a long memory. In 1952, I was entering the third grade at MacArthur School in Alexandria, VA, and in my class in the third grade was a kid named Butch. He was horribly twisted into a wheelchair. I don't think I had ever seen a wheelchair when I was going into the third grade, but he was there.

And here it is—I am not even going to say how many years later, but I can close my eyes and see Butch in that chair. Polio was what he had. He was in pain daily. He could barely make himself understood. His arms were crossed. His legs were bent grotesquely in the wheelchair. And 3 years later, the Salk vaccine began what turned out to be the elimination of polio.

Where would we be as a country if this man had been the head of—at that time, it was HEW—and somehow put a stop to this vaccine, which I believe he has said even the polio vaccine should be rescinded, which has saved millions of lives around the world. Where would we be?

I can't escape the memory of that boy in that wheelchair. I can't escape the memory of my parents not letting me go to the public swimming pool because of the fear of polio, not being able to go out and play in the summer in Virginia because of the fear of polio that stalked the land.

The former Republican leader was a victim of polio. The former President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, was a victim of polio. And it was the vaccine that ended it.

I hope this place comes to its senses and rejects this surreal nomination. It would be hard to find someone less qualified to serve in this position. I believe it will lead to damage to our country, to our health, to our children.

I urge my colleagues to vote no. If you vote yes, you will regret it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I want to just, first, comment on how much I appreciated the comments of my colleague from Maine, Senator KING—both in your elucidation of the deep challenges of the Robert Kennedy, Jr., nomination but also your close look at what the difference is between the legislative branch and the executive branch, and the role that we have in this body to provide advice and consent.

And I appreciated what you were saying about kind of what your North Star is when you look at these nominations.

I would say I agree with you that I do believe that incoming Presidents should be able to surround themselves with people whom they trust, and that, of course, we may strongly disagree with the President; however, he has the right to have people around him who agree with him.

But I think that there is something that you said, Senator KING, that was extremely important. I also look at these nominations in terms of whether I believe they have the base-level qualifications to do the job. And then the second thing I ask myself is, Can I trust these individuals? Can I trust Robert Kennedy to follow the law?

I mean, that is fundamentally what their responsibility is—to, certainly, be loyal to the person who put them in that role, but also, at a base level, that they are going to follow the law.

So, Mr. President, I rise today to highlight what I consider to be the threat of Robert F. Kennedy, the threat that he poses to Americans' health and safety and well-being.

In fact, I have concluded—I have talked with him. I have listened to him. I have asked him questions, both in a private setting and also in committee. And I have read his words and his history. I can only conclude that he cannot be trusted with this important job; that I cannot trust him to follow the laws of this land.

I believe that Mr. Kennedy is wholly unqualified for the position of Secretary of Health and Human Services,

and that he is unprepared to lead. And I think that he cannot be trusted with the health and the well-being of Americans, particularly in this moment.

Now, if you are listening to this, and you don't really know that much about the Department of Health and Human Services, you have got a busy life, you are trying to figure out how to afford your life and how to kind of hold it together in what is a very busy and complicated world, I want to just be clear about what I think Mr. Kennedy's confirmation would mean for Minnesota families. If he is allowed to become Secretary, I have concluded that your family will be less safe, that your loved ones will be more likely to get sick, and that you and the people you care about will be less likely to get the care you need.

As I have thought about this, what I find most disqualifying about Mr. Kennedy is how he has basically made his career—he has built a career around saying what he needs to say in order to get attention, and by getting attention, he is making money. I think it is just important to understand this. This is whether he is talking about vaccines or infectious diseases, whether he is talking about anything.

So you walk away from talking with this individual not entirely sure what it is that he believes because he does seem willing to say nearly anything to nearly everybody without actually considering what impact his words have on the lives of real people, whether he is talking about reproductive freedom, whether he is talking about mental health care, whether he is talking about infectious diseases, whether he is talking about vaccines.

So let's focus a bit on the question of vaccines because I think this is the thing that has gotten the most attention—and rightly so.

In decades of public appearances, as well as in our one-on-one meeting—the one-on-one meetings that I had with him—as well as when he talked about this in front of the Finance Committee, Mr. Kennedy has continued to promote harmful and dangerous information—information that if people followed and they paid attention to him and they did what he suggested, it could do real harm to their families; it could hurt them.

If you think about vaccines, this is his long and very public record of denying the safety and the efficacy of vaccines. In fact, he has spent almost the last two decades of his life promoting these harmful and false theories that vaccines will cause autism and that they are otherwise unsafe.

As an example, in 2021, he proudly described stopping strangers out on hikes and telling them not to vaccinate their babies. Can you imagine that? You are out walking around, and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., comes up to you—a man of stature and power—and says: Don't vaccinate your children.

Those words have impact.

During a podcast interview in July of 2023, Mr. Kennedy said—and I believe Senator KING quoted this as well:

> There's no vaccine that is safe and effective.

So, OK, just think about that. He is saying: Don't pay any attention to the science. Don't pay any attention to the experts. I am going to tell you that there is no vaccine that is safe and effective.

Those words have consequences.

The online store is another example. Mr. Kennedy's organization, the Children's Health Defense—there is an online store. You can all go on and check it out. You will find there that they are still selling little baby onesies and T-shirts for little children that have messages on them like ''Unvaccinated, Unafraid.''

Now, of course, here we are on the verge of a vote to decide whether the U.S. Senate is going to confirm Mr. Kennedy, and, of course, now he is denying all of that. He is distancing himself from all of these past statements. But you can't run away from your words, certainly in this day and age—and, I would argue, in any day and age. Those words are out there. You said them. They are on the record. They are on video. And it matters what the Secretary of Health and Human Services says, what he says about these things, and, of course, it matters what he doesn't say as well. Words have real consequences.

Just the mere fact of his presence being as the head of this Agency, just the fact that he sits there is going to be a factor that will cause some people not to know whether they can trust vaccines. He is in a position of power and authority. He has a high and loud bully pulpit—an individual who has told Americans, both when he was out on hikes, stopping them as they are walking by, and on every media megaphone that he could find, that vaccines are neither safe nor effective. Yet here he is about to assume, unless my colleagues come to their senses, this most highest, you could argue, public health job that affects the health of all of our families. This is an unbelievable and an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of Americans.

I also wanted to highlight for my colleagues an exchange that I had with Mr. Kennedy when he came before the Finance Committee, where I serve. I wanted to ask him about a statement that he had made about Americans and antidepressants. When I probed him on this, I confronted him with some things he had said in the past about antidepressants. Basically, he attributed a connection between people who are using antidepressants and school shootings. I asked him about that, and I asked him whether he thought that folks who take antidepressants are dangerous or not. He refused to even say that Americans who take antidepressants are not dangerous. He could not even get those words out of his mouth. In fact, he doubled down on his claims that antidepressants do cause school shootings, and he claimed that this is an area that needs to be studied and that he knows people who have had ''a much worse time getting off of SSRIs than they have getting off heroin.''

Now, this is a typical strategy that I saw Mr. Kennedy take with many of our colleagues both on the HELP Committee and on the Finance Committee. When confronted with the facts and asked whether he believed the science and the facts, he would always say some version of ''Show me the data; show me the information'' even when the research is settled, the data is settled.

Here, let me come to this question about whether or not antidepressants are dangerous and are somehow a contributor to school shootings, which is an outrageous thing to say.

There is a study in 2019 that was published in the Journal of Behavioral Science and Law, and it says it appears that ''most school shooters weren't treated with psychotropic medication before their attacks. Even when they were, no direct or causal association was found.''

I was stunned when Mr. Kennedy again sort of said ''Well, I don't believe that research'' or ''I need to see other data; we need to look at this.'' Of course, he is not willing to accept the facts and the science. He is not willing to do that.

I am simply not willing to trust Mr. Kennedy when it comes to ensuring that your children, your loved ones, the folks that you care about in your lives, are going to actually have access to the mental health treatments they need to live their lives as productively as they possibly can.

It also, I think, is worth noting that these comments that Mr. Kennedy is making linking antidepressants to school shootings—what it does, of course, is it perpetuates the stigma that so many Americans who struggle with mental illness, mental health—so many of those Americans struggle with the stigma, and they already feel that, and yet here is potentially the next head of Health and Human Services who is perpetuating this stigma in a very real way.

I have seen this in my own life. I have seen people who have been bowed down by this feeling that they can't talk about their challenges with their mental health because people are going to think less of them. It is a stigma that I have spent my time in the Senate working in a bipartisan way to try to break down. So to see it perpetuated in this way by Mr. Kennedy is just such a clear reason why he cannot be trusted.

The rigorous, peer-reviewed research on SSRIs—a common form of antidepressant—is the science Mr. Kennedy has willingly chosen to ignore, but it is not the only science he has willfully chosen to ignore. Mr. Kennedy said during his confirmation hearings

that if President Trump directed him to go after mifepristone—one of the key drugs that is used in medication abortion—he would do whatever the President ordered, even though this is a medication that has been proven safe and effective for more than two decades. Yet Mr. Kennedy said that he would follow the guidance of the President and not the law when it comes to the safety of mifepristone.

In fact, as my colleague Senator HASSAN made so abundantly clear in the committee, over 40 safety studies have demonstrated what Mr. Kennedy was not willing to see, which is that there is clear evidence that this medication is safe.

On reproductive freedom, Mr. Kennedy has proven himself wholly untrustworthy, repeatedly flip-flopping on his position depending on whom he is talking to. Now, this is something that many of us have seen in our lives—a person who will say one thing to one person and another thing to another person, all with the goal, it seems, of winning friends and influencing people, but this is not the kind of character you want to see in this most important job at the Federal Government, leading the Department of Health and Human Services.

Here is just a bit of an example of how this has played out with Mr. Kennedy on the issue of reproductive freedom and abortion rights. On the morning of August 13, 2023, Mr. Kennedy said:

I believe a decision to abort a child should be up to the woman during the first three months of life.

Now, people may agree or disagree with this view, but it is clear what he is saying here.

The very same day, his campaign followed up by saying that his position on abortion is that it is always the woman's right to choose and that he does not support legislation banning abortion.

So on the same day, two different positions.

Then, on May 19, 2024, a few months later, in a podcast interview, he said:

I wouldn't leave it up to the States—

This is a quote.

I wouldn't leave it up to the States. I believe that we should leave it up to the woman—

We shouldn't have government involved.

—even if it's full-term.

OK. So there is a completely different view.

Then the very next day, he tweeted:

Abortion should be legal up to a certain number of weeks, and restricted thereafter.

Mr. Kennedy seems to change his mind so often that we don't know what he actually thinks, what he actually stands for. But when you are the Secretary of Health and Human Services, you have to stand up for something. You have to stand up for the laws of the land.

What is clear through all of this back-and-forth—it is clear to me—is that the Trump administration and Mr. Kennedy are more than willing to restrict or even ban access to medication abortion despite the fact that they have been determined to be safe and effective and that Mr. Kennedy and President Trump are, in fact, dangerous to a woman's access to medication abortion.

I want people just to think about this for a minute. If you live in a State like mine, in Minnesota, where the State has determined that abortion should be accessible, that this is a decision that is up for people to be able to make on their own without government interference—and roughly 60 percent, maybe a bit more now, of abortions are done through medication abortion. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and Donald Trump are going to affect your rights in Minnesota if they take away the right to mifepristone just as much as they affect the rights of somebody who is living in Texas or any of our States.

Mr. President, I want to change the topic to discuss a bit the question of infectious diseases and how Mr. Kennedy has taken similarly unfounded positions—positions that are not based on the science at all.

On infectious diseases, he has taken a position that I think could put Minnesota families at risk. Here is an example of that. At a Children's Health Defense conference in November of 2023—this is the anti-vax organization that Mr. Kennedy led for the last 7 years—Mr. Kennedy said that he is ''gonna say to the NIH scientists, God bless you all. Thank you for public service. We're going to give infectious disease a break for about eight years.''

Now, Mr. Kennedy and President Trump may want to give infectious diseases a break for the next 8 years, but I am pretty sure that infectious diseases are not going to give the United States of America a break for the next 8 years.

Here is a classic example of that. Across the country, we are facing a very real public health threat from avian flu. In Minnesota, farmers and producers know this better than anywhere, although it is certainly not affecting only Minnesota; it is affecting many of our States. This is an infectious disease that is infecting flocks of wild birds and also domesticated poultry. Nearly 150 million chickens across the United States have had to be culled, had to be euthanized, to prevent the spread of the virus. In the last year, bird flu has jumped from poultry to livestock, often to dairy cows, and then from livestock to humans—often, the individuals that are working in livestock operations. So this is something we have to take seriously.

This is important for us to pay attention to. We need surveillance. We need to be working on treatments. We need to be evaluating whether we need to be finding a pathway potentially to some sort of a vaccine.

Avian flu is not going to take an 8-year break. It is already infecting chickens and livestock, and it is already infecting Americans.

And I know that in Minnesota, people want somebody leading the Department of Health and Human Services who is paying attention to this and wants to be on top of this.

You know, one of the things that is sort of incredible, when you dive into the things that Mr. Kennedy has written, is that it is not even really clear if Mr. Kennedy believes that germs cause disease.

I mean, if you read his words on this, you come away with a very concerning perspective. For six pages in one of his recent books, just as an example, he extols the virtue of something called the miasma theory while simultaneously casting doubt on the basic and well-accepted scientific evidence that germs cause disease.

You know, Mr. Kennedy doesn't even really describe this miasma theory correctly, but he most certainly doesn't accurately represent germ theory, which is the basic understandable concept that medical students are introduced to at the very beginning of their medical education that germs, viruses, bacteria are the cause of many, many human illnesses.

You know, and this is the kind of stuff that if it were coming from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, people are going to listen to this. And I just, like, think about the chilling effects that this could have on the healthcare that people are able to seek and receive, particularly if Mr. Kennedy is going to be dialing back or stopping the research on infectious diseases that is the lifeblood of the United States public health work that we do.

At the Finance Committee and then the next day at the HELP Committee, my colleagues and I gave Mr. Kennedy opportunity after opportunity to dispel the false and misleading claim he has spread for decades and to distance himself from these past positions. And we gave him the chance to tell Americans that he would keep them and their children safe and that he wouldn't threaten their access to treatments or to cures or to care and that he believed the research that is out there and accessible to anybody and everybody who wants to see it—the research that is taught at medical schools, the research that is followed by National Institutes of Health, and he couldn't do it. He couldn't just say that vaccines don't cause autism. He couldn't just tell us that antidepressants don't cause school shootings.

He couldn't just tell us that he will make sure that America's health insurance is protected. I mean, he could barely—in his conversations and the questions that he was asked, he could barely articulate that he understood the difference between Medicare and Medicaid. Instead, what happened is that Mr. Kennedy repeatedly talked about following the good science, the science that is good. But the science that he relies on is not good.

And in so many circumstances, he quotes science or studies that have been disproven. The studies that he has referenced have been withdrawn, or they don't say what he claims or purports to say that they do.

Most of all, what happens is that this has the potential to hold our researchers and our scientific community back from making the real progress that we need to make when it comes to medicine and disease and treating ailments.

Think about the progress that we could one day make to help cure cancer, to prevent Alzheimer's. If we have to revisit the history, the record of science, because Mr. Kennedy says that he doesn't think it shows what everybody else thinks it shows, think about how that is going to set us back, how that is going to keep us from moving forward to address the real health challenges of today and tomorrow.

Think about what it might have meant if Mr. Kennedy had led the Department of Health and Human Services when we were in the midst of Operation Warp Speed and we were doing everything that we possibly could to get a vaccine out to Americans and the world to stop the millions of deaths that were happening because of the COVID–19 virus.

What would have happened if Mr. Kennedy, sitting in that position of authority, had said: I don't believe the science; I think we need to do more. I don't think any vaccine is safe and effective; and, therefore, I want to call this vaccine back.

And, in fact, that is what Mr. Kennedy did. He submitted a call to the Department of Health and Human Services in the early days of the vaccine saying that he thought that it should be pulled back from the market.

Think about what impact that could have had on all of our families if he had been in a position of authority and had been able to accomplish that. Over and over again, when he is faced with the actual science—for example, on the science that proves that SSRIs are not associated with school shootings, that vaccines do not cause autism, that germs do cause illnesses—he has refused to accept it, and he has doubled down on his dangerous beliefs.

So this is concerning when it is an individual who is speaking on a podcast, but it could be a matter of life or death when it is the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. As I think about what I said at the beginning of my remarks about my strong belief that my job as Senator is to assess whether I can trust somebody in this role, can I trust them to follow the law? Can I trust this individual to protect the health and well-being of the people in my State and the people around the country? The answer is clearly, no, this is an individual who cannot be trusted.

At the heart of this nomination, of course—the heart of the work of the Department of Health and Human Services—is America's health and healthcare. And it is clear to me that Mr. Kennedy has made it clear that he will enable the Trump and Musk agenda of chaos, that he will enable what they are doing not to execute the laws of this country, which is their constitutional responsibility, but to attempt to make the laws of this country.

And, you know, we can see this during his confirmation hearings. Repeatedly during his confirmation hearings, Mr. Kennedy said that he would follow Mr. Trump's directives.

Now, I am going to be clear about this, I understand that it is the job of any Cabinet official to follow the policies of the individual who has put them there, but not if those policies break the laws of the United States of America.

Department heads, Cabinet heads, the head of the Department of Health and Human Services is required to execute the law, not to execute the will of the President—because the President is a President; he is not a king.

What I am convinced of at this stage is as we see what, I believe, is a massive power grab by Donald Trump and Elon Musk to not just execute the laws but to make the laws, that Mr. Kennedy would be a part of that process, that he would be an enabler of that power grab that we see happening all over the country. And that is another reason why I cannot trust him.

I want to take a look for a minute at the directives that President Trump has put out already. Let's take a look at these—these directives of stopping lawfully executed payments to healthcare organizations that have been made following the will of Congress, the people who are supposed to be making the laws in this country.

I heard a lot about this from Minnesota, huge amounts of concern reflected back to me in my office about what is actually happening with the President's directives, basically directing to withhold funding that Congress has authorized.

I heard from Minnesota's community health centers that they were going to begin doing layoffs because of this Federal funding freeze—basically, a massive cut that they are experiencing. You know, community health centers are all over the country, and in my home State of Minnesota, they are the place that individuals can go to get basic, preventative healthcare. It is a very important part of our healthcare network, and yet many of these have come to me and said that they are basically going to be laying off providers and other folks who are providing direct care to patients.

One community health center's CEO in greater Minnesota, outside of the metro area, said that it was the worst day in his 38-year career when he got word of this freeze.

Now, I understand that this freeze has been unfrozen for now, at least in some cases—though, in other cases it seems like it is back on again. In fact, I hear repeatedly that it is off and on and off and on in this sort of chaotic and confusing dance that they have started.

But these clinics are still facing real challenges about getting access to their Federal funding, and this is threatening their operations. Imagine if you were running a—like a small bootstrap and, you know, small little health center and every day you are just trying to make payroll. You don't have millions of dollars sitting in your bank account waiting for a rainy day. Every day is a rainy day, and every day you are just trying to make it work. And very suddenly, one of your most important ways of paying to provide healthcare to an individual has just evaporated overnight.

So then what happens—because people still get sick, people still need healthcare, even if they are unable to get it at a community health center. So what do they do?

Think about this, right now, in Minnesota—it is probably the same in West Virginia and other parts of the country—Minnesota emergency rooms are packed full of people who have the flu or RSV or norovirus. They go to the emergency rooms. You want to go to the emergency room when you really, really need emergency care. You go to a community health center when you need to be able to get access to urgent care but the care that you need right now. And what is happening is that because there are a lot of illnesses, people are getting sick in the wintertime, it is like 20 below in Minnesota right now, if they can't get their primary care in a doctor's office, in a clinic, they are going to end up in the ER.

And then what happens to all the rest of us who really might need emergency care? The ER is jammed to overflowing. There is no space. You have to wait 5 hours to get the care that you need. That is what is happening with this funding that is being put in jeopardy. That means that community health centers might not be able to help the patients that they typically help. And I am not talking about a small number of people here. That is 170,000 people in Minnesota who rely on community health centers.

And what is going to happen, those folks are going to end up in emergency rooms, and that is going to increase wait times, and it is going to stress the capacity of hospitals to provide care that people need.

President Trump did this. Robert F. Kennedy, if he were head of Health and Human Services, I have no reason to trust that he would stop this. In fact, I believe the opposite, I believe he would enable it. And this is why I think his nomination will end up making all of us less healthy and less safe and less secure.

President Trump, in another example, unlawfully cut National Institutes of Health grant funding earlier this week. This amounts to millions of dollars that support lifesaving research

into Alzheimer's and cancer and Parkinson's disease, and I am just talking about in Minnesota there.

This was retroactive; it happened overnight. Hospitals are left struggling. Big research hospitals like the University of Minnesota and the Mayo Clinic are suddenly looking at massive cuts to their research.

They have trials for important, you know, treatments and cures for serious diseases that are suddenly thrown into chaos, and you have individuals who are part of those trials who are hopeful that they are going to be getting—they are hopeful that, in some way, that this is going to help them to find a cure for what disease is ailing them.

And with this cut to NIH funding, overnight massive cuts, what does that mean for people's health and safety and security? It means people are less well-off. National Institutes of Health is under the umbrella of the Department of Health and Human Services, the organization that Mr. Kennedy is asking Congress to provide advice and consent on.

Again, I have no confidence. In fact, I am sure that Mr. Kennedy would be an enabler to President Trump's power grab here and his undermining, along with Elon Musk, his undermining of this extremely important research that helps us be healthy, helps us find the treatments and the cures for the diseases that are a threat to all of us.

So I see my colleague from Massachusetts is here. I know she has an important perspective on this, with Massachusetts being another—as is Minnesota—another center of research and education and medical education, and I suspect that we agree with one another when it comes to the threat that Robert F. Kennedy poses to all of our health and well-being.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I want to say thanks to the Senator from Minnesota for her leadership on this point. I know that great research institutions in Minnesota that count on her support are out there fighting, thanks to Donald Trump, as they are in Massachusetts—and people all around this country who rely on those research institutions, who are looking for those cures, for those better treatments, for those opportunities in their lives that, right now, Donald Trump and his co-President Elon Musk seem to want to cut off.

So we will stay in this fight. We will indeed.

I am here today because Americans didn't vote to bring back measles. Americans didn't vote to bring back polio. Americans didn't vote to bring back dangerous diseases that we thought we had wiped out decades ago. Americans didn't vote to get rid of critical vaccines that we know—based on science—we know save lives.

But that is what Robert Kennedy, Jr.'s vision would mean for Americans. That is the vision that Donald Trump will empower him to carry out.

Kennedy not only worked to undercut vaccines at home and abroad; he has made a lot of money doing it. In fact, Kennedy has made millions off of peddling harmful conspiracy theories that hurt real people. He opposed the lifesaving COVID vaccine just 6 months into the pandemic, and he set himself up so that he and his family could make millions more from putting Americans' health at risk.

One thing is very clear: We cannot trust Robert Kennedy to make healthcare decisions that will affect every person in this country.

Right now, millions of Americans are sitting down for dinner with their kids, and I hope we just think for a minute about what RFK, Jr.'s plans would mean for them.

Will their teeth decay because Kennedy took fluoride out of the water based on some conspiracy theory? Will they have to worry about getting measles at school because Kennedy is spreading anti-vax conspiracies on government letterhead? Will parents have to risk their kids getting polio and maybe dying by sending them to daycare because Kennedy used his HHS rules to open the door to a flood of bogus lawsuits that force manufacturers to pull the vaccines?

Look, here is the thing: Robert Kennedy has spent years on an anti-vaccine crusade, spreading baseless conspiracy theories under the guise of protecting children. So we don't need to guess the level of harm he will cause. His past already tells us everything we need to know.

In July 2018, two children died immediately after receiving a measles vaccine that nurses had incorrectly mixed with a muscle relaxant. Within weeks, the Samoan Health Ministry publicly confirmed the nursing error and charged the nurses with manslaughter.

Nevertheless, leading anti-vaccine groups—including Kennedy's own organization, Children's Health Defense—exploited public fears to question the reports and spread baseless claims.

On August 5, 2018, Kennedy's organization, Children's Health Defense, posted on Facebook—and I will quote the post:

> Were these once-healthy children the only two to receive MMR that day? If not, why were they the only ones to die? Research needs to determine susceptibility so that no child is ever injured.

Del Bigtree, Kennedy's partner and former campaign manager, also released a video linking the tragedy to false claims about measles and telling his followers to ''share it with everyone you know. This is how we are changing the world.''

Now, amidst public distrust and a paused vaccine program in Samoa, the vaccination rates plummeted. About 10 months later, once the Samoan Government had finally stood up against the disinformation and resumed the vaccine program, Kennedy visited the island to meet with the Prime Minister.

Later, recognizing the blowback that comes with how much went wrong when a conspiracy theory cost people their lives, Kennedy has since denied that his visit had anything to do with vaccines and said that anything suggesting otherwise was ''an industry propaganda trope''—in other words, totally false—''an industry propaganda trope.'' Kennedy lied.

A blog post that Kennedy himself wrote in 2021 admits that he went to Samoa to meet with the Prime Minister, who wanted to discuss the possibility of ''measur[ing] health outcomes following the 'natural experiment' created by the nation's respite from vaccines.''

Think about what that means. Another way to say it is that Kennedy was interested in taking advantage of how the vaccination rate had plummeted—caused by misinformation—so that they could conduct uncontrolled trials on whether unvaccinated kids were healthier than vaccinated kids, a conspiracy theory that he had widely spread.

You see, at the time, one of his traveling partners was working on a similar study with two anti-vaccine activists, which was ultimately retracted, following an investigation that ''raised several methodological issues and confirmed that the conclusions were not supported by strong scientific data.''

Now there is no surprise here. The Prime Minister of Samoa declined Kennedy's outrageous proposal. He didn't want his country to be Kennedy's guinea pig. He didn't want unvaccinated children to be studied to see what happened to them when measles or other diseases broke out.

But that didn't stop Kennedy from spreading his message. On this trip to Samoa, he met with various anti-vaccine influencers, one of whom said the meeting was ''profoundly monumental for the movement.''

A few months after Kennedy left, in October 2019, the vaccination rate in Samoa hit a historic low of 31 percent, down from 74 percent the prior year. And, no surprise, a massive measles outbreak erupted.

So here is Kennedy telling us now: No, no, he had nothing—nothing—to do with this. His trip to Samoa had nothing to do with the measles vaccine, and calling any claim ''industry propaganda trope,'' and yet he himself posted a blog about meeting with the Prime Minister and talking about a study to measure health outcomes following a natural experiment of studying children, some with no vaccination and some that were vaccinated.

And the anti-vax groups he met with talked about how profoundly important it is. Then Mr. Kennedy leaves. Vaccination rates drop down to 31 percent.

The measles outbreak was truly tragic. In total, more than 70 children died,

right up until a door-to-door vaccination campaign brought the disaster to an end.

As HHS Secretary, Kennedy would be responsible for whether we keep our children vaccinated or subject them to, in his word, the same ''natural experiment'' that he was interested in testing in Samoa. Is that really what we want for our kids? Is that what we want for our elderly parents? That is a living nightmare, and it could truly be our reality with Kennedy heading up the Department of Health and Human Services.

And all the while that this is going on, while Kennedy is promoting this anti-vax theory, he and his family are profiting off the plan.

Now, I have been sounding the alarm about Kennedy since the minute Donald Trump announced that he would nominate him for HHS Secretary. It is not just that he is unqualified; his long history of promoting anti-science conspiracy theories make him disqualified.

This is a man who claimed ''there is no vaccine that is safe and effective''—''no vaccine.''

He said that the polio vaccine ''killed many, many more people than polio ever did.''

Now, Kennedy came to our committee and said: Don't worry. He swears he is not anti-vaccine. But he has spent years on an anti-vaccine crusade, spreading baseless conspiracy theories under the guise of protecting children, and making millions of dollars in the process.

And when, in Senate hearings, he was confronted with his own words, he simply denied saying them. He denied saying them, despite the videotapes, the transcripts, the blog posts, and the people who heard them.

Kennedy thinks he knows what he needs to say to try to get the job that will put him in charge of our vaccine program. So he says he didn't say exactly what he said. Kennedy's actions speak louder than his latest words. And time and time again, Kennedy has shown us who he is: an anti-science conspiracy peddler who is willing to gamble with American lives. We know who he is. We need to pay attention.

Let's do a quick count of some of the ways that, as HHS Secretary, Kennedy could make the anti-vaccine lawsuits and his own payouts even bigger. What could Kennedy do? Well, as Secretary of HHS, he could publish his anti-vaccine conspiracies, but this time on U.S. Government letterhead, something that might impress a jury in a subsequent trial. He could appoint people to the CDC vaccine panel who share his anti-vax views and let them do his dirty work. He could tell the CDC vaccine panel to remove a particular vaccine from the vaccination schedule. He could remove vaccines from a special compensation program, which ''would open up manufacturers to mass torts'' lawsuits. He could make more injuries eligible for compensation, even if there is no causal evidence. He could change vaccine court processes to make it easier to bring junk lawsuits that could get vaccines pulled from the market. He could turn over FDA to his friends at the law firm, and they could use it however benefits their lawsuits.

In short, as HHS Secretary, Kennedy would have the power to make healthcare decisions that would affect millions of Americans—working Americans, kids, seniors—on everything from vaccines to abortion to lifesaving drugs.

Kennedy would have the capacity as head of HHS to make it easier to sue vaccine manufacturers. And in an area where the profit margins on vaccines are quite modest, if those lawsuits mount up, vaccines could simply disappear from the market all together. Manufacturers could decide: You know, it is just not worth the lawsuits. We will go produce other drugs.

Those kinds of decisions are critically important, and the consequences are grave. For many Americans, they may be the difference between life and death, and they could change lives forever.

So while you and your family are forced to deal with the grave consequences of Kennedy's conspiracy-driven healthcare decisions, Kennedy could set himself up to make millions of dollars off his anti-vaccine crusade, just like he has been doing for decades.

Remember, the very first ethics agreement that Kennedy submitted to us on the Senate Finance Committee, he said that even while he served as Secretary of HHS, he planned to keep a financial stake in ongoing litigation, including vaccine-related litigation. That means that from the jump, Kennedy's plan was to keep making money off the backs of lawsuits against vaccine manufacturers, some of which directly related to the very products he would have the power to regulate as Secretary of HHS.

So there he is. He has the power to regulate these drugs. He has the power to make life a little better or a little worse for the vaccine manufacturers. He has the power to make it more likely that lawsuits against vaccine manufacturers would succeed. And his initial plan was—even while he sat there as Secretary of HHS, he was going to keep on making money from that.

This was a damning conflict of interest, so we called it out. Kennedy told us, OK, OK, he would submit an updated ethics agreement. Sounds good. What was his update? Well, he said that instead of personally keeping the millions that he would make off these ongoing lawsuits, he would hand that money directly to his son.

Later, he confirmed that the son he is handing his interests off to is the one who works at Wisner Baum, the same law firm that Kennedy has maintained this very lucrative arrangement with over the years, so far netting him a reported $2.5 million just in the last few years.

Kennedy has made clear that he can use his tools as HHS Secretary to open up the door for more anti-vax litigation and, once he is through as Secretary of HHS, go right back to Wisner Baum and cash in on the new flood of cases that Kennedy himself has unleashed. So that is Kennedy's idea of fixing an ethics issue.

Beyond that, Kennedy has flip-flopped countless times in his answers to the Finance Committee. He is untrustworthy. He has made so many contradictory statements that it has come to the point that it is hard to believe anything he says is true.

For example, Kennedy originally said he was not an attorney of record in any of these vaccine-related lawsuits, but we did a little homework, and we found at least five cases related to the vaccine litigation that hadn't been disclosed where Kennedy appears to be the attorney of record. That is important because what it means is that Kennedy is a lot closer to these cases than he is revealing—cases that he and his family will be able to make bank off even as he serves as Secretary at the HHS.

The importance of this litigation cannot be overstated. Just 20 years ago, we watched vaccine makers pull their product off the market because they didn't have protection from these kinds of lawsuits. The consequence of Kennedy's ability to make those lawsuits easier is also the ability to shut down access and manufacturing for vaccines for every one of us, and I think that is a terrible mistake.

Kennedy claims that he is taking on Big Pharma, but that is the lie he is peddling to hide his conflicts. I pressed him on real ways to take on the industry, including using march-in on Big Pharma's patents when they use taxpayer funds to bring drugs to market and then turn around and jack up prices on hard-working Americans and by having the government negotiate prices directly with Big Pharma on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries.

But Kennedy, after talking a big game about taking on Big Pharma, said no, he doesn't support march-in rights and, no, he didn't want to commit to defending Medicare price negotiations—two proven methods to take on the drug industry and put money back into Americans' pockets.

So whose side is he on? Well, one thing is for sure: RFK, Jr., is on the side of his own bottom line.

He has also refused to share a list of cases that he stands to benefit from. I told you he said, nope, he was not attorney of record on any cases. We dug around, and we found five. How many more are there? Well, here is what Kennedy said when we said: Just give us a list of the cases that you are participating in so we can take a look at the possible conflicts. His answer: The list is so long and the conflicts so clear that evidently it would be more damning than what we already know.

Kennedy's list of ethics issues and financial issues are a mile long, and there is still too much that he refuses to reveal.

Think about this. He has already told us enough about his conflicts, about how he plans to keep making money even while he is Secretary of HHS. He revealed all that right up front. He said: Yes, I am going to make money while I am Secretary of HHS. Yet, on basic questions like ''Can you just give us a list of the cases you participated in?'' he says ''No, I can't do that,'' which really makes you ask, what on Earth is he hiding?

He is dodging questions from the Senate, he is contradicting himself, and he keeps changing his answers in order to muddy the waters and really make it hard to understand what is going on.

Look, no one is fooled here. Kennedy has said he will ''slam shut the revolving door'' between government Agencies and the companies they regulate, but what he won't agree to is to cut off his own family's steady stream of money flowing in from lawsuits that he personally can directly affect while he is Secretary of HHS.

Kennedy knows that these conflicts are serious, and that is why he scrambled to update his ethics agreement and hand off his interests to his son in a desperate attempt to ''fix'' things. But that simply isn't good enough when millions of Americans' lives are hanging in the balance.

Don't take it just from me; take it from the Wall Street Journal editorial board. They wrote:

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. pledged during his confirmation hearing . . . to root out corruption between industry and government. Yet the man who wants to be the nation's Secretary of Health and Human Services refused to rule out personally making money from lawsuits against drug makers. This ought to be disqualifying.

The Wall Street Journal: ''This ought to be disqualifying.''

It is simple: If Kennedy wants to prove he was serious about ''slamming shut the revolving door'' between industry and people making money from their positions in government, I laid out a list of commitments he should make immediately.

Senator WYDEN, the ranking member on the Finance Committee, and I wrote:

1. If confirmed as Secretary, you will recuse yourself from all vaccine-related communications and decisions. Given the breadth of your involvement in vaccine litigation, such a recusal would help ensure that you and your family do not benefit financially from official government actions that you will oversee and control. Such recusal will also ensure vaccine-related policymaking and communications are not inappropriately skewed by your personal views at the expense of scientific evidence.

That was part 1 that we want.

2. If confirmed as Secretary, you will recuse yourself from all matters related to HHS-regulated entities that are involved in cases or litigation that you or your family have an interest in. This will help ensure, for example, that you could not leverage your position as Secretary by conditioning a company's request regarding an unrelated manner (e.g., an FDA approval) on such company agreeing to settle an anti-vaccination case in which you or your family have a financial interest.

3. If confirmed as Secretary, you will not litigate cases involving vaccines, represent parties in VICP-related cases, or have a financial interest in such litigation or cases for at least 4 years after leaving office. As Secretary, you would be in a position to influence future anti-vaccine cases and litigation in ways that would benefit you personally after leaving HHS. For example, you could direct the CDC to remove a vaccine from the vaccine schedule, change vaccine labeling requirements, or make procedures in special vaccine court more advantageous for plaintiffs. Then, if you leave HHS and immediately return to litigating against vaccine makers, you would stand to profit from rules you helped reshape. This commitment would further mitigate the appearance of a conflict of interest while you are in office.

These commitments will help ensure that you do not have a direct or indirect financial incentive to interfere with HHS's vaccine proceedings or other matters involving the manufacturer of Gardasil or any other HHS-regulated entity.

In other words, Senator WYDEN and I laid out a path where he truly could avoid the conflicts of interest. If he wants to serve his country and not his own pocketbook, we have shown him a way that he can do this.

Senator KAINE and I followed up on this and wrote to Kennedy:

At your Senate confirmation hearing, you pledged to ''remove the financial conflicts of interests in [HHS] agencies.''

Continuing with our letter:

You should start by mitigating your own conflicts of interests, including by (1) relinquishing your direct and indirect financial interests in matters over which you will have power at HHS; (2) recusing yourself from matters involving your former clients, former employers, or entities in which you have a financial interest; and (3) for at least four years after you leave office, committing to not lobbying HHS, litigating cases against pharmaceutical companies and manufacturers, or joining the industries or entities that you interact with at HHS.

In other words, we showed you another way that you can get this done.

Look, this is just common sense. I would hope that my Republican colleagues would agree that our HHS nominee should not have ongoing, lucrative agreements that enable his immediate family to line their pockets while he influences healthcare decisions that impact millions of Americans.

It is not just attacks on vaccines that we have to worry about from the Trump administration. In the middle of the night last Friday, Donald Trump announced deep cuts to the National Institutes of Health funding, which powers the lifesaving research and medical breakthroughs at universities and medical institutions across the country, especially in my home State of Massachusetts. These Trump cuts will stop research that is working to help cure diseases, it will force people who are working now to lose good jobs, and it will literally threaten people's lives.

As head of HHS, Kennedy would oversee the National Institutes of Health, and he would green-light Trump's plan to gut the Agency. He has made no commitments to protect the critical, lifesaving research that NIH funds, and maybe that should be no surprise given his years of attacking basic scientific facts.

Listen to what experts have had to say about what these cuts will mean for families across America:

People are not able to do their work if there isn't an infrastructure. This will have a huge impact on health research in this country.

We're all reeling. This would decimate medical research.

This is a surefire way to cripple lifesaving research and innovation. America's competitors will relish this self-inflicted wound.

As one expert said:

If you're a cancer patient in a clinical trial, it is not a theoretical undertaking, it is treatment.

For so many rare diseases and illnesses where research is already underfunded, like childhood cancer, researchers have said:

If it's not federal funding, there's nowhere else to go—that's a real impact on the short [term] and [the] long term.

I don't know how you make that up. These funding cuts are putting scientists in a position where they have to default on the promises they made—promises they made to people to join their studies, promises they made to other researchers to join them, promises they made to build up the labs and to build up the work that would make a difference in our world.

When the NIH and the NSF put out their solicitations, they are asking for critical scientific research to be done on behalf of the American people. That research cures diseases and saves lives. The institutions that apply for these solicitations are saying enthusiastically: Yes, we can do that. Yes, we share that dream. Yes, we believe that we can make a better product, that we can make a better medicine, that we can make a better treatment for people who are suffering, and we want to be part of that.

And now here we are in chaos and confusion, and the U.S. Government is trying to break that contract. Americans will suffer because of it.

This is Trump's plan for Americans' health, and Kennedy will be a rubberstamp for whatever Donald Trump wants to do.

Let's talk just a little bit more about that COVID vaccine.

Do you remember how, in the dead of the pandemic, hundreds of millions of Americans were counting on that vaccine as the light at the end of the tunnel; how, when we were shut away from our friends and family and trying to keep ourselves and our communities safe, that vaccine allowed us to come together again; how that vaccine saved countless more lives that otherwise would have been lost to COVID?

Well, just make sure you know: Kennedy tried to stop you and your family from having access to the COVID vaccine.

I will just read a little portion of one of the articles from last month on this:

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., President-elect Donald J. Trump's choice to lead the nation's health agencies, formally asked the Food and Drug Administration to revoke the authorization of all—

All—

COVID vaccines during a deadly phase of the pandemic when thousands of Americans were still dying every week.

Mr. Kennedy filed a petition with the FDA in May 2021, demanding that officials rescind authorization for the shots and refrain from approving any COVID vaccine in the interim. Just 6 months earlier, Mr. Trump had declared the COVID vaccines a miracle. At the time Mr. Kennedy filed the petition, half of American adults were receiving their shots. Schools were starting to reopen, and churches were filling. Estimates have begun to show that the rapid roll-out of COVID vaccines have already saved 140,000 lives in the United States.

The petition was filed on behalf of the nonprofit that Mr. Kennedy founded and led, Children's Health Defense, which we talked about earlier. It claimed the risks of vaccines outweighed the benefits and that the vaccines weren't necessary because good treatments were available, including ivermectin and—I just can't believe this—hydroxychloroquine, which had already been deemed ineffective against the virus.

The petition received little notice when it was filed. Mr. Kennedy was then on the fringes of the public health establishment, and the Agency denied it within months. Public health experts told about the filing said it was truly shocking.

You know, I want to underscore this one because Mr. Kennedy is saying now—not only is he saying he is not an anti-vaxxer; he is saying he wants you to still be able to vaccinate your children if you want to do that. Yet look at Mr. Kennedy's own actions. Mr. Kennedy tried to stop all of us—everyone in America—from getting access to the COVID vaccine. He cites junk science. It was already known to be junk science at the time that he cites it. He cites junk science in order to say, not just that he doesn't want to take the vaccine or not just that he doesn't want to give it to his kids, but he didn't want anybody in America to be able to get that.

So that is the man that the Republicans will be voting on to decide whether or not he makes healthcare policy in the United States—someone who is continuing to line his own pocket with lawsuits against vaccine manufacturers and someone who has tried to stop at least one vaccine from being distributed to anyone anywhere in America.

Look, when Kennedy says he doesn't believe in vaccines, which he has said many times, believe him. When his attempt at fixing his ethics issue is passing his stake to his son, believe him. When he says he will do whatever Donald Trump wants on abortion, believe him. Don't say: No one will let him go that far, because they will let him go that far.

Republicans voting for Kennedy know exactly who they are voting for—someone who spreads baseless conspiracy theories, someone who profits off making our kids sicker, someone who will do whatever Donald Trump tells him to do, whether it is cutting off cancer research funding or banning abortion medication.

Let us be very clear: When it comes to your health and your well-being and the health and well-being of your friends, your family, your community, Kennedy is disqualified, dangerous, and cannot be given the power to make critical healthcare decisions. I urge my colleagues to vote no on his nomination.

I see that Senator KAINE is here. Senator KAINE has been a tireless partner in the fight to help protect the Nation's healthcare system, and I appreciate his being here tonight.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I am so happy that I follow my colleague from Massachusetts. I will build upon some of the points that she has made, but we have served as colleagues together on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee during earlier terms of Congress, and you won't find a better champion for the health of the American public than Senator WARREN.

I stand to continue the dialogue about Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and his unfitness for the position to which he has been nominated, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and I will give you the punch line but then go into it in some detail.

I don't believe Mr. Kennedy can separate fact from fiction. I don't believe Mr. Kennedy can separate conspiracy from content. Now, you wouldn't want someone suffering from that challenge in any position of leadership at any level of government—local, State, or Federal. But this particular position, the Secretary of Health and Human Services—one of the most important positions in the Nation as with respect to people's physical and mental health, is exactly the wrong kind of a position for someone who can't tell fact from fiction or content from conspiracy, because the American public needs to be able to rely on HHS and other critical Agencies for information that is not just about the state of their savings account or housing costs. This is about life and death. This is about life and death.

I want to talk about two elements of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.—my colleagues have been going into many of them—that lead me to the conclusion that here is a guy who can't separate fact from fiction or conspiracy from content.

The first was ably described by Senator WARREN, and that is Mr. Kennedy's skepticism about vaccines. I know many of my colleagues trod this ground during speeches today, so I am not going to go into the breadth of his vaccine skepticism. I am going to talk about one vaccine in particular that is made in Virginia, Gardasil. I represent the Commonwealth of Virginia. There is a facility in Elkton, VA, in the Shenandoah Valley, near Harrisonburg, that makes Gardasil, the vaccine that has been effective—significantly effective—in preventing and reducing the incidence of cervical cancer.

Think about it for a minute. Vaccines do a lot of different things, but a vaccine that can prevent cancer is truly, truly revolutionary.

Cervical cancer and other associated cancers pose very significant challenges to men and women. In the early 2000s, the FDA approved a cervical cancer vaccine. There are a number of vaccine manufacturers, but one of the largest is Merck that manufactures Gardasil in Virginia. I visited the plant a couple of years back as a member of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. I went to the plant, and I talked to the workers and saw the pride that they have in being able to develop a product that has had such a significant impact around the world.

When I was Governor of Virginia, with two Republican houses, we acted to have a mandate around the Gardasil vaccination, around the cervical cancer vaccination. There are other cancer vaccine manufacturers as well. By making it mandatory, we enabled people to access it for free. We allowed any parent or student who didn't want to receive the vaccine to opt out with no excuse. But we have made it widely available in Virginia—we are one of three States to have done this—and it has had a tremendously positive benefit on folks' health.

So this is a relatively new vaccine. I mean, it started and got approval and began to be deployed significantly about 15 years ago; and even in 15 years, the results have been remarkable. And I want to just share with my colleagues and with the public some of the results between 15 and 20 years of the HPV cervical cancer vaccine. I will give you results from many countries and from many research institutions and hospitals to show you that this is not a question of significant medical controversy.

A publication that is one of the signature healthcare publications in England is called The Lancet, and there was an article in The Lancet in February of 2020, titled ''The Impact of HPV Vaccination and Cervical Screening on Cervical Cancer Elimination.'' This particular article summarized the study that looked at data from 78 countries. The researchers who examined this data were from England, China, France, Canada, and Switzerland.

Their research in analyzing the data of hundreds of thousands of patients in 78 countries concluded:

High HPV vaccination coverage of girls can lead to cervical cancer elimination in

most low-income and lower middle-income countries by the end of the century.

Fancy that—eliminating cancer with a vaccine. This was from the data from 78 countries.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, cdc.gov, has a section: the ''Impact of the HPV Vaccine'':

Among teen girls, infections with HPV types that cause most HPV cancers and genital warts have dropped 88 percent [because of the vaccine].

The American Society of Clinical Oncology, in 2024, published an article titled ''Effects of HPV vaccination on the development of HPV-related cancers.'' This is the American society for physicians who work in the clinical oncology area.

Here is the conclusion they reach:

Males vaccinated for HPV were at decreased odds for HPV-related cancers. . . . Females vaccinated for HPV had lower odds for cervical cancers and HPV-related cancers overall.

Let's go to Scotland. The Journal of the National Cancer Institute in Scotland last year published a study titled ''Invasive Cervical Cancer Incidence following bivalent HPV vaccination,'' studying the healthcare results of people following vaccination. This was just published last year. Let me read you the quote:

No cases of invasive cancer were recorded in women immunized at 12 or 13 years of age irrespective of the number of doses. Women vaccinated at 14 to 22 years of age and given 3 doses of bivalent vaccine showed a significant reduction in incidence compared with . . . unvaccinated women.

Again, those first few words: ''No cases of invasive cancer were recorded in women'' who were vaccinated and studied in Scotland in this study that came out in 2024.

Another article in the Lancet looked not at 78 countries, but it looked at the effects of HPV vaccination programs in England. This article was published in 2021:

The HPV vaccination program [in the UK] has almost successfully eliminated cervical cancer in women born since September 1, 1995.

The elimination of cervical cancer, no cases of invasive cancer.

There was a study done in Australia in 2013 by BMC Medicine. The article was entitled ''Impact of a population-based HPV vaccination program on cervical abnormalities.'' This was still relatively early in the mass vaccination because Gardasil and any other HPV vaccinations weren't used until the mid-2000s—2007, 2008. Here is the conclusion reached about the Australians' experience:

Australia was one of the first countries to introduce a publicly-funded national HPV vaccination program that commenced in April 2007. . . . [It] significantly reduced cervical abnormalities . . . within five years of implementation, with the greatest vaccine effectiveness observed [in] the youngest women.

The New England Journal of Medicine, which, in many ways, is the gold standard in the United States, published a study in 2020 about the effects of vaccination in Sweden:

Among Swedish girls and women 10 to 30 years old, quadrivalent HPV vaccination was associated with a substantially reduced risk of invasive cervical cancer at the population level.

All right, those are the studies by the researchers in the journals, but I also wondered—you know, I am not a great scientist. I don't generally read medical journals. But what about our healthcare institutions that are just in the business of providing health advice to everyday Americans who are seeking information about their health?

I went to the website of the Mayo Clinic. Here is what mayoclinic.org says:

HPV vaccine: Who needs it, how it works.

They say on their website: ''Getting vaccinated against HPV helps prevent cancer in men and women''—period. No qualification, no waffling, no wobbling. That is the advice that the Mayo Clinic gives to its patients and to all who go to mayoclinic.org to seek health information.

The Cleveland Clinic, another internationally known healthcare provider, my.clevelandclinic.org in 2025, the website says as follows:

The HPV vaccine is an injection that prevents infections of two types of human papillomavirus. The vaccine lowers your risk of getting cervical cancer.

MD Anderson Hospital, another internationally known hospital based in Houston, TX—mdanderson.org. Here is what they say to their patients or others going to the website to seek advice:

All males and females—

All males and females—

ages 9–26 should get the HPV vaccine. It is a safe and effective method of protection against HPV infection.

So what I have just done is read you a variety of conclusions from a variety of researchers and healthcare providers, from a variety of countries, all pointing to the effectiveness of HPV vaccinations to prevent HPV infections that lead to cancers and other serious medical conditions.

But what does Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., say? He has said that the vaccination is one of the most dangerous vaccines ever created. He has said that it is dangerous and defective.

On one of his website articles on his blog, he said:

It is inescapable that Gardasil kills girls.

The weight of medical evidence is that this is an effective tool to prevent cervical cancer. Robert F. Kennedy—with no medical training, with no scientific research background—claims otherwise. He cannot separate fact from fantasy, content from conspiracy.

Now, is that just because his brain doesn't wrap itself around facts, or is there something more serious? I needn't repeat at length what my colleague Senator WARREN said, but she laid out the facts that Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., has a massive financial stake in lawsuits against the manufacturer of the HPV vaccine.

In fact, he disclosed it on his ethics form, that if there are recoveries against HPV manufacturers in lawsuits, he is entitled to 10 percent—10 percent—of the recovery in massive class-action lawsuits.

When we pressed him in the hearing, first he said he wasn't going to give up that 10-percent stake. But he eventually felt some pressure, and so he transferred it to his adult son. His family stands to gain significantly if these lawsuits hit.

As the Secretary of HHS, he would have the ability to have a huge influence on the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.

Vaccine manufacturers get an immunity from civil suit until a case has gone through the vaccine compensation court. That was put in place many years ago because the number of vaccine manufacturers were in precipitous free fall. They were going out of business or stopping making vaccines because they were getting hit with big lawsuits. So there is a special court that focuses on any arguments against vaccines in these courts.

He would have significant ability to even remove immunity protection from the manufacturers of vaccines. And if you remove immunity protection, the value of lawsuits goes up, and the value of his family's 10 percent stake goes up.

This should cause everyone serious concern about putting someone in who stands, without any medical training, against the weight of medical evidence saying that vaccination against cervical cancer is a remarkable thing that should be done and that has been successful since the mid-2000s.

I am going to conclude in a minute because my able colleague from Colorado is here, but I want to raise one more issue. I want to raise one more issue.

This inability to tell the difference between fact and fiction and content and conspiracy would be dangerous enough if it was just about health information, if it was just about vaccines. That, in and of itself, should disqualify Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., from being the HHS Secretary. But this individual's inability to tell the difference between fact and fiction and between conspiracy and content is not limited just to health.

In July of 2024, when he was running for President of the United States, Robert F. Kennedy tweeted this:

My take on 9/11: It's hard to tell what is a conspiracy theory and what isn't. But conspiracy theories flourish when the government routinely lies to the public. As President, I won't take sides on 9/11 or any of the other debates. But I can promise is that I will open the files and usher in a new era of transparency.

''I won't take sides on 9/11''—I represent the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Pentagon was attacked on 9/11. The World Trade Center in New York

was attacked on 9/11. A plane went down in a farm field in Pennsylvania on 9/11. A lot of Virginia families lost loved ones that day. I know people who were in the Pentagon on 9/11 who had to race through a burning building to go to the childcare center to make sure they could get their child out and that their child was safe. I don't take it very well when someone says they won't take sides about 9/11, when someone admits: ''It's hard to tell what is a conspiracy theory and what isn't.''

I asked Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.: Is this a common problem for you? I mean, that is kind of a candid thing to admit: ''It's hard to tell what is a conspiracy theory and what isn't.''

No, it is not. It is not hard for Virginians to understand what happened on 9/11. They lost loved ones. They went to funerals. Their family members never came home. And then, in the aftermath of 9/11, we were in 20 years of war, where tens of thousands of Virginians were deployed to battle against al-Qaida, the perpetrators of 9/11, and many lost their lives then.

''I won't take sides on 9/11''—well, like, what side is there? What side is he talking about?

I mean, it is a bad thing. Does he think it is a good thing? It was an attack by Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida. Does he think it was an inside job or something else?

And why would he even do this? This tweet is dated July 5, 2024. It was 23 years after 9/11—23 years after 9/11. For some reason, on July 5, he just says: Well, why don't I just share with people that I won't take sides on 9/11; that I still can't tell, 23 years later, what is a conspiracy theory and what isn't.

If you cannot tell what happened on 9/11, if you decide to just freelance an opinion 23 years later and tell the American public—and he was running for President at the time—I will not take sides on 9/11, you should not have been nominated for this position in the first place.

I am finding it very hard to believe that my colleagues in this body, whom I sat with on the Armed Services Committee, whom I sat with on the Foreign Relations Committee, who have invested their time and energy in making investments to battle terrorism around the world, to battle al-Qaida and other terrorist groups, the group that perpetrated the 9/11 attack—many of my colleagues served in the military and were deployed in the War on Terror in the aftermath of 9/11. They are now going to be OK with a guy who says he won't take sides on 9/11; who says he can't tell the difference between what is a conspiracy theory and what isn't?

This is a very, very dangerous vote that we will cast tomorrow. Of any position in the Federal Government that needs somebody who can tell the difference between fact and fiction, conspiracy and content, HHS Secretary is that position, and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., so badly flunks the test of what is needed—careful, reasoned, information that people can count on—that I urge my colleagues, even if you voted in a committee, even if you voted on a procedural resolution to move this to the floor, stop now. You can still stop now. Don't hurt this country. Don't hurt the health of this country by putting someone in office who can't even understand what happened on 9/11.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Presiding Officer to the U.S. Senate. I hadn't had a chance, really, to do that, as you sit in the chair.

We are now going to get somebody else, but I thank the Presiding Officer for being here.

(Mr. HUSTED assumed the Chair.)

I also want to thank my colleague from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Senator KAINE, for his heartfelt remarks.

I think we are through the looking glass in many ways, and there is a pattern here that is reflected in what you were talking about, this idea of being able to tell the difference between fact and fiction—fact and fiction.

I know that when you were the mayor of Richmond, it was probably pretty important for people who were working with you to know the difference between fact and fiction. When you were the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, it probably was pretty important for you to do that as well.

It does seem like, in President Trump's administration, he is really at war with the facts and trying to muddle what is fact and fiction, to be kind about it.

I can't think of a time in the history of this country when families have wanted to know more about what is real and what is false—with their kids, what is real and what is false.

I was the superintendent of schools in Denver, as the Senator from Virginia knows, and it is a great irony that at a time when parents want their kids to be able to distinguish between what is real and what is false—because of all the falsehoods that are coming over social media and other places—the President has decided to nominate the head of the WWE to be the Secretary of Education in this administration.

You were talking about the inability of Bobby Kennedy to pick which side he was on when it came to what happened on 9/11. It reminds me exactly of the situation with Congresswoman Gabbard, who decided over and over and over again that she was going to choose not America's side but our adversaries' side, whether it was the chemical weapons in Syria—I mean, it is hard to even contemplate that—or the fact that at 12:30 at night, or I guess it was 11:30 at night, literally the night that Putin invaded Ukraine, a country that was at peace, a crossing of a peaceful border—the first time a tyrant had done that in Europe since World War II when the United States had led the international and global order that created these incredibly important institutions, NATO being one of those. And she had to reach out at 11:30 at night to basically mimic the talking points from Vladimir Putin. And I am not saying that she was a Russian spy or anything; I am just saying that it is the same stuff that he was using. Two days later, the Russian propaganda television in Moscow was running that stuff on the TV in Moscow.

So I think it really does matter that people are telling the truth to the American people and that, where possible, where there are differences of opinion, that we try to get to the bottom of the truth. There are a lot of reasons to have differences of opinion. We live in a democracy, and we have the freedom to have differences of opinion. We have the freedom to have a different understanding of the facts, but we need to be pretty certain about that when it comes to public health, when it comes to healthcare in this country.

Mr. President, we live in the richest country in the world. We are blessed to live in the richest country in the world. If you look at our national wealth as a function of our population, there is nobody who is remotely even close to us. That is the reflection of an economy that has been much more dynamic than economies across the world, innovation that is much more dynamic, and, I would say, a culture that is not beset by corruption in the way many countries around the world are.

But even though we are the richest country in the world and the richest per capita, shockingly, we have some of the worst health outcomes of any country that is wealthy. We have the lowest life expectancy among large, wealthy countries. We have the highest maternal mortality rate of any other high-income country in the world, and it is getting worse every single year. We have the highest hospitalization rates for chronic conditions—like congestive heart failure and diabetes and asthma—of all our peer countries.

We spend twice as much per capita as any other industrialized country for worse results. It is a bad deal for patients, and it is a terrible deal for taxpayers.

This isn't just about our physical health. We have the highest suicide rate among high-income countries. We have the second highest drug-related death rate among high-income countries.

We have some of the lowest numbers of mental health practitioners per capita in many parts of the country. In my own home State of Colorado, there are entire counties that really don't have any mental health expertise at all. And at a time when there is an epidemic in our country, I would say especially among young people, that is a shameful failure on our part.

Americans in every corner of our country are getting sicker in 2025.

They are spending more on healthcare, they are traveling farther, and they are waiting longer to see fewer doctors.

The citizens of Colorado, I can tell you, are deeply, deeply unhappy with our healthcare system—deeply unhappy.

I will actually say I was here when we passed the Affordable Care Act during the Obama years, and it has not fixed the issues we are facing.

My constituents, when they think about healthcare, they think about scarcity; they think about the unavailability of drugs that their moms and dads have been prescribed but they either can't get or they can't afford even though they have been prescribed.

Unlike other countries around the world, this is a nation where our senior citizens actually spend their retirement going from pharmacy to pharmacy to pharmacy to get the drugs they have been prescribed by a doctor, to be able to get the inhaler that will keep them healthy so that they don't end up in the emergency room.

This is a country, unlike our competitors, where it is very common for moms and dads to spend 2 hours or 3 hours or 4 hours on the phone with an insurance company denying their claim—their legitimate claim—for their kid.

This is a country, as I mentioned, where we do not have ready access to mental health care, which people living in other countries far less wealthy than we are have as a reasonable expectation of being a citizen of that country.

When we are in the midst of a physical and mental health care crisis like this, unlike many of the other Cabinet positions we are going to fill—and for some of them, it is true as well—the Secretary of Health and Human Services is a job of life and death. That is why Mr. Kennedy's confirmation, I think, would be so dangerous.

We are on the precipice of allowing a practiced trafficker of vaccine conspiracy theories—admitted, of these theories—to administer healthcare to over 29 million children in America who receive routine, lifesaving vaccines through Medicaid; a man who has made his fame and fortune by treating our most vulnerable children as his personal science experiment.

Mr. Kennedy has peddled bunk science that claims vaccines cause autism, sowing confusion and fear and causing heartbreak among parents who are now afraid to vaccinate their kids because they are so worried that it is going to cause autism—that they won't have a vaccine for their kid for fear of autism. But the failure to get that vaccine means their kids are exposed to profoundly important childhood and serious childhood illnesses.

He makes his claims with incredible conviction. He is not shy about it. He claimed that the measles vaccines ''poisoned an entire generation of children'' and went further to say that the ''only thing that cures measles is nutrition and clean water.''

Before the measles vaccine was developed in the 1960s, hundreds of American kids died every year, and measles is a completely preventable disease with two vaccines administered in childhood. Without it, measles can spread like wildfire, leaving behind serious complications like blindness and encephalitis. We don't know that. We don't remember that because the pages that are on this floor can't remember a time when we weren't having the measles vaccine in the United States of America. It would be a very different world if we hadn't had them, but we do.

Doctors in sub-Saharan Africa, where measles runs rampant, describe watching children die from this preventable disease in their dire warnings they are now sending to the United States.

The CDC warns that kindergarten MMR vaccine rates have dropped below the 95-percent threshold needed to prevent worldwide measles outbreaks.

As I stand here tonight, as the Presiding Officer sits here tonight, five States have reported measles cases. An outbreak in Gaines County, TX, has rapidly grown to 24 reported cases, all of them unvaccinated children. Nine are in the hospital. Nine of these children are in the hospital. Vaccine exemptions in Gaines County are among the highest in the State of Texas. Mr. President, 17.5 percent of Gaines County kindergartners have vaccine exemptions. That is almost 20 percent.

It is not just Mr. Kennedy's vaccine conspiracies that are of grave concern, however. He has spent 50 years muddying the waters of scientific consensus with half-truths and misinformation and bad science.

In his hearing before the Finance Committee, Mr. Kennedy showed an alarming inability to answer simple questions about his past statements. He appeared to have selective memory regarding some of his most outlandish claims.

I asked him point-blank about his claims that COVID–19 was a genetically engineered bioweapon—these are his words: genetically engineered bioweapon—that targets Black and White people but spared Ashkenazi Jews and Chinese people. He never denied this. He never denied that he said it and instead pointed to a debunked theory study as flimsy proof of his claims.

I asked him further, based on what he had said—again, quoting him:

Did you say Lyme disease is a highly likely militarily engineered bioweapon?

To this he answered:

I probably did.

''I probably did'' say that Lyme disease was a militarily engineered bioweapon. How can we consider someone for the highest health office in the country who believes that America's own military engineered Lyme disease and uses it as a weapon against us? What could go wrong?

He said on his podcast that exposure to pesticides could cause children to become transgender—a statement he claims not to remember, but he said it. It is on the record.

He insisted he forgot writing in his own book that ''it's undeniable that African AIDS is an entirely different disease from Western AIDS'' and could provide no explanation for this false statement either.

Mr. Kennedy likes to talk about the need for more research. In fact, that was his answer to many of my colleagues' questions. He even told me to look at an NIH study when I asked him about some of his unfounded claims about COVID–19.

Now, the NIH, as you know, is under attack tonight as we are here, and all Mr. Kennedy has to say about that is that he will look into that.

The NIH is the gold standard worldwide for scientific research and innovation. The University of Colorado is telling me that the system could lose $85 million a year in research dollars to study Alzheimer's, brain injuries, mental illness, and heart disease. If confirmed, Mr. Kennedy would oversee NIH.

I guess I really think that we could do better than a known peddler of junk science to run the most important medical research in the country.

Is a vaccine denier the best we can do for our doctors who are working around the clock and our nurses, too, in the midst of the worst flu outbreak in 15 years? Is a man who became a millionaire many times over by claiming vaccines cause autism the best we really can do for our kids?

Do we really want parents making a choice that is unsafe for them and for their communities because people at the highest offices in the country are making false statements about science? Out of 330 million Americans, we can surely do better than this.

I appreciate the Presiding Officer's patience.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. KIM. Mr. President, I rise today because there is nothing—nothing—that keeps a parent up at night like the health of their child. It doesn't matter if you are a Democrat or a Republican, if you live in the reddest rural areas or the bluest cities. One of the things that binds us as Americans, as people, is that every parent looks at their kids and wants to know that they are doing everything that they can to keep them safe.

And let me tell you, that is not an easy task. I am a father of a 7-year-old and a 9-year-old, two little boys, and I every day wonder, am I doing the right thing for them? Am I being the kind of father that they deserve? Am I looking out and being thoughtful about what they eat, about whether or not I am keeping up with their health, and that they are exercising?

And like most families, I can tell you it is tough to know that you are always doing the best thing for your kids. But like most families, we do what we can.

My wife and I, we try our very best. But we don't have all of the answers.

I mean, how many parents out there, when your kid gets sick and it is too late in the night to find a way to call the doctor or the nurse, you are trying to figure out where to turn to for information?

Where do we go when it is that we feel like we have reached the limits of our own personal knowledge and we need to find a place that we can trust? And that is what this is about. It is about knowing that there is someone you can trust when you feel like you don't know where else to turn, that someone can have your back and you can trust that they have your best interests at heart.

When we think about our doctors, when we think about our nurses, our health professionals, when we think about those making decisions in this great Nation of over 330 million people about our healthcare, we want to trust those individuals, these people that are making these decisions.

And I know for the people in New Jersey, over 9 million people there in the State of New Jersey, they are wondering who they can trust. We live in tough times. In fact, we live in the time of the greatest amount of distrust that we have ever seen in modern history of this country.

And that is most pronounced, most clear when it comes to our health. And one of those people we need to trust the most in our country is the person who runs the Department of Health and Human Services.

I rise today because I have met with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. I have questioned Mr. Kennedy in committee. I have read his statements and examined his record, and I want to say here on the floor of the Senate that he is not someone I can trust with my kids' health. And in good conscience, I cannot vote for him.

If I cannot trust him with the health of my own kids, how can I ask the families of 9 million other New Jerseyans to go do it or for families across our country to trust this man?

I have had the chance to be able to meet him, talk to him in person, ask him questions, that is more than most anyone in my own State is going to have a chance to talk to him. I took that as a deep responsibility to try to use that time and that opportunity to try to deduce whether or not this man rises to the level of trust that I think the people of New Jersey and this country deserve.

And I have come to the conclusion that I cannot support Mr. Kennedy to lead an Agency in charge of our Nation's health. And he has too often diminished that trust in the very healthcare that he would be in charge of and too often has spread disinformation about the diseases and challenges and threats that we face.

Now, what you will hear from his supporters is a story of an advocate for change. They will tell you that he is fighting against a broken system, that he simply wants to make America healthy. And, look, I think all of us, hopefully, can say that we want to make America healthy, that we care about the health of Americans across this Nation.

And I don't think anyone in this Chamber would disagree that there are broken problems that we face when it comes to our healthcare, to our government, to so many aspects of our society.

But, unfortunately, like most things coming out of this current administration, what we are seeing is corruption and conspiracy disguised as false promises of change. It is important that we take this moment to call it out and to expose it, to explain to the American people why this is a position—the Secretary of Health and Human Services is a position where trust is so important.

Because if he is confirmed, Mr. Kennedy will have an incredible platform, well beyond the strong platform that he already has developed—a bully pulpit. But this would be an official platform of the United States, of our government, paid for by the taxpayers, to shape the health of my children and yours.

Let's begin with the Agency he is nominated to lead. HHS employs more than 80,000 people across the United States and around the world. Their mission is simple: to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans. And to put that another way, their job is to make it easier for parents to sleep at night by making sure their kids can stay healthy.

Now, I am not going to go over every single one of the 13 operating divisions of HHS, but let me name a few you have probably heard of. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, they are on the frontlines of preventing the next pandemic; the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, they operate Medicare, Medicaid; the Children's Health Insurance Program, otherwise known as CHIP; and the Health Insurance Marketplaces. All of these provide healthcare for more than 100 million Americans, including my mother and my father who are under Medicare. That is about one in three people under the services of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Then there is the Food and Drug Administration, or the FDA. You probably know them because when there is some sort of outbreak that impacts the food supply, they issue the recalls. But they do a lot of other stuff, too, from approving new medicines to countering bioterrorism.

Now, those are three of the divisions you have heard of. Maybe you haven't heard of the National Institutes of Health, an Agency that sits at the cutting edge of medical research—not just in the Nation but around the world. Or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, an Agency that does work to combat the real addiction and mental health crisis our country is facing.

The Lakewood Community Service Corporation, Lakewood, NJ, received a $2.5 million grant to improve mental health care in one of our State's fastest growing services. Cape May County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse received a $300,000 grant to tackle substance abuse issues in South Jersey, both important causes that my colleagues from both sides of the aisle can agree to support.

And then, finally, there is the Administration for Children and Families, and whether you heard of it or not, you or someone you know probably is touched by it. It is the second largest Agency in HHS, and it is the Agency that manages temporary assistance for needy families: Head Start, childcare and foster care programs.

I wanted to outline all of this because I want you to understand the enormity of the task ahead of the next HHS Secretary. This is not just someone who can walk in and just say: We need to be healthy again. This is someone who will be tasked with operating programs on a day-to-day basis that mean the very life and death of over a third of all Americans.

So when I say that trust is important, it is not just a buzzword. Who do you trust with your health? Who do you trust with your children's health? Who do you trust with your parents' health, as they age and face challenges of physical and cognitive decline?

Let's look at some of the things that show why we should not trust Mr. Kennedy. One of the first things that many parents have to deal with—vaccines. A lot of us have had to hold our kids through those vaccines. We talk to our pediatricians—people we trust—and they talk to us about the importance of making sure that our kids are protected.

Mr. Kennedy has used his stature to push lawsuits that he personally stands to profit from—including over a common vaccine given to children. And throughout all of this, Mr. Kennedy has claimed that he is ''not anti-vaccine.'' While it is clear that we cannot trust him, what is even more clear is that his deception has had a real impact on the lives of people.

Mr. Kennedy's push to sow distrust in Samoa in 2019 helped lead to a measles epidemic that claimed the lives of 83 people, mostly children under the age of 5. While Kennedy said in his hearing that ''We don't know what was killing them,'' the Samoan Director-General of Health, Dr. Alec Ekeroma, called his words ''a total fabrication.''

The doctor said that if Mr. Kennedy is confirmed, he would be ''a danger to us, a danger to everyone.''

That is not someone we can trust.

In a speech on the Senate floor in the 1960s, then-Senator John F. Kennedy, said that ''the treatment of its older citizens is said by anthropologists to be one of the most basic tests of how civilized a society or nation has become.''

I would broaden that test to be our most vulnerable, our neighbors who are

targeted simply because of who they are.

And when Mr. Kennedy spreads false claims like the COVID–19 virus was engineered to spare Jewish Americans and Asians, he uses the trust that he has been given to divide and spread anti-Semitism and anti-Asian hate.

And when Mr. Kennedy, in response to the questions asked of him by Members of this body, refused to acknowledge the importance of taking commonsense steps in our foster care system to protect trans youth, he uses the trust he has been given to divide and spread hate and fear. That is not someone we can trust.

My reasons for opposing Mr. Kennedy's nomination don't just come from the concerns I have for my children; it comes from an understanding I have from my parents.

A little over 50 years ago, my parents came to America from South Korea to start a better life. They did so by working to keep Americans healthy. My father earned his Ph.D. and became a genetic researcher trying to cure cancer and Alzheimer's. My mother worked as a nurse in hospital systems across New Jersey.

They worked hard to earn the trust of people around them, their colleagues, their patients that they had worked on every single day, but also the trust that they had in the people around them for their own health.

My father was a polio survivor; my mother struggled with Lyme disease. They have had their fair share of health struggles. And through them, I have seen a common denominator that our public health system only works when we have people working together with trust and that we the public, in turn, trust them.

But then when I hear Mr. Kennedy say this about Lyme disease. He said:

> Another thing that keeps us from enjoying the outdoors and keeps us locked inside and the idea that this may have been, is highly likely to have been a military weapon, and we cannot say 100 percent for sure, but we do know that they were experimenting with tics there. Now, the American Lyme Disease Foundation wrote:
>
> Some claim that Lyme disease was introduced into the northeastern region of the U.S by a man-made strain that escaped from a high containment biological warfare lab on Plum Island.
>
> They said:
>
> However, there is ample evidence to indicate that both the Ixodes ticks and the bacteria causing Lyme disease were present in the U.S well before the Plum Island facility was ever established.''

According to a Washington Post article written by a Professor Sam Telford, ''It's an old conspiracy theory enjoying a resurgence with lots of sensational headlines and tweets. Even Congress has ordered that the Pentagon must reveal whether it weaponized ticks. And it's not true.''

When it came to the disease of polio that disabled my father since he was a baby, Mr. Kennedy had this to say about the vaccine that nearly eradicated polio from the face of the planet. He said the vaccine, for a period of time, may have led to cancer due to a contamination with a virus that ''killed many many many many many more people than polio ever did.''

So with the polio vaccine he said: ''Did it cause more deaths than it averted? I would say, I don't know.''

And he said this just a year and a half ago.

A large study was published that concluded that the polio vaccine under concern was not associated with increased rates of cancer, and other studies showed that the virus of concern was killed by the same process used to inactivate the polio virus.

And in that same podcast, Mr. Kennedy said:

> There is no vaccine that is safe and effective.

Again, this was just a year and a half ago. Now he is coming to us and saying: I am all for the polio vaccine.

What are the American people left to believe?

Again, our health and our Nation is founded on trust. That is part of the compact we have as Americans for generations. We want trust for our families.

As I said, I am a father of two little boys. All I want for them is to be healthy and happy. They are the reason that I am here in the U.S. Senate, to take actions to be able to give them the best type of lives, to give other kids and other grandkids the kind of lives they deserve.

And I worry about the foods that they eat, and I support efforts to address ultraprocessed foods in America, to try to make sure we can have Americans eating healthy. But I also want someone who is not going to shoot from the hip and spread disinformation.

Our healthcare is far from perfect, and we do need major reforms to get it in a place where it can better serve the American people. We do need massive changes in the way our healthcare, childcare, elder care, and nutrition systems are run, but not without trust.

We need research—more and more research—to understand safety and to power the innovation that will come up with the cures and the medicines of the future. But, this week, we see efforts to undertake massive cuts at NIH, cuts that would set back the very research we need to keep improving our health.

As I conclude here, these efforts to cut and slash our research at NIH and elsewhere would continue under the leadership of Mr. Kennedy. HHS Secretary is a big job. We can't just hand it to someone we can't trust—not for my kids or for my parents or for yours.

I encourage my colleagues, again: Reject this nomination so that every parent in America can go to sleep having trust in a person tasked with ensuring that our children will be healthy in the morning.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the postcloture time with respect to the Kennedy nomination expire at 10:30 a.m., Thursday, February 13. I further ask that, following disposition of the Kennedy nomination, the cloture motion with respect to the Rollins nomination be withdrawn and the Senate vote on confirmation of the Rollins nomination with no intervening action or debate; further, that following disposition of the Rollins nomination, the Senate resume consideration of the Lutnick nomination, and the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Lutnick nomination at 1:45 p.m.; and if cloture is invoked on the Lutnick nomination, that all time be considered expired, and the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Loeffler nomination; and if cloture is invoked on the Loeffler nomination, that all postcloture time be expired, and the Senate vote on confirmation of the Loeffler and Lutnick nominations at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader no earlier than Tuesday, February 18.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

U.S. COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 119th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the accompanying rules for the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be printed in the RECORD.

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Rule 1.—Subject to the provisions of rule XXVI, paragraph 5, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, regular meetings of the committee shall be held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, at 10:00 a.m., in room SD–430, Dirksen Senate Office Building. The chair may, upon proper notice, call such additional meetings as the chair deems necessary.

Rule 2.—The chair of the committee or of a subcommittee, or if the chair is not present, the ranking majority member present, shall preside at all meetings. The chair may designate the ranking minority member to preside at hearings of the committee or subcommittee.

Rule 3.—Meetings of the committee or a subcommittee, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public except as otherwise specifically provided in subsections (b) and (d) of rule XXVI, paragraph 5, of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

Rule 4.—(a) Subject to paragraph (b), one-third of the membership of the committee, actually present, shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business. Any quorum of the committee which is composed of less than a majority of the members of the committee shall include at least one member of the majority and one member of the minority.

(b) A majority of the members of a subcommittee, actually present, shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business; provided, no measure or matter shall be ordered reported unless such majority shall include at least one member of the minority who is a member of the subcommittee. If, at any subcommittee meeting, a measure or matter cannot be ordered reported because of the absence of such a minority member, the measure or matter shall lay over for a day. If the presence of a member of the minority is not then obtained, a majority of the members of the subcommittee, actually present, may order such measure or matter reported.

(c) No measure or matter shall be ordered reported from the committee or a subcommittee unless a majority of the committee or subcommittee is physically present.

Rule 5.—With the approval of the chair of the committee or subcommittee, one member thereof may conduct public hearings other than taking sworn testimony.

Rule 6.—Proxy voting shall be allowed on all measures and matters before the committee or a subcommittee if the absent member has been informed of the matter on which the member is being recorded and has affirmatively requested that the member be so recorded. While proxies may be voted on a motion to report a measure or matter from the committee, such a motion shall also require the concurrence of a majority of the members who are actually present at the time such action is taken.

The committee may poll any matters of committee business as a matter of unanimous consent; 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.

Rule 7.—There shall be prepared and kept a complete transcript or electronic recording adequate to fully record the proceedings of each committee meeting, subcommittee meeting, or conference, whether or not such meeting or any part thereof is closed pursuant to the specific provisions of subsections (b) and (d) of rule XXVI, paragraph 5, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, unless a majority of said members vote to forgo such a record. Such records shall contain the vote cast by each member of the committee or subcommittee on any question on which a ''yea and nay'' vote is demanded, and shall be available for inspection by any committee member. The clerk of the committee, or the clerk's designee, shall have the responsibility to make appropriate arrangements to implement this rule.

Rule 8.—The committee and each subcommittee shall undertake, consistent with the provisions of rule XXVI, paragraph 4, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, to issue public announcement of any hearing or executive session it intends to hold at least one week prior to the commencement of such hearing or executive session. In the case of an executive session, the text of any bill or joint resolution to be considered must be provided to the chair for prompt electronic distribution to the members of the committee.

Rule 9.—The committee or a subcommittee shall require all witnesses heard before it to file written testimony at least 48 hours before a hearing, unless the chair and the ranking minority member determine that there is good cause for failure to so file, and to limit their oral presentation to brief summaries of their arguments. Written testimony may be filed electronically. The presiding officer at any hearing is authorized to limit the time of each witness appearing before the committee or a subcommittee. The committee or a subcommittee shall, as far as practicable, utilize testimony previously taken on bills and measures similar to those before it for consideration.

Rule 10.—Should a subcommittee fail to report back to the full committee on any measure within a reasonable time, the chair may withdraw the measure from such subcommittee and report that fact to the full committee for further disposition.

Rule 11.—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 executive meeting may be held at the same time.

Rule 12.—It shall be the duty of the chair in accordance with section 133(c) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended, to report or cause to be reported to the Senate, any measure or recommendation approved by the committee and to take or cause to be taken, necessary steps to bring the matter to a vote in the Senate.

Rule 13.—Whenever a meeting of the committee or subcommittee is closed pursuant to the provisions of subsection (b) or (d) of rule XXVI, paragraph 5, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no person other than members of the committee, members of the staff of the committee, and designated assistants to members of the committee shall be permitted to attend such closed session, except by special dispensation of the committee or subcommittee or the chair thereof.

Rule 14.—The chair 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 fifteen minutes of the time scheduled for such meeting.

Rule 15.—Whenever a bill or joint resolution shall be before the committee or a subcommittee for final consideration, the clerk shall distribute to each member of the committee or subcommittee a document prepared by the sponsor of the bill or joint resolution. If the bill or joint resolution has no underlying statutory language, the document shall consist of a detailed summary of the purpose and impact of each section. If the bill or joint resolution repeals or amends any statute or part thereof, the document shall consist of a detailed summary of the underlying statute and the proposed changes in each section of the underlying law and either a print of the statute or the part or section thereof to be amended or replaced showing by stricken-through type, the part or parts to be omitted and, in italics, the matter proposed to be added, along with a summary of the proposed changes; or a side-by-side document showing a comparison of current law, the proposed legislative changes, and a detailed description of the proposed changes.

Rule 16.—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. Unless the chair and ranking minority member agree on a shorter period of time, the minority shall have no fewer than three business days to prepare supplemental, minority, or additional views for inclusion in a committee report from the time the majority makes the proposed text of the committee report available to the minority.

Rule 17.—(a) The committee, or any subcommittee, may issue subpoenas, or hold hearings to take sworn testimony or hear subpoenaed witnesses, only if such investigative activity has been authorized by a majority vote of the committee.

(b) For the purpose of holding a hearing to take sworn testimony or hear subpoenaed witnesses, three members of the committee or subcommittee shall constitute a quorum; provided, with the concurrence of the chair and ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee, a single member may hear subpoenaed witnesses or take sworn testimony.

(c) The committee may, by a majority vote, delegate the authority to issue subpoenas to the chair of the committee or a subcommittee, or to any member designated by such chair. Prior to the issuance of each subpoena, the ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee, and any other member so requesting, shall be notified regarding the identity of the person to whom it will be issued and the nature of the information sought and its relationship to the authorized investigative activity, except where the chair of the committee or subcommittee, in consultation with the ranking minority member, determines that such notice would unduly impede the investigation. All information obtained pursuant to such investigative activity shall be made available as promptly as possible to each member of the committee requesting the information, or to any assistant to a member of the committee designated by such member in writing, but the use of any such information is subject to restrictions imposed by the rules of the Senate. Such information, to the extent that it is relevant to the investigation shall, if requested by a member, be summarized in writing as soon as practicable. Upon the request of any member, the chair of the committee or subcommittee shall call an executive session to discuss such investigative activity or the issuance of any subpoena in connection therewith.

(d) Any witness summoned to testify at a hearing, or any witness giving sworn testimony, may be accompanied by counsel of the witness's own choosing who shall be permitted, while the Page 3 of 6 witness is testifying, to advise the witness of any legal rights.

(e) No confidential testimony taken or confidential material presented in an executive hearing, or any report of the proceedings of such an executive hearing, shall be made public, either in whole or in part or by way of summary, unless authorized by a majority of the members of the committee or subcommittee.

Rule 18.—Presidential nominees shall submit a statement of the nominee's background and financial interests, including the financial interests of the nominee's spouse and children living in the household, on a form approved by the committee which shall be sworn to as to its completeness and accuracy. The committee form shall be in two parts—

(I) information relating to employment, education, and background of the nominee relating to the position to which the individual is nominated, and which is to be made public; and

(II) information relating to financial and other background of the nominee, to be made public when the committee determines that such information bears directly on the nominee's qualifications to hold the position to which the individual is nominated.

Information relating to background and financial interests (parts I and II) shall not be required of nominees for less than full-time appointments to councils, commissions, or boards when the committee determines that some or all of the information is not relevant to the nature of the position. Information relating to other background and financial interests (part II) shall not be required of any nominee when the committee determines that it is not relevant to the nature of the position.

Committee action on a nomination, including hearings or meetings to consider a motion to recommend confirmation, shall not be initiated until at least five days after the nominee submits the form required by this rule unless the chair, with the concurrence of the ranking minority member, waives this waiting period.

Rule 19.—Subject to statutory requirements imposed on the committee with respect to procedure, the rules of the committee may be changed, modified, amended, or suspended at any time; provided, not less than a majority of the entire membership so determine at a regular meeting with due notice, or at a meeting specifically called for that purpose.

Rule 20.—When the ratio of members on the committee is even, the term ''majority'' as used in the committee's rules and guidelines shall refer to the party of the chair for purposes of party identification. Numerical requirements for quorums, votes, and the like shall be unaffected.

Rule 21.—First degree amendments must be filed with the chair at least 24 hours before an executive session. The chair shall promptly distribute all filed amendments electronically to the members of the committee. The chair may modify the filing requirements to meet special circumstances with the concurrence of the ranking minority member.

Rule 22.—In addition to the foregoing, the proceedings of the committee shall be governed by the Standing Rules of the Senate and the provisions of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended.

GUIDELINES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS WITH RESPECT TO HEARINGS, MARKUP SESSIONS. AND RELATED MATTERS

Hearings

Section 133 A(a) of the Legislative Reorganization Act requires each committee of the Senate to publicly announce the date, place, and subject matter of any hearing at least one week prior to the commencement of such hearing.

The spirit of this requirement is to assure adequate notice to the public and other members of the Senate as to the time and subject matter of proposed hearings. In the spirit of section 133 A(a) and in order to assure that members of the committee are themselves fully informed and involved in the development of hearings:

1. Public notice of the date, place, and subject matter of each committee or subcommittee hearing should be inserted in the Congressional Record seven days prior to the commencement of such hearing.

2. At least seven days prior to public notice of each committee or subcommittee hearing, the majority should provide notice to the minority of the time, place, and specific subject matter of such hearing.

3. At least three days prior to the date of such hearing, the committee or subcommittee should provide to each member a list of witnesses who have been or are proposed to be invited to appear.

4. The committee and its subcommittee should, to the maximum feasible extent, enforce the provisions of rule 9 of the committee rules as it relates to the submission of written testimony of witnesses 48 hours in advance of a hearing. Witnesses will be urged to submit written testimony even earlier whenever possible. When written testimony is received in advance of a hearing, the committee or subcommittee (as appropriate) should distribute copies of such testimony to each of its members. Witness testimony may be submitted and distributed electronically.

Executive Sessions for the Purpose of Marking Up Bills

In order to expedite the process of marking up bills and to assist each member of the committee so that there may be full and fair consideration of each bill which the committee or a subcommittee is marking up the following procedures should be followed:

1. Seven days prior to the proposed date for an executive session for the purpose of marking up bills the committee or subcommittee (as appropriate) should provide written notice to each of its members as to the time, place, and specific subject matter of such session, including an agenda listing each bill or other matters to be considered, and:

(a) a copy of each bill, joint resolution, or other legislative matter (or committee print thereof) to be considered at such executive session; and

(b) a copy of a summary of the provisions of each bill, joint resolution, or other legislative matter to be considered at such executive session including, whenever possible, an explanation of changes to existing law proposed to be made.

2. Insofar as practical, prior to the scheduled date for an executive session for the purpose of marking up bills, the committee or a subcommittee (as appropriate) should provide each member with a copy of the printed record or a summary of any hearings conducted by the committee or a subcommittee with respect to each bill, joint resolution, or other legislative matter to be considered at such executive session.

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP RULES OF PROCEDURE

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship today adopted rules governing its procedures for the 119th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the accompanying rules adopted by the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be printed in the RECORD.

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMMITTEE RULES—119TH CONGRESS

JURISDICTION

Per Rule XXV(1) of the Standing Rules of the Senate:

(1) Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship to which committee shall be referred all proposed legislation, messages, petitions, memorials, and other matters relating to the Small Business Administration;

(2) Any proposed legislation reported by such committee which relates to matters other than the functions of the Small Business Administration shall, at the request of the chairman of any standing committee having jurisdiction over the subject matter extraneous to the functions of the Small Business Administration, be considered and reported by such standing committee prior to its consideration by the Senate; and likewise measures reported by other committees directly relating to the Small Business Administration shall, at the request of the Chair of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, be referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship for its consideration of any portion of the measure dealing with the Small Business Administration and be reported by this committee prior to its consideration by the Senate.

(3) Such committee shall also study and survey by means of research and investigation all problems of American small business enterprises, and report thereon from time to time.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

General

All applicable provisions of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Senate Resolutions, and the Legislative Reorganization Acts of 1946 and of 1970 (as amended), shall govern the Committee.

Meetings

(a) The regular meeting day of the Committee shall be the first Wednesday of each month unless otherwise directed by the Chair. All other meetings may be called by the Chair as he or she deems necessary, on 5 business days notice where practicable. If at least three Members of the Committee desire the Chair to call a special meeting, they may file in the office of the Committee a written request therefore, addressed to the Chair. Immediately thereafter, the Clerk of the Committee shall notify the Chair of such request. If, within 3 calendar days after the filing of such request, the Chair fails to call the requested special meeting, which is to be held within 7 calendar days after the filing of such request, a majority of the Committee Members may file in the Office of the Committee their written notice that a special Committee meeting will be held, specifying the date, hour and place thereof, and the Committee shall meet at that time and place. Immediately upon the filing of such notice, the Clerk of the Committee shall notify all Committee Members that such special meeting will be held and inform them of its date, hour and place. If the Chair is not present at any regular, additional or special meeting, such member of the Committee as the Chair shall designate shall preside. For any meeting or hearing of the Committee, the Ranking Member may delegate to any Minority Member the authority to serve as Ranking Member, and that Minority Member shall be afforded all the rights and responsibilities of the Ranking Member for the duration of that meeting or hearing. Notice of any designation shall be provided to the Chief Clerk as early as practicable.

(b) It shall not be in order for the Committee to consider any amendment in the first degree proposed to any measure under consideration by the Committee unless an electronic copy of such amendment has been delivered to the Clerk of the Committee at least 2 business days prior to the meeting. Following receipt of all amendments, the Clerk shall disseminate the amendments to all Members of the Committee. This subsection may be waived by agreement of the

Chair and Ranking Member or by a majority vote of the members of the Committee.

Quorums

(a)(1) A majority of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for reporting any legislative measure or nomination.

(2) One-third of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of routine business, provided that one Minority Member is present. The term ''routine business'' includes, but is not limited to, the consideration of legislation pending before the Committee and any amendments thereto, and voting on such amendments, and steps in an investigation including, but not limited to, authorizing the issuance of a subpoena.

(3) In hearings, whether in public or closed session, a quorum for the asking of testimony, including sworn testimony, shall consist of one Member of the Committee.

(b) Proxies will be permitted in voting upon the business of the Committee. A Member who is unable to attend a business meeting may submit a proxy vote on any matter, in writing, or though oral or written personal instructions to a Member of the Committee or staff. Proxies shall in no case be counted for establishing a quorum.

Nominations

In considering a nomination, the Committee shall conduct an investigation or review of the nominee's experience, qualifications, suitability, and integrity to serve in the position to which he or she has been nominated. In any hearings on the nomination, the nominee shall be called to testify under oath on all matters relating to his or her nomination for office. To aid in such investigation or review, each nominee may be required to submit a sworn detailed statement including biographical, financial, policy, and other information which the Committee may request. The Committee may specify which items in such statement are to be received on a confidential basis.

Hearings, Subpoenas, & Legal Counsel

(a)(1) The Chair of the Committee may initiate a hearing of the Committee on his or her authority or upon his or her approval of a request by any Member of the Committee. If such request is by the Ranking Member, a decision shall be communicated to the Ranking Member within 7 business days. Written notice of all hearings, including the title, a description of the hearing, and a tentative witness list shall be given at least 5 business days in advance, where practicable, to all Members of the Committee.

(2) Hearings of the Committee shall not be scheduled outside the District of Columbia unless specifically authorized by the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member or by consent of a majority of the Committee. Such consent may be given informally, without a meeting, but must be in writing.

(b)(1) Any Member of the Committee shall be empowered to administer the oath to any witness testifying as to fact.

(2) The minority on the Committee shall be entitled, upon request made by a majority of the minority members to the Chair before the completion of such hearing, to call witnesses selected by the minority to testify with respect to the measure or matter during at least one day of hearing. Interrogation of witnesses at hearings shall be conducted on behalf of the Committee by Members of the Committee or such Committee staff as is authorized by the Chair or Ranking Minority Member.

(3) Witnesses appearing before the Committee shall file with the Clerk of the Committee a written statement of the prepared testimony at least two business days in advance of the hearing at which the witness is to appear unless this requirement is waived by the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member.

(c) Any witness summoned to a public or closed hearing may be accompanied by counsel of his or her own choosing, who shall be permitted while the witness is testifying to advise the witness of his or her legal rights. Failure to obtain counsel will not excuse the witness from appearing and testifying.

(d) Subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses or the production of memoranda, documents, records, and other materials may be authorized by the Chair with the consent of the Ranking Minority Member or by the consent of a majority of the Members of the Committee. Such consent may be given informally, without a meeting, but must be in writing. The Chair may subpoena attendance or production without the consent of the Ranking Minority Member when the Chair has not received notification from the Ranking Minority Member of disapproval of the subpoena within 72 hours of being notified of the intended subpoena, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. Subpoenas shall be issued by the Chair or by the Member of the Committee designated by him or her. A subpoena for the attendance of a witness shall state briefly the purpose of the hearing and the matter or matters to which the witness is expected to testify. A subpoena for the production of memoranda, documents, records, and other materials shall identify the papers or materials required to be produced with as much particularity as is practicable.

(e) The Chair shall rule on any objections or assertions of privilege as to testimony or evidence in response to subpoenas or questions of Committee Members and staff in hearings.

(f) Testimony may be submitted to the formal record for a period not less than two weeks following a hearing or roundtable, unless otherwise agreed to by Chair and Ranking Member.

Confidential Information

(a) No confidential testimony taken by, or confidential material presented to, the Committee in executive session, or any report of the proceedings of a closed hearing, or confidential testimony or material submitted pursuant to a subpoena, shall be made public, either in whole or in part or by way of summary, unless authorized by a majority of the Members. Other confidential material or testimony submitted to the Committee may be disclosed if authorized by the Chair with the consent of the Ranking Member.

(b) Persons asserting confidentiality of documents or materials submitted to the Committee offices shall clearly designate them as such on their face. Designation of submissions as confidential does not prevent their use in furtherance of Committee business.

Media & Broadcasting

(a) At the discretion of the Chair, public meetings of the Committee may be televised, broadcasted, or recorded in whole or in part by a member of the Senate Press Gallery or an employee of the Senate. Any such person wishing to televise, broadcast, or record a Committee meeting must request approval of the Chair by submitting a written request to the Committee Office by 5 p.m. the day before the meeting. Notice of televised or broadcasted hearings shall be provided to the Ranking Minority Member as soon as practicable.

(b) During public meetings of the Committee, 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.

Subcommittees

The Committee shall not have standing subcommittees.

Amendment of Rules

The foregoing rules may be added to, modified or amended; provided, however, that not less than a majority of the entire Membership so determined at a regular meeting with due notice, or at a meeting specifically called for that purpose.

MEASURES DISCHARGED PETITIONS

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, hereby direct that the Senate Committee on Finance be discharged from further consideration of S.J. Res. 3, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service relating to ''Gross Proceeds Reporting by Brokers That Regularly Provide Services Effectuating Digital Asset Sales,'' and, further, that the joint resolution be immediately placed upon the Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

Ted Cruz, Ted Budd, Cynthia M. Lummis, Bill Hagerty, Tim Sheehy, John R. Curtis, Mike Lee, Tom Cotton, Bernie Moreno, Jim Banks, Rand Paul, Tommy Tuberville, David McCormick, Ron Johnson, Eric Schmitt, Jon Husted, Thom Tillis, James E. Risch, Mike Rounds, John Barrasso, Katie Boyd Britt, Shelley Moore Capito, Steve Daines, Markwayne Mullin, James C. Justice, Pete Ricketts, Ashley Moody, Tim Scott, Jerry Moran, Marsha Blackburn.

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, hereby direct that the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of S.J. Res. 4, a joint resolution Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Energy relating to ''Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Consumer Gas-fired Instantaneous Water Heaters,'' and, further, that the joint resolution be immediately placed upon the Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

Ted Cruz, Tim Scott, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Jim Banks, James E. Risch, Bill Cassidy, Mike Crapo, Roger F. Wicker, John Kennedy, Tim Sheehy, Josh Hawley, Bernie Moreno, Rand Paul, Tommy Tuberville, David McCormick, Ron Johnson, Eric Schmitt, Jon Husted, Mike Lee, Rick Scott, John Cornyn, Kevin Cramer, John Barrasso, John Hoeven, Joni Ernst, Pete Ricketts, Lisa Murkowski, Markwayne Mullin, Roger Marshall, Dan Sullivan.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following joint resolution was discharged from the Committee on Finance, by petition, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 802(c), and placed on the calendar:

S.J. Res. 3. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service relating to ''Gross Proceeds Reporting by Brokers That Regularly Provide Services Effectuating Digital Asset Sales''.

The following joint resolution was discharged from the Committee on Energy and natural Resources, by petition, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 802(c), and placed on the calendar:

S.J. Res. 4. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Energy relating to ''Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Consumer Gas-fired Instantaneous Water Heaters''.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–351. A communication from the Deputy Secretary of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Annual Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties to Reflect Inflation - 2025'' (RIN3038–AF41) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–352. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–353. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13660 with respect to Ukraine; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–354. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13692 with respect to Venezuela; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–355. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Maritime Administrator, Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–356. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy for the position of Deputy Secretary, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–357. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–358. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy for the position of Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science , and Transportation.

EC–359. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39–22918'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–1699)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–360. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39–22933'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–1303)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–361. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39–22951'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2025–0017)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–362. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39–22930'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–2136)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–363. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39–22914'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–2314)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–364. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39–22919'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–2715)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–365. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39–22913'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–0770)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–366. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39–22921'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–1294)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–367. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39–22931'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–2141)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–368. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39–22920'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–0471)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–369. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39–22926'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–2327)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–370. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes; Amendment 39–22924'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–1483)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–371. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Various Airplanes and Helicopters; Amendment 39–22917'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–0996)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–372. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce Deutschland Ltd & Co KG Engines; Amendment 39–22912'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–2664)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–373. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters; Amendment 39–22950'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–2332)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–374. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters; Amendment 39–22952'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No.

FAA–2025–0018)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–375. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Embraer S.A. (Type Certificate Previously Held by Yabora Industria Aeronautica S.A.; Embraer S.A; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. (EMBRAER)) Airplanes; Amendment 39–22922'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–2133)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–376. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; DAHER AEROSPACE (Type Certificate Previously Held by SOCATA) Airplanes; Amendment 39–22928'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–2321)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–377. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; CFM International, S.A. Engines; Amendment 39–22927'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–2325)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–378. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Britten-Norman Aerospace Ltd. Airplanes; Amendment 39–22925'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2024–1299)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–379. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment and Amendment of Multiple United States Area Navigation (RNAV) Routes; Eastern United States'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2024–1157)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–380. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Kinston, NC'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2024–1979)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–381. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of VOR Federal Airways V–9, V–78, V–341, and V–430, and Canadian RNAV Route T–765, and Establishment of United States RNAV Route T–490; Northcentral United'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2024–1157)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–382. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 4150'' ((RIN2120–AA65) (Docket No. 31587)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–383. A communication from the Manager of Legal Litigation and Support, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 4150'' ((RIN2120–AA65) (Docket No. 31586)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–384. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Green Rock LLC v. Internal Revenue Service'' (AOD 2024–01) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–385. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revenue Ruling 2025–4'' (Rev. Rul. 2025–4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2025; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–386. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Treasury Decision (TD): Credit for Production of Clean Hydrogen and Energy Credit'' (RIN1545–BQ97) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2025; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–387. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–707, ''Consumer Protection Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–388. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–708, ''Autonomous Vehicle Testing Permit Requirement Second Temporary Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–389. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–709, ''Driver License and Identification Card Renewal Temporary Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–390. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–710, ''Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Technical Second Temporary Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–391. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–703, ''Reservoir Park Recreation Center Designation Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–392. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–706, ''Child Marriage Prohibition Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–393. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–705, ''Luggage for All Youth in Foster Care Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–394. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–716, ''Amplified Sound Mitigation Regulation Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–395. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–715, ''Public Life and Activity Zones Amendment (''PLAZA'') Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–396. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–704, ''Safe and Supported Pregnancy and Delivery Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–397. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–694, ''Fairness and Stability in Housing Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–398. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–695, ''Fraudulent Vehicle Tag and Parking Enforcement Modernization Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–399. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–696, ''Strengthening Probate Administration Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–400. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–697, ''Pesticide Operations Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–401. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–698, ''Enhancing Mental Health Crisis Support and Hospitalization Amendment Act of 2024''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–402. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–403. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department

of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–404. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Deputy Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–405. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–406. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Chief Financial Officer, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–407. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Inspector General, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–408. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–409. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration , Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science , and Transportation.

EC–410. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–411. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Secretary of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–412. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–413. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Chief Financial Officer, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–414. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Administrator, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–415. A communication from the Biologist, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''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'' (RIN0648–BL72) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–416. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation, and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program: Test Procedure for Compressors'' (RIN1904–AF08) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–417. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation, and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program: Test Procedures for Residential and Commercial Clothes Washers and Consumer Clothes Dryers'' (RIN1904–AF68) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–418. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation, and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program: Test Procedure for General Service Lamps'' (RIN1904–AB99) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–419. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation, and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Commercial Refrigerators, Freezers, and Refrigerator-Freezers'' (RIN1904–AD82) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–420. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Non-Power Production or Utilization Facility License Renewal'' (RIN3150–AI96) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. CASSIDY, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, without amendment:

S. Res. 76. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. CRAPO for the Committee on Finance.

*Jamieson Greer, of Maryland, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

*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. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 532. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to collect registration fees from members of the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BUDD, and Mr. LEE):

S. 533. A bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. ERNST:

S. 534. A bill to amend the Act of August 25, 1958, commonly known as the ''Former Presidents Act of 1958'', with respect to the monetary allowance payable to a former President, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BANKS:

S. 535. A bill to reauthorize the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, to improve access to relative caregivers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. RICKETTS, and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 536. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a tax on the sale of electric vehicles and batteries; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. LEE, Mr. BOOZMAN,

Mr. MARSHALL, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. COTTON, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. THUNE, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. BUDD):

S. 537. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture from prohibiting the use of lead ammunition or tackle on certain Federal land or water under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. ERNST:

S. 538. A bill to reduce Federal spending and the deficit by terminating taxpayer financing of Presidential election campaigns; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. HAWLEY, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 539. A bill to reauthorize the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TUBERVILLE:

S. 540. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the consideration of continuity of health care in determining best medical interest under the Veterans Community Care Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. THUNE, Mr. COTTON, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. RICKETTS, Ms. ERNST, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. HOEVEN, and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 541. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the credit for new clean vehicles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MORENO:

S. 542. A bill to declare English as the official language of the United States, to establish a uniform English language rule for naturalization, and to avoid misconstructions of the English language texts of the laws of the United States, pursuant to Congress' powers to provide for the general welfare of the United States and to establish a uniform rule of naturalization under article I, section 8, of the Constitution; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 543. A bill to prohibit certain discrimination against athletes on the basis of sex by State athletic associations, intercollegiate athletic associations, and covered institutions of higher education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. RISCH, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. CRAPO, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 544. A bill to provide for the location of multiple hardrock mining mill sites, to establish the Abandoned Hardrock Mine Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. BRITT, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. KELLY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. RISCH, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. LUJÁN, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 545. A bill to prohibit certain uses of xylazine, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO:

S. 546. A bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to make a technical correction to the water rights settlement for the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 547. A bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Labor to conduct a study and issue a report on grant programs to support the nursing workforce; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 548. A bill to amend the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998 to require a Caribbean border counternarcotics strategy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 549. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the exemption from the excise tax on alternative motorboat fuels sold as supplies for vessels or aircraft to include certain vessels serving only one coast; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MULLIN (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 550. A bill to provide for the equitable settlement of certain Indian land disputes regarding land in Illinois, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 551. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the application of a cost-of-living adjustment to the non-labor related portion for hospital outpatient department services furnished in Alaska and Hawaii; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 552. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the treatment of critical access hospital services furnished by a critical access hospital located in a noncontiguous State; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 553. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a floor on payments to sole community hospitals located in Alaska and Hawaii under the hospital outpatient prospective payment system; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. RICKETTS, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 554. A bill to enhance bilateral defense cooperation between the United States and Israel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. COONS, Mr. KELLY, and Mr. RICKETTS):

S. 555. A bill to direct the Secretary of State to establish a national registry of Korean American divided families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. RICKETTS):

S. 556. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to persons engaged in logistical transactions and sanctions evasion relating to oil, gas, liquefied natural gas, and related petrochemical products from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. ERNST, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 557. A bill to repeal the small business loan data collection requirements under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act; 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. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. DAINES, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. Res. 75. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that member countries of NATO must commit at least 2 percent of their national gross domestic product to national defense spending to hold leadership or benefit at the expense of those countries who meet their obligations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. Res. 76. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions; from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 157

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 157, a bill to authorize certain States to take certain actions on certain Federal land to secure an international border of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 158

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 158, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide that aliens who have been convicted of, or who have committed, sex offenses or domestic violence are inadmissible and deportable.

S. 167

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 167, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to punish criminal offenses targeting law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

S. 214

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 214, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the rate of the special pension payable to Medal of Honor recipients, and for other purposes.

S. 311

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT) was added as a cosponsor of

S. 311, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives for education.

S. 315

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors 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. 338

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 338, a bill to award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal to Fred Korematsu, in recognition of his contributions to civil rights, his loyalty and patriotism to the United States, and his dedication to justice and equality.

S. 422

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 461

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 461, a bill to exempt children of certain Filipino World War II veterans from the numerical limitations on immigrant visas, and for other purposes.

S. 485

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. CURTIS) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) were added as cosponsors of S. 485, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

S. 513

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. SCHIFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 513, a bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to establish and carry out a grant program to conserve, restore, and manage kelp forest ecosystems, and for other purposes.

S. 515

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 515, a bill to repeal the Impoundment Control Act of 1974.

S. 525

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 525, a bill to transfer the functions, duties, responsibilities, assets, liabilities, orders, determinations, rules, regulations, permits, grants, loans, contracts, agreements, certificates, licenses, and privileges of the United States Agency for International Development relating to implementing and administering the Food for Peace Act to the Department of Agriculture.

S.J. RES. 16

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 16, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to require that the Supreme Court of the United States be composed of nine justices.

S. RES. 47

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 47, a resolution designating January 30, 2025, as ''Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution''.

S. RES. 53

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 53, a resolution recognizing the 80th anniversary of the amphibious landing on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima during World War II and the raisings of the flag of the United States on Mount Suribachi.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 75—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT MEMBER COUNTRIES OF NATO MUST COMMIT AT LEAST 2 PERCENT OF THEIR NATIONAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT TO NATIONAL DEFENSE SPENDING TO HOLD LEADERSHIP OR BENEFIT AT THE EXPENSE OF THOSE COUNTRIES WHO MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS

Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. DAINES, and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 75

Whereas, in 2014, the heads of state and governments of the member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (commonly known as ''NATO'') renewed their earlier commitment to invest 2 percent of their national gross domestic product (referred to in this preamble as ''GDP'') to defense spending to help ensure the continued military readiness of NATO;

Whereas NATO considers the 2 percent commitment as a floor and not a ceiling for what member countries of NATO have committed to invest in their national defense efforts;

Whereas the current global security environment has caused the current leadership of NATO and the United States to consider raising this commitment even higher;

Whereas 23 of the 31 member countries spent at least 2 percent of their GDP on national defense in 2024; and

Whereas, since the year 2000, NATO has lost almost $2,000,000,000,000 in mutual defense spending capability from member countries not meeting the commitment of 2 percent of their GDP towards defense; and

Whereas it is in the interest of all member countries to meet the 2 percent minimum commitment or have a plan in place to do so before the opening session of the NATO Summit in The Hague, which is scheduled to take place in June 2025: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) any citizen of a member country of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (commonly known as ''NATO'') that is not meeting its commitment to spend 2 percent of its gross domestic product (referred to in this resolution as ''GDP'') on national defense should not be allowed to hold any position within the leadership of NATO, including positions such as—

(A) the Secretary General of NATO;

(B) the Deputy Secretary General of NATO;

(C) any Assistant Secretaries General of NATO;

(D) the NATO Spokesperson; and

(E) any uniformed military leadership or command positions within the structure of NATO at the 2-star (OF–7) level or above; and

(2) any member country of NATO that fails to meet its commitment to spend 2 percent of its GDP on national defense should not be allowed to host any significant formal or informal meetings, conferences, or summits of NATO at the ministerial level or above, outside established routine corporate processes of NATO that direct military operations or coordination at a headquarters location, that would provide substantial economic benefit to the economy and enable the ability for that member country to receive international recognition, including—

(A) the NATO Summit;

(B) meetings of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs;

(C) NATO Parliamentary Assembly sessions; and

(D) the NATO Youth Summit or similar events.

SENATE RESOLUTION 76—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS

Mr. CASSIDY submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions which which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 76

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 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (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 $7,767,027, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $75,000 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 $25,000 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 $13,314,904, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $75,000 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 $25,000 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 $5,547,877, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed $75,000 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 $25,000 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.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have seven 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 COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

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 12, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 11 a.m., to consider a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct an oversight hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

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 12, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following fellows in my office be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 1st session of the 119th Congress: Mary Fernandes, Sarah Goldman, Adam Hasz, and Alyssa Rudelis.

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

LOCAL ACCESS TO COURTS ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 32 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 32) to clarify where court may be held for certain district courts in Texas and California.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 32) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 32

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 ''Local Access to Courts Act'' or ''LACA''.

SEC. 2. ORGANIZATION OF TEXAS DISTRICT COURTS.

Section 124(b)(2) of title 28, United States Code, is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (3), by inserting ''and College Station'' before the period at the end.

SEC. 3. ORGANIZATION OF CALIFORNIA DISTRICT COURTS.

Section 84(d) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''and El Centro'' after ''at San Diego''.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 13; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session to resume Executive Calendar No. 17 under the previous order; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Thursday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the

Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of my colleagues.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. President, on the eve of the vote for the nominee for the Department of Health and Human Services, I stand before you acknowledging that I will vote no on the confirmation of Mr. Robert F. Kennedy.

I stand before you tonight after looking at his abilities, his background and qualifications, and his character. For me, I listened to my constituents and the calls that we have received into our office. And I have read articles. I have looked at petitions and lawsuits. I have listened to podcasts, and even watched a video that he produced.

There were inconsistencies in his positions, and so that is one reason that I could say no to this candidate.

Even as the former deputy secretary of health and social services from Delaware, I thought about the potential for another pandemic in our country and would he be ready for the job?

I thought about the fact that I come from a State that is also an agriculture State, and we are right now dealing with issues and concerns and fears about avian flu. Would he be ready for the job?

I have thought about senior citizens in my State who are on Medicare and children with special needs who may be on Medicaid, and the fact that in our hearing and also in my one-on-one conversation with him, he confused the two. Even within a week's time, he did not learn the differences between the two.

That was concerning enough, but tonight, in the time that I have, I want to also say I stand here as a grandmother, and I think about my granddaughter Lennox and her ability to, No. 1, be safe in school, because she is vaccinated, and she is with other children who are vaccinated and no longer have to worry about things like polio. I think about her ability to have reproductive freedom over her own life, when Mr. Kennedy has changed his positions so many times on where he stands on reproductive freedom and the right for her to choose what she wants for her life.

But I think one of the most troubling things that took place during our meeting was that he was not familiar with the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, EMTALA, while we literally have a crisis in maternal mortality. It is important to me that the person who holds this job understands those basic things—Medicare, Medicaid, EMTALA—and that we face a challenge for women's lives being saved.

I asked him specifically if he agreed about making sure that, if someone was having complications during their pregnancy, that they should get the care that they need. This is both something that is being experienced across the country, but it is also personal for me.

A few years ago, after my son and daughter-in-law went through so much to get pregnant through IVF, on Christmas morning, I remember beginning to make the family dinner, and I got a call from my daughter-in-law saying: Mom, something is wrong. My water broke.

She was only about 5, 6 months pregnant—about 5 months pregnant. And she went to a hospital. And I got to that hospital, and because I knew, from my former jobs, of the statistics, particularly for Black women and maternal deaths—I saw her sitting in a wheelchair in the waiting room not being attended. The hospital ended up telling her she needed to go home and just basically wait it out.

For that whole month afterward, my son and my daughter-in-law stayed in my house. They slept in my bed. We supported each other.

But because of the miracle of IVF, they were able to conceive again, and 2 years ago this weekend, I became a grandmother of my granddaughter Lennox.

Tonight, I stand here on behalf of the children who want and need to be healthy. I stand here on behalf of the women across the country who need to know that there is a Cabinet Secretary who understands the need for emergency care, who understands the rights of women to make choices with their doctors and their families, and, if they have a pastor or a rabbi, with their rabbi and their pastor.

As someone who has focused much of my career on health and social services and dealing with health disparities, it is important that we do better as a country with our health status and that we are healthier.

But I go back to the beginning. Does the candidate have the qualifications, the background, the character, and the ability? For this candidate, unfortunately, the answer is no.

And tonight, I stand here for all of the children of our country, all of the families of our country, and I will be voting no on this nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I am joining my Democratic colleagues on the Senate floor today because we have pledged to Americans that we will always stand up and fight for affordable, quality healthcare.

Right now, Donald Trump and his Republican allies in Congress are trying to dismantle healthcare access for Nevadans and Americans across the country. As we speak, Republicans are working out a way to pass their budget through Congress and slash Medicaid to pay for tax cuts for Trump's ultrawealthy friends. Their budget for these billionaire tax cuts was just released this morning, and they want to give away trillions of dollars to the richest Americans and add about $3 trillion to our national debt in exchange for nearly $1 trillion in healthcare cuts for working families. You can bet Medicaid will be one of their biggest targets.

It is absolutely outrageous, and it is important that we shine a light for the American public so they know what is going on.

Right now, the Senate is considering the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to lead the Department of Health and Human Services—who has made it clear that he will be a rubberstamp for Donald Trump even if it hurts Nevadans.

This isn't fearmongering or speaking in hypotheticals. Donald Trump has been coming after critical healthcare since his first term in office. Every annual budget proposal Trump had in his first term, from 2017 through 2020, included huge cuts to Medicaid. And when Republicans in Congress tried to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, President Trump was on board with every plan they came up with that slashed Medicaid in the process.

I will tell you what: Democrats stood up to him every time.

But even after multiple failed attempts, it doesn't seem like President Trump has learned that Americans don't want him to roll back Medicaid.

His Project 2025 manifesto calls for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to impose lifetime caps on Medicaid. What does that mean? That means a person can only receive Medicaid benefits for a limited period of time no matter their income or their healthcare needs. That would leave about 92,800 Nevadans who are low-income and depend on Medicaid for healthcare at risk of losing their coverage.

We know RFK, Jr., will just let this happen if he becomes the Secretary of Health and Human Services. HHS oversees the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which means Mr. Kennedy would have control over what happens with these essential healthcare programs.

What is ironic is that Mr. Kennedy doesn't seem to even know the difference between Medicare and Medicaid. He confused the two multiple times during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Finance Committee.

Also during that hearing, he made it very clear to me and he made it very clear to the general public who was watching that he would refuse to even tell me he wouldn't be a rubberstamp for this administration, that he could have an independent thought and fight any harm that would occur to Nevadans or across this country; he would stand up with them. He made it very

clear that he would not, that he would stand with Donald Trump.

I cannot support someone who would let Donald Trump give his billionaire friends tax cuts at the expense of Nevadans' healthcare.

I know some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have argued that their plan to cut Medicaid is about getting rid of waste and fraud. Listen, I am all for reducing government waste and fraud and streamlining our bureaucracy.

I will tell you, I served for 8 years as the attorney general in the State of Nevada, and during that period of time, the Medicaid Fraud Unit was in my office. We prosecuted and we went after individuals, and we held people accountable for that waste and fraud in the Medicaid Program. So I am all about addressing waste and fraud. In fact, I know that my Democratic colleagues and I have offered to work in a bipartisan way to cut wasteful spending.

Instead, however, Trump and Republican leadership want to gut Medicaid, which millions of Americans depend on to access healthcare. It is just wrong. But let me talk about why. Let me tell you a little bit about the history of this.

Medicaid was created in 1965 as a way for the Federal and State governments to provide healthcare coverage to low-income people who need it. That includes children, pregnant women, seniors, people with disabilities, and adults across the United States. It helps veterans, new moms and their babies, rural hospitals, primary care providers, mental health care workers, and more.

As of June 2024, 788,481 Nevadans were enrolled in Medicaid and its initiatives, like the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP. Nearly 800,000 people in Nevada—and that is just Nevada—depend on Medicaid to keep themselves and their families healthy. This includes one in six adults, three out of eight children, four in seven nursing home residents, and one-third of people with disabilities. Forty-three percent of our births are covered by Medicaid.

But here is the deal: Sixty-six percent of adults in Nevada who benefit from Medicaid work for a living.

I cannot say enough about this program and its impact in my State and how important it is. People over the age of 65 and disabled rely on Medicaid for their long-term care, and people with disabilities rely on Medicaid for their long-term care.

Let me say that there are seniors who helped build this country and make America what it is today. They worked hard, they raised their families, and they contributed to our economy. Some are veterans of our Armed Forces. Now in their senior years, they have chronic illnesses, and they aren't able to move around the house like they used to. They cannot take care of themselves alone. That is what Medicaid is for.

In Nevada, 17,600 Medicaid enrollees used home- and community-based services and long-term services to support themselves. That means nursing facility care, adult daycare programs, home health aide services, personal care services, transportation, and supported employment.

It is a common misconception that Medicare and private insurance covers long-term nursing facility care or home care. They just don't. That is Medicaid. That is what Donald Trump and Republican leadership and RFK, Jr., want to cut to thank our seniors for everything they have done for our country. They want to roll back the healthcare benefits that are giving them the dignity they deserve in their retirement.

But that is not all. Medicaid also supports low-income children and working families, including pregnant women and children with disabilities. Nearly 40 percent of all children in Nevada are covered by Medicaid and CHIP. This is a crucial program for Nevada's kids in making sure that they get their annual checkups, vaccines, hospital emergency care, dental and vision care, and the medications they need. All of this—all of this—is key to ensuring that our kids grow and that they develop at a healthy rate.

Medicaid also covers more than 40 percent of all births in Nevada. In 2023, that was 13,206 babies and their mothers who had access to essential healthcare that they wouldn't have been able to afford otherwise. These are the children, babies, mothers who are now being targeted by Donald Trump so he can pay for tax cuts for the ultrarich.

Another key component of Medicaid coverage includes people with mental health challenges and substance use disorders. Nevada Medicaid provides screening and early intervention, outpatient and community services, crisis and emergency response, and residential and inpatient treatment to children and adults.

I know we have a mental health crisis and a drug epidemic in this country. I see it. I hear about it from Nevadans every single day. I think both Democrats and Republicans agree that we are just not dedicating enough resources towards Americans' mental health.

When there is a shooting at a school or place of worship or a music festival, the first thing I hear is that we need to invest more in mental health. And families in both red and blue States are being torn apart by fentanyl and other dangerous drugs.

So why do my Republican colleagues want to do Donald Trump's bidding and slash Medicaid, making this crisis even worse? They are working right now to pass a budget through Congress that guts these critical programs. And they want to confirm Mr. Kennedy, who we know is going to go along with every one of Trump's plans.

If they succeed, what is going to happen to Nevada's working families, our seniors, our veterans, and our children? What will happen to them if Medicaid is slashed? Well, let me just tell you what is going to happen.

In Nevada, we rely on Federal funding for the vast majority of our Medicaid Program. Without it, policymakers in my State will be forced to cut coverage and leave hundreds of thousands of Nevadans uninsured, without access to affordable, quality healthcare. I said it before. Nearly 800,000 Nevadans who have Medicaid now will be in danger of being kicked off their health insurance, and 17,600 seniors and disabled people in Nevada will be at risk of losing their coverage, leaving even more families with nowhere to turn to take care of their elderly loved ones.

When Nevadans lose their coverage, the already-expensive cost of healthcare shoots up. Nevada Health Link has a list of costs for people without health insurance. Let me tell you what that looks like now if they were no longer to have the benefit of Medicaid.

Mammograms will cost $212 now. Brain MRIs have a copay of $20 to $100 with insurance, but it will become $1,000 to $5,000 without insurance. A visit to the emergency room will cost Nevadans who are insured a $50 to a $150 copay, but Nevadans who don't have insurance could pay as much as $3,000. A baby's visit to the doctor for a wellness checkup costs $10 to $30 if they have insurance, but without insurance, it costs about $95 per visit.

These are the kinds of costs the average Nevada family cannot afford to pay, but Donald Trump is threatening to make this a reality.

If Donald Trump cuts health insurance in Nevada, even more healthcare providers may be forced to close up shop because their patients can't pay for their care.

Let me just stress this even more: Nevada's rural hospitals rely heavily on Medicaid. If Medicaid is cut, these hospitals that are already understaffed and overwhelmed would have to reduce their services, if not shut down entirely.

Now, that is not unique to Nevada. Every rural community that relies on Medicaid is going to have the same problem. If you know our rural communities, you know that very rarely is there access to healthcare in a rural community, and when those providers are there, that is the place for our rural Americans to go. Sometimes they have to drive, in my State, 2 to 3 to 4 hours just to get access to healthcare. If we take away those areas and the locations for healthcare in our rural communities, that will devastate rural Americans.

The reality is, in Nevada, we just don't have enough providers in our Medicaid Program. It is one thing to have a clinic open that door; it is another to have a hospital be able to open those doors to communities. But if you

don't have the providers, that is essentially shutting down healthcare for individuals and people across this country.

I will say my State is working to build out networks and encourage providers to come to Nevada, but we can't do it without critical funding from Medicaid. If Donald Trump cuts Medicaid, one of the first things my State will have to do is cut payment rates for healthcare providers, which will make our shortage of providers even worse, and it will disincentivize providers coming to live and work in Nevada. The ripple effect it will have on my State's economy will be disastrous. We just can't let this happen. This is going to affect Americans in every State across the country.

We have to come together as a Congress and protect our working families from Donald Trump's billionaire tax cuts, and that includes voting no on RFK, Jr., whom Trump handpicked to lead HHS because he knew Mr. Kennedy wouldn't do a thing to stop him.

With RFK running our Department of Health and Human Services, it is not just Medicaid that is in danger; Trump also wants to dismantle the Affordable Care Act. As we all may remember, he has concepts of a plan to do just that, but let's talk about what that means.

Before the ACA, if you were an adult with no dependents, even if you were low-income, you had no access to Medicaid. Unless your employer provided health insurance, you had none. Now, thanks to the ACA, more people than ever before can get the healthcare they need. Over the last 11 years, that has amounted to 20 million low-income adults enrolling in affordable, quality healthcare coverage through Medicaid. This has been a huge gift to our economy.

Think of it this way: If you were an adult who had a chronic illness that kept you from working, you didn't used to have access to health insurance, but because of the ACA, you can now get the care and treatment you need and get back into the workforce.

The ACA has helped Medicaid support our workers to boost our healthcare workforce, and it has made us a stronger and healthier nation. But, once again, Donald Trump wants to roll this expansion of Medicaid back and strip healthcare from thousands of Nevadans so he can pay for tax cuts for his elite, billionaire friends.

Well, I don't know about my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but I have no interest in cutting taxes for the ultrawealthy when we should be cutting taxes for working families. Here is how we can do that: Part of the Affordable Care Act provided tax credits for low-income Nevadans to make their healthcare premiums cheaper and help them afford their insurance. When we passed the bipartisan American Rescue Plan and the Inflation Reduction Act, we made those tax credits available to even more people, especially to those who had been impacted by the COVID–19 pandemic. But now those tax credits for hard-working families are set to expire at the end of this year.

This would be devastating to Nevada families and small businesses, as 11,000 Nevadans would lose their healthcare coverage. Nevadans who have benefited from these tax credits would see their healthcare premiums go up by $2,000 a year, on average, and 250,606 small businesses and self-employed workers in Nevada who qualified for these tax credits will see their premiums increase.

I will tell you what: My Republican colleagues in the majority now have a decision to make. Instead of letting these tax credits for working families and small businesses expire and throwing thousands of lives into chaos, they could renew them. It should be simple. Let's come together and prioritize hard-working families and small businesses over billionaires. That is what we were elected to do, and it is what the American people expect of us.

We cannot give our country over to the elite—to the wealthiest people like Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.—who will do whatever President Trump wants him to do to our healthcare system.

My Democratic colleagues and I stand here today and every day ready to continue pushing back against Donald Trump's attacks on Americans' healthcare. Trump can say whatever he wants about not touching Medicaid and making America healthy, but the truth is that he will do whatever it takes to lift up his elite, billionaire friends and then tell you it is for your own good. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., will be just a rubberstamp for that agenda. Because of that, I will be voting no on his confirmation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). The Democratic leader.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, unfortunately and sadly, we are witnessing an alarming abdication of duty from Republicans here in the Senate. The job of the Senate when it comes to nominees is very simple: When a nominee is obviously qualified and experienced, we should consider them seriously even if we don't agree with their political views or ultimately vote for them. But when a nominee comes before the Senate who is obviously unqualified, who is obviously fringe, whose views are obviously detrimental to the well-being of the American people, well, Senators have a duty to reject them and to tell the President to send someone better.

We were faced with one such nominee earlier today in Tulsi Gabbard, and now we are faced with another such nominee right now.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is not remotely qualified to become the next Secretary of Health and Human Services. In fact, I might go further. Robert F. Kennedy might be one of the least qualified people the President could have chosen for the job. It is almost as if Mr. Kennedy's beliefs, history, and background were tailor-made to be the exact opposite of what the job demands.

A few weeks ago, it seemed like maybe Senate Republicans would have drawn the line on nominees like Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and Tulsi Gabbard, but the past few days have been a stunning capitulation by Senate Republicans. At this point, they are just rubberstamping people no matter how fringe they are.

If the Senate had a secret ballot, I will bet you that Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., would never have come close to confirmation. His unfitness for the job is simply too obvious and too glaring.

HHS is an Agency that depends on science, on evidence, and on impartiality to ensure the well-being of over 330 million Americans. HHS ensures we eat safe food, purchase reliable medications, oversees Medicare benefits, and approves the use of lifesaving vaccines. Most importantly, a good HHS Secretary makes sure the American people have access to affordable, high-quality healthcare.

Mr. Kennedy, unfortunately, is not qualified to oversee any of these things. He is neither a doctor nor a scientist nor a public health expert nor a policy expert of any kind.

If Mr. Kennedy is confirmed given that lack of background, it is my deep fear that he will rubberstamp Donald Trump's war against healthcare, meaning we will see more of the disastrous funding cuts of the past few weeks, meaning that more people will lose health coverage, meaning that the interests of for-profit corporations and Big Pharma will come before the needs of working Americans.

When I saw Mr. Kennedy and asked him certain views, like on abortion, he said: Well, I am going to defer to the President.

On something as personal, as heartfelt, as talked over within ourselves, even, as abortion, he will follow the whims and the wishes of the President? Well, then, how do we know he won't do it on everything else? Even in the places where he might try to tell someone in an interview that he is different than the President, how do we know he won't just follow the President given that he said that on one of the most fundamental views a person can hold?

I am so troubled by this nomination. Already, as we have seen, community health centers across the country have been locked out of the funding they need to serve patients, and I fear it will get worse under RFK, Jr.'s watch. Already, the CDC has gutted valuable public health care data from its websites before the courts stepped in. As we speak, DOGE has basically hacked into the payment data of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which tens of millions of people rely on for secure benefits. I fear all

of that will get worse—worse—under RFK, Jr.'s watch.

Now, it would be bad enough that a vote to confirm RFK, Jr., would be a vote to weaken America's healthcare system, but it gets even worse when you remember that a vote for RFK, Jr., is also a vote to elevate a conspiracy theorist to the top healthcare job in the country.

Mr. Kennedy has made a living not by promoting public health but, in his later years, by actively fighting it. RFK is the face of the modern anti-vax movement. He has spent decades profiting off vaccine misinformation, undermining public trust in a medical practice that has saved tens of millions of lives, if not hundreds of millions or more, for more than a century.

We need to take a moment to truly reckon with the dangers of putting a vaccine skeptic in charge of HHS.

Simply put, weakening vaccine standards could mean more people will die—more people will die. A vaccine skeptic in charge of HHS could defund vaccine awareness campaigns that are led by organizations like the CDC. A vaccine skeptic in charge of HHS could reshape the CDC's vaccine advisory board and alter which kinds of vaccines are required to be covered by insurance companies.

A vaccine skeptic in charge of HHS would make our schools less safe. If fewer kids are required to be vaccinated against things like measles, the results will be sicker classrooms across America.

A vaccine skeptic in charge of HHS could weaken protections for vaccine and drugmakers from frivolous lawsuits.

These are just some of the dangers that come with putting a vaccine skeptic in charge of America's healthcare policy. It will set American healthcare back dramatically.

Of course, during his hearings, RFK, Jr., tried to run away from his fringe views. We heard the usual excuses you might expect from a nominee forced to answer for a terrible record. He suggested perhaps he was misquoted here and there or that he had been misunderstood or that he never meant to come across as anti-vaccine at all, and that, of course, he would follow the science. Well, give me a break. Are Senators supposed to believe that someone who has spent decades writing books and giving speeches and making trips around the world undermining vaccines has suddenly had this epiphany and come around on vaccines; that, suddenly, now that he has been nominated to lead HHS, he is fully on board with vaccines, and that we have nothing to worry about when it comes to his views? How convenient. Again, give me a break.

We should look less at RFK, Jr.'s eleventh-hour conversion and, instead, examine the things he has said again and again, going back decades. We should look at the way RFK, Jr., has used his powerful platform to spread misinformation for years, like in 2023—not very long ago—when Mr. Kennedy went on FOX News and said:

> I do believe autism does come from vaccines.

Or when Mr. Kennedy gave his speech at a conference linking the CDC vaccines division to ''fascism.''

Or like in 2021, when he said on a podcast:

> Our job is to resist and to talk about vaccines to everyone. If I see someone on a hiking trail carrying a little baby and I say to him, ''Better not get vaccinated.''

And, of course, you could try reading Mr. Kennedy's numerous books against vaccines, like the one claiming parents have been misled on the measles vaccine. Or you could go to the online store of one of his anti-vaccine groups and check out the merchandise they sell for kids, like the onesie that says ''Unvaxxed and Unafraid''—a onesie for a little one, putting this propaganda on him or her.

This last example is pretty revealing because it is not just that Mr. Kennedy embraces pseudoscience and conspiracy theories but that he has, in fact, profited off spreading misinformation. He has been involved with no fewer than five lawsuits filed by anti-vaccine groups against drug companies. In fact, his primary source of income from the last year came from the fees he collected by referring clients to a civil lawsuit against vaccines.

And, by the way, he didn't originally disclose those connections to ethics officials. Worse, he refused to give up his financial stake in any settlement agreement that comes from one of these lawsuits. That is stunning.

That means, right now, Republicans are on the brink of confirming a nominee to HHS who will be in charge of vaccine regulations in America and who at the same time stands to benefit from lawsuits against vaccines, financially benefit.

Well, Donald Trump says he wants to get rid of the swamp. This is a textbook definition of ''the swamp''—to benefit from lawsuits against vaccines while you are HHS Secretary and have power over which vaccines are needed and how they are distributed and talked about to the American people.

Now, let me repeat what I said a few weeks earlier. It fills me with such sadness, as well as a great deal of frustration and even anger. A few weeks ago, it seemed like Senate Republicans would have drawn the line on nominees like Robert Kennedy and Tulsi Gabbard. A few weeks ago, yes, indeed, it did seem like Senate Republicans, maybe, would have drawn the line on RF Kennedy, Jr., and Tulsi Gabbard. But, unfortunately, and, again, sadly, the past few days have been a stunning capitulation by Senate Republicans.

If the Senate had a secret ballot, I will bet you that Tulsi Gabbard would have gotten fewer than 10 votes and Robert Kennedy would not have come close to confirmation. My guess is a majority of the party on the other side would have voted against him as well, as are all of us.

But, instead, Donald Trump is tightening his vice grip even further on Senate Republicans. What we are witnessing is leadership from one branch of government, withering under pressure from another, even to the point of confirming dangerously unfit individuals to positions of immense responsibility.

My Republican colleagues should think very carefully before they roll the dice on Mr. Kennedy. There is a very serious risk that, if confirmed, Mr. Kennedy will take steps that severely undermine public health, and then sooner or later public backlash is going to build, and Republicans will have wished they didn't sign their names to this troubling nominee.

So I implore my Republican colleagues, reject the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy to be Secretary of HHS. There are certainly better individuals for the job, even if many on our side may not agree with them politically.

But a vote to confirm Mr. Kennedy is a vote to make America sicker. A vote to confirm Mr. Kennedy is a vote to make America sicker. It is a vote to let pseudoscience dictate healthcare policy. It is a vote that will endanger the lives of the American people. And it is a vote, I truly believe, many, many Republicans will eventually deeply regret.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today alongside Senator SCHUMER and Senator CORTEZ MASTO and so many others who have come to the floor today in opposition to the President's nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to lead the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services is the top health official in our country and is in charge of everything from preventing disease outbreaks to making sure our kids are healthy and have a good start in life.

Americans need and deserve a Secretary who is guided by facts and science in decision making. After all, this is someone who will be in charge of overseeing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's critical efforts to fight disease outbreaks; the Food and Drug Administration's work to ensure the safety of the medications Americans rely on and the food on our grocery shelves; the National Institutes of Health's ground breaking, lifesaving medical research; the Administration for Community Living's support for older adults and people living with disabilities, as well as their families and caregivers; and the Administration for Children and Families' work to oversee the foster care system and child adoption programs—something I care deeply about as a cochair

of the adoption caucus for the U.S. Senate; as well as work to prevent human trafficking.

Through these efforts and more, the Department of Health and Human Services directly touches more lives, actually, than any other Cabinet Agency.

The building that houses the Department is named for Minnesota's ''Happy Warrior,'' Vice President Hubert Humphrey, former U.S. Senator for the State of Minnesota. He was a champion for expanding access to healthcare, grew up in South Dakota, grew up at a drugstore, went on to get his degree at Minnesota and eventually became a U.S. Senator, always fighting for those—in his words—''in the shadows of life.'' Inscribed in the entrance hall of that building are words from Humphrey's final speech in 1977:

The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life; the sick—

As well as, of course, those with disabilities.

That is the test for this Agency that is housed in the building with those words from the former Senator from my State, whose desk I actually have. I open it up, and I see his name, ''Hubert H. Humphrey'' carved into that desk.

You need someone as a Secretary of this Department that believes deeply in those words and believes in them with all the modern science and every tool we have to keep people healthy.

Robert Kennedy, Jr., does not pass that test.

Among the HHS Secretary's most important duties is ensuring American medical research remains on the cutting edge. Yet Mr. Kennedy's record reveals a consistent pattern of dismissing, distorting, and devaluing the very research that is critical to HHS's mission.

Among other things, the Secretary oversees the National Institutes of Health, which, for more than a century, has been a driving force behind such groundbreaking discoveries as blood tests to detect HIV and hepatitis, the use of lithium to manage bipolar disorder, and the HPV vaccine to prevent cervical cancer.

This administration has already displayed open hostility to medical research. Over the weekend, we learned that the administration intends to defund and derail lifesaving medical research.

Let's be clear about what is happening here. They are looking for money everywhere: Head Start program, firefighter grants. They are looking for money over at NIH with that lifesaving research. Why? Because the Republicans, led by Donald Trump, are about to reveal over $2 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthy. We know because that was a campaign promise.

And in the process, they are extinguishing hope for so many Americans looking for treatments and cures. That is why they are looking to cancel cancer trials and Head Start, to give tax cuts to their buddies.

Americans are already feeling the pain from this. I have constituents writing to me afraid and afraid for loved ones. I heard from one constituent over the weekend whose niece is fighting a very aggressive cancer but has been seeing results from an NIH-funded clinical trial. The niece has three small children at home while battling this disease. And without this trial, she doesn't know what else her physicians could do for her.

I have also heard from a constituent whose daughter got treatment at the NIH last year. She said it ''was a great experience, with great doctors and services,'' but she can't imagine how patients enrolled in NIH studies for life-threatening conditions are feeling right now.

Another constituent told me one of her kids is living with a rare cancer, and the administration's directive to suspend NIH funding threatens the prognosis.

Simply put—

This constituent wrote—

this administration's policy will lead to many unnecessary deaths.

Everyone knows someone in their life who has benefited from that medical research.

For me, this is personal. I am standing here today because of one of the types of research that is on the chopping block, that is research on breast cancer. As many of our colleagues know, following a routine mammogram in February of 2021, I learned that I had stage IA breast cancer. I am lucky I only had stage IA. I still remember what it felt like to walk in here about 15 minutes after finding out what the tests had shown, and I had to walk in here like everything was fine and vote.

But then after that, I got treatment at the Mayo Clinic. All I had to have was a lumpectomy and radiation—I never even had to go through chemo—and I was in remission. And when it popped up again, the same thing: lumpectomy, radiation, no chemo.

That would have never happened 50 years ago. That would have never happened 25 years ago. That was because of research.

There are many in this Chamber, who either themselves or who have loved ones who have had cancer who have gotten through it successfully because of the research that occurred years and years back because our Nation decided we want to be in the lead. We are not going to be a follower. We are going to be in the lead when it comes to lifesaving research. We are going to do it in our great universities and medical institutions all over this country, and we are going to make sure that we put the funding into that research.

Not just Democrats said this—no, quite the contrary. All of these moves to invest in NIH and to understand how that research just can't occur in one place with a famous name but has to occur all over the country—that was bipartisan work, under Presidents that have been both Democratic and Republican. And we have built that research, and we are now on the cusp of finding out not just ways to make this easier to deal with and easier treatments and to go into remission, but ways to eradicate this once and for all. We are on the cusp of that with the mapping of the human genome and with all the information that we have gotten out of that.

We have seen what this has done for America. It has put us in the lead. Studies have shown that every dollar in NIH funding spurs almost $2.50 in economic activity. NIH funding supports hundreds of thousands of jobs across the country and pumps more than $92 billion into our economy. This includes generating $1.7 billion of economic activity and supporting over 2,500 businesses and nearly 8,000 jobs in my State alone.

I have heard from a number of constituents who are researchers, who solve things—scientists, entrepreneurs, a microbiology lab technician. One is worried that blocking Federal research funding will put their research on hold and prevent her from employing lab personnel.

This administration's reckless freeze on NIH funding is a threat to not just jobs but to those lifesaving cures. It will extinguish hopes. It will extinguish what will be lives that will come after that and after that. It will set back American innovation and put us at a competitive disadvantage with countries like China. And this is just the beginning of the assault on healthcare.

So it will be the HHS Secretary's job to push back against these attacks. I haven't seen that happen—not with this nominee. Mr. Kennedy has demonstrated open hostility to science.

At an event in Arizona, days before the President nominated him, Mr. Kennedy said that ''600 people are going to''—this is his quote—''walk into offices at NIH and 600 people are going to leave.''

On top of his desire to deprive our government of the great work done every day by the men and women who keep Americans healthy, Mr. Kennedy has expressed his intent to roll back the Agency's focus on combating infectious diseases and remove funding that improves our understanding of how, why, and where diseases are spreading.

Don't take my word for this, if you want; just take his. These are quotes.

I'm going to say to NIH scientists—

He said—

we're going to give infectious disease a break for about eight years.

That is his plan for overseeing the NIH: give infectious disease a break.

Well, Mr. President, measles doesn't take a break. Tuberculosis doesn't take a break. Polio doesn't take a break.

And the reason we have largely eliminated those diseases in this country is because medical research can never take a break.

Unfortunately, Mr. Kennedy's animosity toward the NIH does not come to us in a vacuum. He has long been a vocal opponent of medical research. When influential voices promote the idea that data-backed, evidence-based research is unreliable, it breaks down trust in medicine and public health science as a whole. To place Mr. Kennedy atop our Nation's largest public health Agency is to provide this voice of constantly questioning science and telling parents they shouldn't get their kids vaccinated—it gives that voice a megaphone.

People are welcome to their opinion. Certainly, they are in this Chamber and walking down the street. That is fine. This is America. But it is giving this voice that is not based in science a megaphone.

For generations, America has led the way on medical research and global health. Our Nation's scientists gave the world penicillin, anesthesia, the pacemaker, and more. Mr. Kennedy's nomination puts decades worth of scientific advancement at risk—so much so, in fact, that the Wall Street Journal editorial board, not exactly a bastion of liberalism, called it ''a threat to American medical innovation.''

Of course, Mr. Kennedy's opposition to science is hardly a secret. Over the years, he has repeatedly chosen to ignore scientific evidence in favor of conspiracy theories, most notably those involving vaccines.

Let me be absolutely clear on this: Vaccines are among the greatest achievement of modern science, and the evidence supporting their safety is overwhelming. Vaccines have saved 154 million lives over the last half century. That is about six lives every minute. And each life saved gains an average of 66 years of health.

In spite of that, Mr. Kennedy has long promoted baseless theories about vaccines, including, most notably, during the pandemic. During a period in our Nation and world history when trust in science was more important than ever, Mr. Kennedy, instead, chose to stir up doubts about lifesaving vaccines. Mr. Kennedy actively sought to halt the rollout of the vaccines just 6 months after President Trump—the same President who has now nominated him to oversee healthcare in our country—declared the vaccines a miracle. That is from President Trump. You all remember those days when we were trying to get the vaccines out as soon as possible.

In May 2021, Mr. Kennedy filed a petition with the FDA demanding that the Agency end authorization for the vaccines and avoid approving any future COVID vaccine.

Mr. Kennedy's denial of basic science goes beyond his opinions on vaccines. He has, on numerous occasions, spread misinformation about the origins of diseases, claiming without evidence that humans, rather than bacteria or viruses, cause infectious diseases. For example, he has claimed that Lyme disease, which is spread by ticks—a big deal in Minnesota—he claims it was created by the U.S. military in a lab on Long Island in the 1950s. The fact is that the bacteria that causes Lyme disease has been around for at least 60,000 years, and the ticks that spread the disease have been around for at least 99 million years.

I also want to bring attention to Mr. Kennedy's denial of avian flu—key for me on the Agriculture Committee. Last year, Mr. Kennedy said the World Health Organization ''fabricated the 2006 bird flu outbreak, which of course never happened.'' This is what he said.

Now, my State is the largest producer of turkeys, and Minnesota turkey farmers will tell you that avian flu isn't fabricated; it is all too real.

I remember hugging a turkey producer who had just had to eradicate all of his birds. He was so proud of the operation he had. He was a small turkey producer. Just like that, because of the avian flu, he had to eradicate and kill those birds.

I have heard from one constituent who teaches farm business management at a rural Minnesota community college. Several of his students are turkey farmers, and they have seen firsthand the devastating impact of that bird flu virus when it comes in: A turkey dies. They know it is trouble. They get it tested. They know it is going to go to the whole flock and beyond, and they have to take immediate action.

Part of the result of that is, of course, higher prices at the grocery store. When my constituent met with his students to complete their 2025 cash flow projections, he said:

> It was devastating to see the results, and I have great concerns that this virus may cause bankruptcy for turkey farmers.

We all know that those young farmers are not alone. For 3 years now, poultry farmers in my State and across the country have been fighting a new outbreak of avian flu, which has affected 156 million birds and counting.

Following the 2015 avian flu outbreak, our colleague Senator CORNYN and I worked to establish an animal vaccine bank and disease response program as part of the 2018 farm bill. This has given farmers and public health agencies critical resources for containing outbreaks, but it is clear we need to be doing more, not less. That is why I am working with Senator BOOZMAN. I hope we can pass a farm bill and really upgrade our work when it comes to avian flu.

But to do all that and the potential of having vaccines here for various animals, we are going to need people in the government that believe in science. Placing Mr. Kennedy in charge of public health in our country could unravel that progress and more. He has already said he didn't believe in the avian flu, that it was somehow manufactured. What more evidence do you need, I say to my colleagues across the aisle?

Facts are the foundation of medical science, and our next HHS Secretary must commit to making decisions based on facts, not personal beliefs.

I also have concerns that Mr. Kennedy will be a rubberstamp for the administration's plans to undo the progress that we have made on bringing down the sky-high costs of prescription drugs. For decades, Big Pharma companies had a sweetheart deal written into law that allowed them to charge our seniors whatever they wanted for lifesaving prescription drugs.

That was unacceptable, and, along with my colleagues, we successfully led the legislation to end it. Taking on the big drug companies wasn't easy. I did for years and years and years. They had three lobbyists for every Member of Congress and spent hundreds of millions of dollars—I am sure many watching tonight have seen those ads—trying to stop us. That was a great deal that got written into law. I don't know how they got it, but they got it.

Then we said: Wait a minute. Why are these drugs in other industrialized nations half the price of the drugs that we have in America, especially when we paid for a lot of the research with our taxpayer money? Then we found out, well, for the biggest drug-buying group in the country for prescription drugs—our seniors—they get locked-in profits on that, not like the VA, where they can actually negotiate for our brave veterans. But when it comes to all the seniors, no negotiation was allowed.

The power of over 50 million American seniors negotiating, that is a pretty strong bloc. And our constituents finally said: Enough is enough—major issues when people were running for office. And together, we ended Big Pharma's sweetheart deal—Democrats only—in the Inflation Reduction Act and gave Medicare the power to negotiate better prices for prescription drugs.

So what was the result of that? Well, already, the last administration negotiated the first 10 drugs—blockbuster drugs: Eliquis, Xarelto, Januvia, Jardiance. The negotiated prices that they negotiated with Big Pharma—because if Big Pharma didn't negotiate with them, they were then not going to be able to sell their drugs through Medicare. Do you know what prices they got?

Big Pharma is still suing. They have lost every single lawsuit saying that we, in this body, didn't have the power—didn't have the power—to stop the sweetheart deal that Congress had given them. Of course, we had the power.

But do you know what happened with those negotiated prices for seniors? They went down on those—just the first 10 blockbuster drugs—60, 70 percent. And no one has questioned the statistic that in 1 year, when this takes

effect—in about a year—9 million seniors across the country, in 1 year—just 1 year—will save $1.5 billion in out-of-pocket costs. That is ''b,'' billion.

That is not all we did, because the next drugs are coming down the pike for negotiations—I will mention that in a minute—and the next ones after that and the next ones after that. The torch has been passed on to this administration. It is their turn to negotiate and get those 60 percent, 70 percent, 80 percent reductions like Secretary Becerra and the Biden administration were able to get because they were organized, because they knew what they were doing, and they stood tall and they negotiated those prices after we passed the law.

What else did we do? The legislation passed under the last administration capped monthly insulin costs for seniors at $35, capped total out-of-pocket drug costs for seniors at $2,000 a year, starting this year. And these savings are just the beginning. Last month, the previous administration announced the next 15 drugs Medicare must negotiate. These are more blockbusters: diabetes and weight loss drugs like Ozempic, Rybelsus, Wegovy, which 2.3 million Medicare Part D enrollees take, including thousands of seniors in my State.

For these seniors, getting those lower prices—you know how much those drugs cost right now—makes a huge difference.

Finally, seniors in America—and, by the way, it helps nonseniors as well. We already see the insulin prices lowered by the companies. Even though the law—I would have liked to pass a law for nonseniors. Our colleagues wouldn't join us in doing that. But the market worked, and they are also getting that $35-per-month cap.

Think about what these next drugs will mean, though. Minnesotans like Brian—Brian has been paying more than a hundred bucks a month for Breo Ellipta, one of the asthma medications covered in last month's announcement for the drugs of the Trump administration—it is now on their plate to negotiate. Brian has been taking that for 20 years. After all that, $24,000 spent on just one medication, think about if that was reduced 60 to 70 percent. That is what they could do if they have the right HHS Secretary.

Judith pays $1,100 a month for Otezla, an arthritis drug also covered in last month's announcement. That is two-thirds of her Social Security check.

Relief could be on the way for Judith, for Brian, and for millions of seniors like them, but only if this administration follows the law and commits to continuing Medicare drug price negotiation.

This task, of course, doesn't fall to the Veterans Secretary, doesn't fall to the Commerce Secretary; it is the HHS Secretary. And I know I speak for many of my colleagues when I say I have serious doubts about this nominee when it comes to this.

Why? Well, to discuss Mr. Kennedy's testimony before the Finance Committee last week and his responses to questions submitted in writing, he could even have clarified it in writing.

What did he say? Our colleague Senator CORTEZ MASTO, who just spoke, pointed out that the President, our Republican colleagues, and Big Pharma wanted to repeal the law we passed—that is the Inflation Reduction Act—that contains the Medicare negotiation. She asked Mr. Kennedy if he would commit to following the law and negotiate a good deal for our seniors.

This is his response:

President Trump has asked me to end the chronic disease epidemic and make Americans healthy again.

Oh, come on. It is a very straightforward question. Congress passed a law. The former President signed it into law. It is the law that you have to follow, and the law says you have to negotiate these drug prices—not to mention that your Attorney General is going to have to defend the lawsuits that Big Pharma is bringing to try to upend the law that they are losing left and right, and you sure better continue the track record of the Biden administration and win those cases.

So when CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO received this answer, which was a nonanswer, in fact, he actually said something that makes you think, is he really going to follow the law and negotiate a good deal for our seniors? So she asked him to clarify his comments.

His response:

President Trump asked me to end that.

End what? I don't know. That is not leadership. He should have known all about the prescription drug program and Medicare Part D. He is taking over a major Agency that does this work for 50 million seniors under Medicare—50 million seniors. Out-of-pocket savings of $1.5 billion in just 1 year on only the first 10 drugs, and then there are going to be 15 more and 15 more and 15 more.

This is not the answer of someone who is prepared to stand up and lower drug prices; that is the answer of someone who will do whatever the President asks him to do, no questions asked.

Mr. Kennedy was also given the chance to provide clarity by answering our colleagues' questions in writing. Yet he refused to give clear answers to the vast majority of the questions.

When asked if he would refrain from making policy changes that would raise drug costs for seniors with cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, or chronic kidney disease, Mr. Kennedy refused to answer. He also refused to provide a clear answer when asked if he supported policies that hold Big Pharma companies accountable for price gouging.

From the person nominated to shape health policy in our country for the next 4 years, we need someone who will commit to bringing down drug costs. This is particularly important after the actions the administration has taken in the last few weeks.

On his first day in office, the President signed an Executive order that cut Affordable Care Act enrollment periods short and reversed policies that make it affordable for parents to add their kids to their health insurance. He is also making it harder for 24 million people to keep coverage year to year by revoking automatic reenrollment in affordable healthcare plans.

The Affordable Care Act is the law of the land whether the President likes it or not, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services must follow the law because, guess what, also, the American people like this law. But when Mr. Kennedy was asked about the Affordable Care Act, he attacked it, saying ''Americans don't like it'' instead of promising to uphold the law.

The President's efforts to overturn the ACA are only the beginning. He is also taking away new initiatives that lower prescription drug prices, including one that offers seniors a flat $2 copay for drugs that treat common chronic conditions.

In less than a month, this administration has made clear that it intends to do Big Pharma's bidding instead of sticking to commonsense policies that have brought down healthcare costs. Reversing them won't bring down prices; it will raise them.

We have problems with healthcare access, costs, and the like, so we need someone at the HHS who is actually going to work with us to take this down. Whether it is the denial of care for way too many patients under insurance policies or whether it is the expense of these prescription drugs, where still more work needs to be done on patents and some of the reforms on a bipartisan basis that we have gotten out of Judiciary, we need an HHS Secretary that supports reform, and by reform, I mean bringing down prices.

If you have been able to keep your healthcare coverage year to year through the Affordable Care Act, then this nominee will not fight for you. If you are a young adult who has been able to stay on their parents' healthcare until you are 26, don't look at this nominee to fight for you. If you are a senior shelling out thousands of dollars a month because of that sweetheart deal I just mentioned, he is not going to fight for you. He wouldn't even answer the question on whether he was going to keep negotiating.

None of this that he has talked about in these hearings, from my perspective, whether it is a rubberstamp for withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization, whether it is upending the work of the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee, whether it is what I have just spoken about tonight about not believing in vaccines or not carrying on the work of negotiating prescription drugs, none of this will bring down healthcare costs. None of this will make Americans healthier.

President Eisenhower, who established the Agency that is now HHS—President Eisenhower, a trusted Republican President—said in his 1954 State

of the Union Address that the Department ''symbolized the government's permanent concern with the human problems of our citizens.''

The person at the helm of this Department must above all share that concern that President Eisenhower put out there so clearly. He must prioritize the well-being of his fellow Americans, must be guided by facts and science, not politics or personal opinions. That is why 17,000 doctors have sounded the alarm about Mr. Kennedy's nomination. It is why more than 700 public health experts called his nomination ''dangerous.'' It is why, for the first time in living memory, more than 70 Nobel Prize winners across the fields of medicine, chemistry, physics, and economics came together in public opposition to this Cabinet pick.

I believe in listening to experts. I trust doctors. I trust public health researchers. I trust Nobel Prize winners. That is why, on behalf of every senior who relies on medications to live and age with dignity, every child who deserves the promise of a future free from preventable diseases, and every American whose health and safety depend on sound scientific guidance, I will be voting no on his nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do what they know is the right thing and vote no as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s nomination to lead the Department of Health and Human Services.

Healthcare is not just a policy to me; it is deeply personal. I got into public service because of my own healthcare journey. When I was 9, I was hospitalized with a serious childhood illness. It was similar to spinal meningitis—that wasn't the exact diagnosis but similar. While I fought to survive and then ultimately to get better and fully recover, my grandparents, who raised me, struggled to figure out how to pay for the lifesaving care that I needed and received. In total, I spent 3 months in the hospital in Madison, WI.

When I talk about healthcare, I don't just speak as a U.S. Senator or as a Wisconsinite; I am speaking as a person who knows what it was like to spend months in a hospital bed. I am speaking as someone who knows the emotional toll and the financial stress that it put on my loved ones. I am speaking as someone who knows firsthand how important it is to protect our children from serious illness and the dire consequences when our children do get sick. That is why I was so disturbed by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s nomination to lead our Nation's largest public health Agency.

As a member of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, I was able to question Mr. Kennedy at one of his nomination hearings. I watched as he over and over again parroted the same answer when pressed about his anti-vaccine views. ''Show me the data,'' he would say. When asked if he still believes that vaccines cause autism, he would not commit. He again said, ''Show me the data.''

Well, Mr. Kennedy has had every opportunity to review the overwhelming consensus of doctors, researchers, and experts that vaccines are safe and effective. He certainly had the opportunity to do so not just before his confirmation hearing but before spending a decade peddling misinformation and conspiracy theories about vaccines.

Apparently, he didn't look at the research before traveling to Samoa to rail against the measles vaccine. Perhaps if he had, the 83 people—primarily infants and children—who died from a subsequent outbreak of measles would still be with us.

I think it is clear that he also didn't bother to review the research before spreading misinformation online, with one study finding that among verified Twitter accounts, Mr. Kennedy was by far the top purveyor of vaccine misinformation, garnering more than three times as much engagement as the second most retweeted account.

Now, we are supposed to believe that if we simply show Mr. Kennedy the research, he will change his tune. Well, I believe someone applying to be the top health official in this country shouldn't have to be convinced to follow the science. We shouldn't have to hold their feet to the fire on whether they would be willing to protect our children from polio or measles. They should already be an expert in the field, not an expert at evading responsibility and spreading conspiracy theories.

Americans deserve a leading health official who believes in science, not in conspiracies. If Mr. Kennedy is not willing to believe or even review the overwhelming data on vaccines before spreading dangerous lies about their safety, then I highly doubt he will change his tune when leading the Department of Health and Human Services. And it is not just his statements like ''No vaccine is safe and effective.''

By the way, he really did make that statement. I have seen it on a podcast. But he has repeatedly made claims with no evidence. He said Wi-Fi causes cancer. He said antidepressants caused school shootings. He questioned whether HIV does, in fact, cause AIDS. And time and again, he is showing us who he is. By his own admission, he is not interested in the research. He has no time for the data. And these claims may seem outlandish. They may seem harmless, but they all point to a fundamental truth about Mr. Kennedy. He not only does not believe the science, but he is willing to actively undermine it. He spreads dangerous conspiracy theories, and he puts families' health and safety at risk.

RFK, Jr., will put Americans in harm's way. Kids will be at risk of getting preventable diseases like measles and mumps. Women will have essential healthcare ripped away. Families will be further away, not closer, to having cures to diseases like cancer. And, sadly, the list goes on and on.

So I urge my colleagues, especially those who understand how dangerous vaccine skepticism is, to ask themselves this simple question: Will this nominee keep your constituents safe? Or will he harm them?

For Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., the answer is clear. I oppose this nomination on behalf of Wisconsin families and encourage my colleagues to vote no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Senator from Georgia.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I rise tonight in strong opposition to the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to lead the Department of Health and Human Services. It is no overstatement for me to say that it is hard for me to imagine a nominee less qualified that would actually be presented for the job of HHS Secretary. Robert F. Kennedy, not only does he not pass muster, this is not even close.

I still can't believe we are even having this discussion. He is a conspiracy theorist who is so focused on his conspiracy theory. When you think of what we need the HHS Secretary to do, Robert F. Kennedy is a hazard to our health. Certainly, we can do better than this. He is just manifestly unqualified.

I don't know how else to put it. This is not a partisan exercise for me. In fact, some of the nominees that have been presented, I voted for some of them. But I can't vote for Robert F. Kennedy. Not only is he a hazard to our health, not only is he manifestly unqualified, it is clear that he will be a rubberstamp for Washington Republicans and their attempts to raise healthcare costs for hundreds of thousands of Georgians. He is a threat to public health and the thousands of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention employees who work tirelessly every single day to keep us safe.

He has enforced the administration's gag order that is literally keeping medical professionals from sharing information to get diseases like bird flu under control, cancer researchers from doing their important, lifesaving work—who among us has not been touched in some way by cancer?—doctors and their ability and hospitals from accessing resources to lower the maternal mortality rate, which is abysmally high in this country, particularly in a State like Georgia. I will be voting no on Mr. Kennedy's nomination to lead HHS, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to somehow find a way to do the right thing and vote no with me.

Mr. Kennedy won't work to lower Georgians' healthcare costs or increase

access to healthcare for my constituents who are caught right now in a healthcare coverage gap.

I was so proud that, in my first few months in the Senate, I was able to play a critical role in passing the American Rescue Plan which, among other things, lowered Georgians' healthcare premiums by hundreds of thousands of dollars on average. It is, quite frankly, the kind of thing that makes this job worth it for me, being able to help ordinary folks.

That tax cut literally helped bring healthcare into reach for tens of thousands of Georgians and millions of Americans. These tax cuts are so critical that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said that the number of Americans without healthcare would grow by 3.8 million in just 1 year—in just 1 year, 3.8 million, without healthcare—if the premium subsidies that we now enjoy were allowed to expire. We know that that would impact thousands of Georgians who have only recently been able to receive healthcare coverage.

If these tax credits are allowed to expire, a 45-year-old in Georgia with $62,000 annual income would see premiums go up by $1,414 a year. A 60-year-old couple in Georgia with an $82,000 annual income would see their premiums go up by a staggering $18,157 a year. Can you imagine someone making $82,000 a year—a 60-year-old couple—and all of a sudden, their health insurance for the year goes up by more than $18,000? We know what that is. That is the difference between having healthcare coverage and not having it at all.

Nearly one-third of Americans have less than $500 in savings in their bank account, and so these folks don't have that kind of extra dough. They don't have that kind of extra cash on hand to pay for something that is vitally necessary, and we don't know—we never know—when we will really need our health insurance.

And so every single day, as we watch the games that Washington politicians play—for me, this is no game. I often say that if we would center ordinary people, we have a chance at getting the public policy right. If we will center people rather than politics, we might manage to get the right policy.

And so as these debates rage on, as nominees like this come before us, I am thinking about people like my constituent Cassie Cox. She is from Bainbridge, GA. She wasn't able to afford healthcare on the Affordable Care Act Marketplace until the premium tax credit brought healthcare into reach. And shortly after she became insured, she severely cut her hand, landing her in the emergency room with 35 stitches.

With insurance, it still cost her about $300, but she could figure out how to get that dough. Had it not been for the tax credits that allowed her to get healthcare, she could have been in financial ruin from a severe cut of the hand, something that could happen to any one of us at any time.

She is one of the hundreds of thousands of Georgians at risk of losing their coverage if these tax credits are allowed to expire. And so I ask the nominee for HHS: What do you think about those? Mr. Kennedy told me when I met him privately in my office that he wanted to work with President Trump to lower healthcare premiums. I said, Good.

That is why I was deeply troubled when I questioned Mr. Kennedy on his support for these tax credits in his hearing in front of the Senate Finance Committee. I asked him: Yes or no, Mr. Kennedy, are you aware that the premium subsidies that help save Georgians an average of $531 a month are set to expire at the end of the year?

He said, yes, he is aware.

And I asked him, yes or no, if he supports Congress extending these tax credits which lower Americans' premiums—something he told me was a priority for him. Suddenly, Mr. Kennedy could not give me a yes-or-no answer. I wonder why.

He told me in private that he cared about healthcare. He said he was aware that these tax credits were set to expire at the end of the year. He said he wanted to lower healthcare costs. But when I asked him whether he would support Congress extending these tax credits, the crusader all of a sudden become a politician and couldn't give me a yes-or-no answer. That is not a good sign.

It is a pretty simple question to the nominee to run the Federal Agency tasked with protecting the health of all Americans: Do you support lower healthcare premiums and keeping millions of people insured? That question apparently was a bit too challenging for Mr. Kennedy.

So the nominee to run the Department of Health and Human Services cannot tell me if he supports preventing Georgians' healthcare costs from spiking and keeping people like Cassie Cox on her healthcare plan. I cannot support his nomination. I don't work for him. I don't work for the insurance companies. I work for Cassie Cox and other Georgians like her.

We know that these subsidies, which expire this year, are at serious risk of not getting renewed. And if there is anybody in the Federal Government who ought to be advocating for the patients, advocating for public health, reminding the President of how important this is, surely it ought to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

And so I am very concerned about this because, right now, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are already starting to put together a tax bill that I would describe as Robin Hood in reverse. They want to take tax credits needed by ordinary, hard-working Georgians in order to give an unneeded tax cut to their wealthy friends. That is Robin Hood in reverse. It is bad public policy. It is bad for our health, and I would argue it is bad for our economy as we create the circumstances for having a workforce that will be sicker, less productive, less competitive on the global stage. Mr. Robert Kennedy, I am afraid, will similarly aid and abet this process. He will hold the door open for Washington Republicans while thousands of Georgians get kicked off their healthcare.

For Cassie Cox and for the hundreds of thousands of Georgians who risk losing their healthcare coverage if premium tax credits are allowed to expire, I am voting no on Secretary Kennedy's nomination for HHS Secretary.

But that is not the only reason I am voting no. You see, every Sunday I return home to Georgia to preach in the Ebenezer pulpit. Ebenezer Baptist Church is the spiritual home of Martin Luther King, Jr. Some folks ask me why I continue to hold that job. I return to Georgia and I return to my church every Sunday because I don't want to spend all my time talking to politicians. I am afraid I might accidentally become one.

I serve in politics, but in a real sense, I tolerate politics so that I can do the important work for the people—work that I tried to do long before I came to the Senate. It was Martin Luther King, Jr., after all, copastor of our church, who said: Out of all the injustices—Dr. King said—of all the injustices, ''inequality in healthcare is the most shocking and the most inhumane.''

It was that conviction that inspired me in 2014—years before I decided to run for elected office—to protest State politicians in Georgia as they were refusing to expand Medicaid and close the healthcare coverage gap which would improve healthcare access for over 640,000 Georgians.

We had just passed the Affordable Care Act. We were caught up in the throes of the debate around that policy. Georgia refused to expand Medicaid, leaving 640,000 Georgians in the healthcare coverage gap.

I preach every Sunday morning in honor of one who spent much of his ministry, according to the Gospels, healing the sick, even those with preexisting conditions. That is what leprosy was, a preexisting condition. I could not preach the Gospel that I try to preach every Sunday and then allow Georgia politicians to leave hard-working Georgians in the cold when we literally had a prescription that could provide healing.

So I and members of my pastoral staff and other volunteers, other activists, went to the office of the then-Governor of Georgia, and we staged a sit-in at the Governor's office. And when we were arrested and taken to the Fulton County Jail, another wave of protesters came in and sat down and took our place.

I was here in the Senate again in 2017 protesting the fact that Washington Republicans were getting ready to pass a $2 trillion tax cut for the wealthiest

Americans while cutting needed resources from the children's healthcare program, while refusing to accept the necessary levels of support for those facing food insecurity in the farm bill. So I was arrested in an act of civil disobedience that day also because I believe that healthcare is a human right.

But it is also one of the reasons I decided to go and run for office myself, to move from agitated to legislative, to translate my protest into public policy. Perhaps I could get a few more tools to help the people that I have always advocated for.

And so in my first few months in office, I made it a priority to sweeten the deal that further incentivized Georgia politicians to finally do the right thing and expand Medicaid. I thought to myself, if I could get additional resources in Federal legislation to further incentivize States like Georgia to expand Medicaid, surely, they will expand Medicaid. It only makes sense. Not only is it the right thing to do, it would be the smart thing to do.

I remember standing up to Democrats, many of whom, unlike me, represent blue States. I am from Georgia, a purple State. Georgia had not elected Democratic Senators in years. I think they sent me and my friend JON OSSOFF to represent them in the Senate because they understand we are not focused on partisan politics; we are focused on the people we were sent here to represent. I remember standing up to Democrats in a Democratic caucus talking to many of my colleagues who represent blue States. And I began to make the case for Georgia, and they responded to me.

They said: Why should we put more Federal dollars toward States that don't want to help their own constituents? Why should we reward Georgia for digging in its heels?

I reminded them that the people of Georgia were literally being held hostage by their legislature. It was standing between them and access to healthcare. And maybe if we just sweetened the pot a little bit more, we could encourage the legislature to do the right thing, encourage the Governor to do the right thing.

Sadly, after I was able to secure $14.5 billion for nonexpansion States, including $2 billion for Georgia alone, to just incentivize Medicaid expansion, they left that money on the table and 600,000 Georgians in the Medicaid coverage gap.

Who were they working for? I work for Georgia.

Thankfully, there are some folks who heard it, who heard the call, who responded. The incentives I secured led to North Carolina, for example, recently expanding Medicaid. Even the staunchest opponent of President Obama's signature law could not justify the overwhelming financial incentive to finally close the coverage gap.

But Georgia politicians continued to dig in their heels more than a decade after the Affordable Care Act has become settled law. No matter where you are on this side of the debate, which side you are on in the debate about the Affordable Care Act, can you imagine Social Security in 40 States? Can you imagine Medicare or Medicaid in 40 States and whether you get it or not depends on which State you are in?

Well, while craven politicians are still fighting the fights of more than a decade ago, literally millions of Americans, most of them hard-working Americans—it is the working poor. That is who we are talking about. They are in the healthcare coverage gap while politicians play the games that politicians play. It is shameful. It is immoral. It is unjustifiable.

When I think about this, I often think about a woman that I met while doing my work named Heather Payne. I think of Heather from Dalton, GA, often, because here is a woman in the healthcare coverage gap. And guess what she does for a living? She is a traveling nurse. Think about that. She has committed her whole life to making sure that other people have the healthcare coverage that they need. Her job is healthcare.

She worked throughout COVID as an ER and labor-and-delivery nurse. Yet she often did not have healthcare coverage herself because she fell into the healthcare coverage gap.

That is who we are talking about, Heather the nurse. She made too much money to qualify for Medicaid—conventional Medicaid—but she could not afford coverage on the marketplace. So about 2½ years ago, Heather, who sometimes had healthcare coverage and sometimes she didn't because she was a traveling nurse—about 2½ years ago, she noticed something was wrong in her body. And even though she noticed that something was wrong and she was in pain and discomfort, she couldn't go immediately to see a doctor. She literally had to keep working through her pain, working through her discomfort, working through her uncertainty until she could save enough money out-of-pocket for a visit to a neurologist.

By the time she got to a neurologist months later, the neurologist told her that she had already had a series of small strokes. Now, with the knowledge of what had happened to her, Heather had to continue putting off serious medical procedures because she could not work as an ER nurse anymore, and yet she was still waiting to get approval for disability so she could get Medicaid coverage. There are ways in which our system is broken and needs to be reformed. Think about that. Heather, despite spending her career providing lifesaving care to others, is not able to access healthcare herself because she cannot meet Georgia's work requirements rules.

I don't see how anybody could think that is right. I think it is wrong that, in the richest country on the planet, we don't want to lower the cost of healthcare for people who work hard serving our community and, in Heather's case, literally keeping us healthy.

And because I think about Heather quite often, I asked Robert Kennedy what does Heather need, because our Governor set up his own program with these work requirements that just create redtape. I said: Does Heather need monthly bureaucratic paperwork requirements to prove she is working when she is sick or does she need access to healthcare so she can finally get healthy and get back to work?

Mr. Kennedy told me that she needed healthcare, not work requirements—right answer. But I found his answer interesting because this administration is not working to get Heather healthcare. In fact, they want to continue to allow Georgia to waste taxpayer dollars right now, implementing an expensive and flawed system of bureaucracy and redtape to put more obstacles between Georgians and the healthcare they desperately need.

We have a program in Georgia right now that the Governor set up, rather than expanding Medicaid, and most of the money that they have gotten from the Federal Government, about 80 percent of it, is spent on administrative costs. And 18 months later, only a few thousand Georgians are signed up, while hundreds of thousands of Georgians are in the healthcare coverage gap. It is not right. It is not smart.

I believe in hard work. My late father had a fierce work ethic. I watched him and my mother wake up early every morning, and they woke us up. My dad just had this saying: You didn't sleep late in this house. You didn't care if it was Saturday or Sunday. As a little kid, he would wake us up: Now, get ready. Put your shoes on.

I said: Get ready for what?

He said: I don't know. Just get up and get ready. Be ready for whatever.

I believe in hard work. It was drilled in me. But an ER nurse who has been taking care of people for years, she doesn't need somebody to put a fire under her to get her to go to work. She needs to be able to get basic healthcare so she can get healthy and go back to work.

So I was deeply disturbed when I kept asking Mr. Kennedy about this, and he kept changing his answer. He kept flip-flopping. He said at one point:

> States . . . [may] take different approaches to providing coverage to their citizens.

I wonder what was going on. I think I know what. I think, already, he is trying his best to navigate the politics of the folks in the administration. We are not committed to the Heathers of this world.

So if Mr. Kennedy can't decide if an ER nurse from Dalton, GA, who spent years saving other people's lives and now needs healthcare insurance to save her own life, deserves healthcare—if he can't decide that, then how in the world am I supposed to vote yes on his being the HHS Secretary?

So for Heather and for the hundreds of thousands of Georgians in the

healthcare coverage gap who need an HHS Secretary who will stand and advocate for them, my vote is no.

Not only that, as a Senator from the great State of Georgia, I am very proud that I represent the Georgia-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the CDC, which was created nearly 80 years ago to prevent the spread of malaria across our country. The CDC does lifesaving work to control disease outbreaks, to ensure our food and our water are safe, to keep our brave servicemembers abroad safe, and to prevent leading causes of death, such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes.

The CDC is one of those entities that, I think, is vastly underrated and underappreciated because we don't see, most of the time, the bad stuff that they have saved us from. It is hard to get credit for the bad stuff that you prevent from happening, but where in the world would we be without the CDC?

I think we got a good glimpse of how important their work is as we were all dealing with the COVID–19 pandemic. There are many other bugs like that out there. Thank goodness for their work, for the scientific method, for their discipline. The CDC employs 10,000 Georgians, and their work is so critical for every American. In addition to that, the CDC has a great economic impact on Georgia as well. For every one job at the CDC, three jobs are created. One job at the CDC creates three jobs in the Georgia economy.

That is why students come from all over the world to study in Georgia research institutions—because of its proximity to the CDC. They come to Emory University. They come to Georgia Tech. They come to Morehouse College because it is near the CDC—the Morehouse School of Medicine. The Centers host over 125,000 visitors on their campus every year. The CDC invests hundreds of millions of dollars into Georgia organizations and institutions to partner on research. In fact, for every dollar the CDC spends, the Georgia economy sees $2 in growth—healthy people, a healthy economy. If the CDC were a business, it would be the seventh largest business in my State.

So, last June, I visited the CDC, in carrying on the spirit of my predecessor in my seat, my friend, the late Republican Senator Johnny Isakson. Johnny Isakson was a good man. We didn't agree on everything, but he was just a good human being, and he was a fierce advocate for the CDC. I am honored to carry on that tradition in his memory because he understood, as do I, that the CDC, again, is saving us from so many bad things that we don't even see. There is a way in which, because of their work, we are blessed and privileged into cluelessness. He understood not just the economic benefits of the CDC but also the tremendous importance of investing in our public health.

During the first Trump administration, Senator Isakson, a Republican, questioned all HHS nominees about how they would support the critical work of the CDC. Think about that in sharp contrast to what we are seeing on the other side of the aisle these days. Johnny Isakson would be questioning whoever was the nominee for the HHS: What do you think about the CDC? Because—imagine that—he actually believed in advice and consent.

I don't know what we are witnessing in this moment, but we are hard-pressed to call this advice and consent between two coequal branches of government. Senator Isakson—a Republican Senator from Georgia—fought for the CDC to expand its scope of research into areas like preventing mass violence and mass shootings, pandemics; and because the CDC was equipped to expand this research, it turned Federal investments into cures and treatments and lives that are saved, not Republican lives, not Democratic lives—human lives.

It is easy to get behind the work of the CDC. It ought to be. After all, look what the CDC has accomplished over the past 80 years because the Centers have been well-funded and have always received support on both sides of the aisle: eradicating smallpox globally; nearly eradicating polio, measles and mumps, which is responsible for saving the lives of at least 42,000 Americans; finding treatments and supporting preventive care for our HIV-positive brothers and sisters; creating an 18-percent drop in infections by helping hospitals implement safety standards that save 4,500 lives each year so you don't die of some bug in the hospital that kills you while you are trying to get well. You can thank the CDC for that. This is because the CDC has always been supported by both sides of the aisle.

I saw that work up close when I visited the CDC last June. I spoke with researchers and medical professionals who were already working to address bird flu, which poses a danger to our poultry farmers and our grocery prices.

Can I tell you? I spent time with those CDC workers. They are not the enemy as some have tried to paint these Federal workers in recent days—shameful. They didn't deserve to get a blanket memo encouraging them—whoever they are, no matter what job they hold—to just resign. They are the wall. They have been protecting us. They are the reason we are able to go to sleep at night and not even think about certain things. It is hard to get credit for saving people from the bad stuff they don't even see.

I visited the insectary where the CDC was testing thousands of mosquitos for malaria to help prevent malaria deaths globally; to protect Americans traveling abroad and keep the disease from spreading to the United States.

So it is concerning for anyone who cares about stopping the spread of deadly diseases to the United States to hear some of the past comments about the CDC from the nominee to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, Mr. Kennedy, who would manage a budget—listen—of nearly $2 trillion—$2 trillion, including the CDC's budget, as comparing the CDC's work to Nazi death camps and sexual abusers in the Catholic Church.

He said:

> Many of them belong in jail.

So I asked Mr. Kennedy if he retracted those statements, and he denied making them at all. He said: No, I didn't say that. So I read him the transcripts of his remarks at the AutismOne conferences in 2013 and 2019, where he made these comments.

In 2019, Mr. Kennedy said:

> It's the same reason we had a pedophile scandal in the Catholic Church. It's because people were able to convince themselves that the institution of the church was more important than these little boys and girls who were being raped.
>
> And everybody kept their mouth shut—the press, the prosecutors, the priest, the bishops, the monsignors, the Vatican.
>
> And even the parents of the kids just didn't want to believe it was happening or believed so much in the church they were unwilling to criticize it.
>
> And, you know, that is the perfect metaphor—

He said—

> for what's happening to us.

In 2013, at the same conference, he said:

> Is it hyperbole when I say these people should be in jail? They should be in jail, and the key should be thrown away.
>
> To me, this is like Nazi death camp. I mean, what happens? What happened to these kids? One in 31 boys in this country . . . their minds are being robbed from them.
>
> And look what it does to the families. I can't tell you why somebody would do something like that. I can't tell you why ordinary Germans participated in the Holocaust.

He is talking about the CDC. You can slice and dice these words all you want. The moment at which you put the CDC and Nazi death camps in the same statement and you are the Secretary nominee for HHS, Houston, Georgia, America, we have a problem, and that problem is Robert Kennedy. God help us if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle cannot get past partisan politics and cannot find the courage to stand up to Donald Trump and say no to Robert Kennedy.

So don't chastise me and ask me how in the world would I vote against him when, 18 months ago, he was a Democrat. That is not the game we are playing here. This is not about Democrat or Republican. And if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to abdicate their responsibility to seriously engage in advice and consent, that is their problem. I am not obligated to play along. We are voting against Robert Kennedy not out of some partisan impulse, not out of some sense of shirts versus skins. This is literally a matter of life and death. We are voting against him because he is manifestly unqualified, and anybody who is honest knows it is true.

These are serious times. A few days ago, in the midst of all that we are facing, the Trump administration silenced

the CDC from sharing public health notices and critical health data. That is literally their job. During the first week of the Trump administration, the White House gagged the CDC, preventing them from communicating all important public health information to anybody—doctors, State health officials, parents—anybody. This impacted everything from cancer research data to updates on the bird flu, which was found in flocks of poultry in north Georgia just 3 weeks ago and is literally raising the cost of eggs. In addition to that, this order crippled their ability to combat maternal mortality.

The American Cancer Society, an organization whose work we can all support, called on the Trump administration to ''restore access to comprehensive data, refrain from changes that would lead to incomplete future data collection and commit to ensure evidence-based science can proceed without additional bureaucracy or red-tape.''

They said:

> Any restriction to gather and release these data could thwart our ability to address and reduce the cancer burden across all communities.

That is the American Cancer Society.

The Trump administration removed vast amounts of government datasets, resources, and web pages across the CDC to comply with the administration's shortsighted DEI Executive orders.

How is an organization like CDC supposed to address the social determinants of health? This is keeping our best scientists and our researchers from their work to treat and cure cancer.

Everybody has lost somebody to cancer, and everybody would like to see more progress in preventing and curing disease. So I would like Mr. Kennedy to explain to my constituents in Georgia how datasets that help cancer organizations work to eliminate cancer is somehow a problem that needs to be eliminated.

Thankfully, these web pages have been temporarily restored, but that is only because it was ordered by a judge.

I asked him: Yes or no, Mr. Kennedy, do you agree with the administration's gag order? He called it ''standard operating procedure.'' Well, I don't believe hindering cancer research is ''standard operating procedure.''

I fear this administration's attempt to dismantle the CDC is going to slow down desperately needed lifesaving research, and Mr. Kennedy will be there aiding and abetting that work.

We have to address this issue of maternal mortality. This weekly update around the issues that pertain to our health is a critical resource for researchers, doctors, and public health professionals looking to combat our country's shamefully high maternal mortality rate.

Shockingly, Georgia is one of the worst States for maternal mortality and maternal healthcare access. In fact, a Black woman in Georgia is three to four times as likely to die related to pregnancy and childbirth than her White sisters nationally. If you are a Black woman in Georgia, you are three to four times more likely to die even when you have the insurance, even when you have the income.

Now, what happens if you have a Federal Government that doesn't even allow you to report those disparities? How do you address them?

Shockingly, 89 percent of maternal deaths in Georgia are preventable. But these numbers represent women and their families, and they are more than statistics.

When I think about our maternal mortality crisis, I think of Kira Johnson, a 39-year-old woman who flew planes and ran marathons and spoke several languages. More importantly, she was a human being.

On April 12, 2016, Kira Johnson checked into a hospital with her husband Charles to give birth to their second child, Langston. Kira never returned home alive. She was literally lying on a hospital bed begging for care. She died from a hemorrhage approximately 12 hours after delivering Langston.

Kira deserved better, and so did Amber Thurman and Candi Miller, and so do the mothers across the United States who are dying at disproportionately higher rates than other developed nations. Yet this administration is working to make a preventable crisis worse by gagging the Agencies tasked with helping medical professionals keep mothers alive.

So for Georgia's incredibly dedicated scientists, researchers, and medical professionals; for Kira Johnson, Amber Thurman, Candi Miller, and their grieving families; for the thousands of women who died preventable deaths surrounding their pregnancies, I am voting no on Mr. Kennedy's nomination for HHS Secretary.

Finally—and nobody believes a preacher when he says ''finally''—I am going to get out of the way so my colleague Mr. WELCH from the great State of Vermont can continue this work. But, you know, the sad irony of this moment in which we are seeing an onslaught on anything that relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the sad irony of this attack on DEI is that the Trump administration, while attacking diversity, equity, and inclusion, is nominating a manifestly unqualified person to run the Department of Health and Human Services. So don't lecture me on diversity, equity, and inclusion and the virtues of a meritocracy while putting up the most unqualified person anybody can imagine to be in charge of the Nation's public health system.

At the end of the day, Mr. Kennedy is a hazard to our health. He is a rubberstamp for the agenda to raise your healthcare costs so that they can line the pockets of their wealthy friends. He is busy chasing conspiracy theories, but he will spend no time chasing solutions to lower our healthcare costs. He apparently sees no problem gagging the CDC, even at the risk of raising egg costs, slowing cancer research, and exacerbating our shameful maternal mortality rates.

So for Cassie Cox, for Heather Payne, for Atlanta's CDC employees, in memory of Kira Johnson and thousands of women who died of preventable maternal deaths, I am voting no on Robert F. Kennedy's nomination to lead the Department of Health and Human Services. I call on all of my colleagues to join me in saying yes to our constituents and no to Robert Kennedy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). The Senator from Vermont.

ELON MUSK

Mr. WELCH. Madam President, I am here to follow my colleague from Georgia Senator WARNOCK to talk about the Robert Kennedy nomination. But before I start, I just want to share some good news I just learned about with the success of DOGE.

As we all know, Mr. Musk is working hard to slash costs, sending out emails to people telling them they don't have to show up to work tomorrow, firing inspectors general—all in pursuit of a smaller government at whatever the cost to a lot of folks around.

But busy as Mr. Musk is, he found time—he found time—with Tesla to sign a $400 million contract to provide Tesla Cybertrucks as transportation for the State Department. So it is a tribute to Mr. Musk that he was able to take a little bit of time out of his worthy full-time job of cutting costs, cutting positions, and ''saving the taxpayers money''—that he was able to find an opportunity to sign this $400 million deal for his company, Tesla.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. WELCH. Madam President, turning back to the topic at hand—a serious question for all of us. The Health and Human Services Secretary plays a vital role in the well-being of every citizen in this country and is extraordinarily powerful in every respect. It has to do with science, medical research, cancer cures. It has to do with the delivery of healthcare and trying to deal with the very complex and very expensive healthcare system we have. It has to do with trying to create priorities for the administration of our healthcare system.

I think all of us, every single one of us, takes very seriously the advice and consent constitutional responsibility that we have when it comes to voting on a Presidential nominee.

I start out with the proposition that a newly elected President is entitled to the benefit of the doubt, so my beginning position is my hope that I can be supportive. But saying that I want to

give the benefit of the doubt to the President, Republican or Democratic, is different than saying I want to give a blank check.

So how do we decide—or at least I will say how do I decide about a yes or no? It is three matters for me. One is character, one is competence, and one is their priorities. So character, competence, and priorities.

Now, character is a difficult issue to assess, and I think all of us are reserved when it comes to making an opinion or judgment on the character of another person. There are a lot of reasons anyone does whatever it is they do, and all of us have mistakes that we have made along the way. But difficult as it is, that is a factor that I believe a U.S. Senator has to take into account, exercising her or his best judgment about the character qualifications of the person who is presented to us.

So rather than go through my own reading and assessment of Mr. Kennedy's character, I want to read a letter from his cousin Caroline Kennedy, who has known him all his life.

You know, it was a painful letter for her to write. She videotaped it as well. But it was a letter that, out of great sincerity and a great sense of concern about the well-being and the healthcare of the citizens of this country, she felt obligated to share.

She is a very private person. Her family, as we all know, has suffered great loss and provided great service. She lost her father. She lost her uncle. She lost her other uncle. There has been a lot of hardship that has been reported for many of the Kennedys.

I am happy to be a great admirer of the family. I am from Massachusetts. John F. Kennedy was somebody who inspired me to think about going into politics and public service.

I say that by way of introduction because this letter that Caroline Kennedy sent to Senator CRAPO, the Finance Committee chair, and Senator WYDEN, the ranking member, and Senator CASSIDY and Senator SANDERS, the chair and ranking member of the HELP Committee, was clearly hard to write but heartfelt and, as I said earlier, reflected a deep and abiding commitment that she felt to provide relevant information to those of us who have to take a vote on Mr. Kennedy. Let me read her letter:

Throughout the past year, people have asked for my thoughts about my cousin, Robert Kennedy, Jr., and his presidential campaign.

I did not comment, not only because I was serving in a government position as United States Ambassador to Australia, but because I have never wanted to speak publicly about my family members and their challenges. We are a close generation of 28 cousins who have been through a lot together. We know how hard it has been, and we are always there for each other.

But now that Bobby has been nominated by President Trump to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, a position that would put him in charge of the health of the American people, I feel an obligation to speak out.

Overseeing the FDA, the NIH, the CDC, and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services—agencies that are charged with protecting the most vulnerable among us—is an enormous responsibility, and one that Bobby is unqualified to fill. He lacks any relevant government, financial, management, or medical experience. His views on vaccines are dangerous and willfully misinformed. These facts alone should be disqualifying. But he has personal qualities related to this position which, for me, pose even greater concern.

I have known Bobby my whole life; we grew up together. It's no surprise that he keeps birds of prey as pets because he himself is a predator. He has always been charismatic—able to attract others through the strength of his personality, willingness to take risks and break the rules. I watched his younger brothers and cousins follow him down the path of drug addiction. His basement, his garage, and his dorm room were the centers of the action where drugs were available, and he enjoyed showing off how he put baby chickens and mice in the blender to feed his hawks. It was often a perverse scene of despair and violence.

Of course, people can grow and change. Through his own strength—and the many second chances he was given by people who felt sorry for the boy who had lost his father—Bobby was able to pull himself out of illness and disease. I admire the discipline that took and the continuing commitment it requires.

But siblings and cousins who Bobby encouraged down the path of substance abuse suffered addiction, illness, and death while Bobby has gone on to misrepresent, lie, and cheat his way through life. Today, while he may encourage a younger generation to attend AA meetings, Bobby is addicted to attention and power. Bobby preys on the desperation of parents of sick children—vaccinating his own children while building a following by hypocritically discouraging other parents from vaccinating theirs. Even before he fills this job, his constant denigration of our health care system and the conspiratorial half-truths he has told about vaccines, including in connection with Samoa's deadly 2019 measles outbreak, have cost lives.

And now we know that Bobby's crusade against vaccination has benefited him in other ways, too. His ethics report makes clear that he will keep his financial stake in a lawsuit against an HPV vaccine. In other words, he is willing to enrich himself by denying access to a vaccine that can prevent almost all forms of cervical cancer and which has been safely administered to millions of boys and girls. During my time in Australia working on the QUAD Cancer Moonshot, I learned that cervical cancer is among the top three forms of cancer among women in a majority of countries. Tragically every year, more than 200,000 children lose their mothers, orphaned due to lack of vaccines and screening. Those are the real-world consequences of Bobby's irresponsible beliefs.

We are a close family and none of this is easy to say. It also wasn't easy to remain silent last year when Bobby expropriated my father's image and distorted President Kennedy's legacy to advance his own failed presidential campaign—and then groveled to Donald Trump for a job. Bobby continues to grandstand off my father's assassination, and that of his own father. It is incomprehensible that someone who is willing to exploit their own painful family tragedies for publicity would be in charge of American life-and-death situations.

Unlike Bobby, I try not to speak for my father—but I am certain that he and my uncle Bobby, who gave their lives in public service, and my uncle Teddy, who devoted his Senate career to improving health care, would be disgusted.

The American health care system, for all its flaws, is the envy of the world. Its doctors and nurses, researchers, scientists, and caregivers are the most dedicated people I know. Every day, they give their lives to heal and save others. They deserve a knowledgeable leader who is committed to evidence and excellence. They deserve a Secretary committed to advancing cutting-edge medicine to save lives, not rejecting the advances we have already made. They deserve a stable, moral, and ethical person at the helm of this crucial agency. They deserve better than Bobby Kennedy—and so do the rest of us. I urge the Senate to reject his nomination.

Sincerely,

Caroline Kennedy.

That is a hard letter for her to have written, a hard letter for me to have read. But a person who has known him all his life, who admires his capacity ultimately to kick the heroin addiction that he had, has expressed very clearly questions about his character.

Now, why is that important?

You need a steady hand to run a major Agency with the awesome responsibility of the healthcare and well-being of the people of this country. That is a hard thing to do. It is very stressful. And that history that was recounted by Caroline Kennedy certainly raises major questions about the suitability of Mr. Kennedy to assume the responsibility of Health and Human Services Secretary.

The second question is competence. Competence has to do with what your experience is, what your training is, what your managerial capacities are.

What Mr. Kennedy said is that he wants to be a disrupter in the healthcare system. I am in favor of a disrupter. We need change. I don't want a destroyer. And Robert Kennedy does not have the temperament or the capacity or the competence to be merely a disrupter and a builder, but to be a destroyer.

Competence—you know the obvious things: He is not a doctor. He is not a scientist. He is not a public health expert or someone who has led a complex organization like HHS or a private major organization that requires extraordinary managerial skills.

He has built a career—we have a debate about this, but I come down clearly on the side that his career is built on misinformation. And it is misinformation in healthcare.

And, by the way, one of the things that is so tough: If you are a mother, if you are a father, and you have a partner or you have a son or a daughter who is really seriously sick, you will do anything—you will mortgage your house, you will liquidate your retirement account, you will do anything and everything you can—for the well-being of that child or that loved one. You will do it. But also, if you have a person you love who is diagnosed with a fatal illness, you also are really vulnerable to folks who tell you there is an easy way out, a magic therapy, a special doctor in South America. You

are so hungry to get the cure, to get the answer to protect the person you love. Anybody in the medical profession should take great care not to abuse the trust they have.

My view: Robert Kennedy has spent his considerable talent promoting misinformation to vulnerable people who have motives we all have, and that is the well-being of people we love.

Some of the things that Mr. Kennedy said when he was attacking vaccines, they are not based at all on science, but they appeal to people's distrust of the standard medical profession.

Kennedy made anti-Semitic remarks about COVID–19, saying that the pandemic was ethnically targeted to spare Ashkenazi Jews and Chinese people. I mean, what is that about?

His anti-vax work in Samoa contributed to a measles outbreak in 2019, and 83 people—mostly children—died.

Kennedy falsely claimed 5G internet causes radiation sickness and DNA damage. You know, some people believe this. They saw it on the internet. He is promoting it using the magic of the Kennedy name, the credibility that comes from being a member of one of the most storied political families in the history of our country.

Kennedy doesn't understand what HIV/AIDS is and has espoused homophobic and racist views on HIV/AIDS. He has said it is ''undeniable that African AIDS is an entirely different disease from Western AIDS.'' Kennedy has also pushed a false theory that AIDS is really chronic fatigue syndrome.

And Kennedy said it is antidepressants, not guns, that lead to more mass shootings and has said Big Pharma's influence over the NIH stopped him from researching mass shootings.

When I think about how did he come to be the nominee, it is relevant because it obviously isn't on the basis of his scientific knowledge, his skill at running a major organization, the healthcare research that he has done. It was political.

He ran for President in the Democratic primary. He lost badly, made no progress, selected his Vice Presidential candidate on the basis of her capacity to write checks and keep the campaign going. It blew up nevertheless, and he went, hat in hand, to Candidate Trump, who was leading by far on the Republican side—pretty much uncontested—and begged for a job in exchange for Kennedy's political support. President Trump—then-Candidate Trump—told Kennedy: You could be HHS Secretary.

And here he is. So that is hardly the resume to inspire confidence that he will be good at the job. He was good at ingratiating himself to President Trump, but that is not confidence for me that he will be good at securing the health and well-being of this country.

Interestingly enough, one of the things that President Trump did in his first term that I have great respect for is Operation Warp Speed. We were in COVID. A lot of things President Trump did, I think, were bad, but I am going to talk about something he did that was really good. We needed a vaccine. We all remember back then. We knew COVID was deadly. We were all terrified that somebody or a family member, a friend, would contract the virus.

We didn't know how it was spreading. There was even a time when, if you got your groceries, you were supposed to leave your bag outside. We just didn't know, and we were trying to figure it out. But what we did all know is that what would give us security and safety was a vaccine, and we didn't have one.

Operation Warp Speed was a commitment by the Federal Government to put up money in advance to help facilitate research and put up money in advance to build production capacity for a yet-to-be-invented vaccine.

So what happened with Operation Warp Speed was the combination of Federal money going into pharmaceutical companies that devoted their scientific expertise and medical expertise to finding a vaccine, and they found it.

Then, when they found it, we didn't start building the manufacturing capacity; we had it in place. That was a risk because we didn't know we would get the vaccine. We didn't know if it would work or it wouldn't. But the Trump administration made a commitment to be ready the moment that vaccine was found, and as a result of that, we were able to get the vaccines out to millions of people way before, in the absence of Operation Warp Speed, it would have been delivered. That is an achievement.

Robert Kennedy, 6 months after the vaccine was out and hundreds of millions of lives were being saved, said it was a disaster. He condemned it. So how is it, even in the face of this almost miraculous discovery, creation, and then delivery of this vaccine and hundreds of thousands of lives saved and a restoration of some sense of security even though we had a long way to go, that Mr. Kennedy condemned the scientific breakthrough that led to the saving of lives of people in the Presiding Officer's State and in mine?

So it just bewilders me that a person is so rash and so rejects not only science but life experience in this country where Operation Warp Speed helped us get that vaccine created and distributed. That is pretty strange.

You know, other things that Mr. Kennedy has said about vaccines—and this really is serious, you know, because we are having debates about these things, and people don't have confidence. The more we undercut their confidence in vaccines—will they get vaccinated for polio? Will they get vaccinated for measles? Will they get vaccinated for COVID? The more you undercut that with specious claims, the more resistance there is for us having the confidence we need as a society to make a decision about how to proceed.

But Robert Kennedy, some of the things he did—he falsely claims that vaccines caused autism. He falsely claims that vaccines cause autoimmune diseases, develop disorders and allergies. He claims vaccines can cause rare childhood cancers. He claimed that the Spanish flu came from vaccine research—no evidence in the world for that—and called COVID shots ''a crime against humanity.'' He claimed the COVID vaccine was a conspiracy against Black communities. He raised a lot of money off anti-vaccine propaganda films.

He went to Samoa, as others have said, to amplify anti-vaccine voices and contributed to a measles outbreak, and that measles outbreak killed 83 people.

As my colleague from Georgia mentioned, he compared COVID policies with Nazi testing programs. He compared vaccination requirements to Nazi experimentation. He claimed pesticides make people trans. He claimed HIV does not cause AIDS. You know, a couple of things that—he claimed fluoride causes diseases and claimed that 5G internet causes radiation sickness and DNA damage.

That is not a person I think that we can trust to build up science, build up the credibility of good science, and make decisions about allocation of research. It is just a person—I don't know how to describe it—it is just a conspiracy-minded person who comes up with the conspiracy of the day to challenge anything that is out there to advance his interests.

You know, the other priorities—and this is where, on how best to improve our healthcare system, there is going to be debate, and there always is within the Democratic caucus, oftentimes within the Republican conference, and certainly across the aisle.

I was a strong supporter of ObamaCare, and my Republican colleagues in the House at that time were united in their opposition. It passed really with the vote of Senator McCain here in the Senate, and the debate never ended.

When I was in the House after ObamaCare was passed and the Republicans took the majority, it seemed like every vote was about repealing the healthcare bill. But finally that is behind us. It has been accepted, but it is not necessarily guaranteed. In fact, we have to make a lot of improvement.

But the priorities that I am hearing from the Trump administration, which would be carried out by the Health and Human Services Secretary, are very disturbing to me and would be very, very harmful to Vermont.

There are dramatic cuts in the Medicaid budget. Medicaid helps low-income kids. It really is also the lifeline for our seniors who need nursing home care. Medicaid in Vermont—194,000 or 30 percent of Vermonters could potentially be impacted by the administration's cuts to Medicaid and health insurance, tax credits, and assistance.

And that is all kinds of Vermonters. That is 20,000 seniors, it is 67,000 children, and it is 19,000 Vermonters who have disabilities.

By the way, we have real affordability challenges in Vermont. One of our big affordability challenges—we have very high property taxes and one of the highest income taxes in the country, but the property taxes are brutal on local property owners and homeowners.

If those cuts occur, as is being proposed by the Trump administration and would be advocated by Mr. Kennedy, that is a $113 million hole in the Vermont State budget. What do they do? Does the State go to local property tax payers to try to make up the difference? Not possible. Not sustainable.

You know, three proposals would dramatically reduce Federal funding for Medicaid—block grants, per capita caps, and reducing Medicaid matching rates. All of that has immediate and detrimental impact on our budget.

Currently, the Federal Government pays between 50 percent and 77 percent of Medicaid costs and more for certain high-value services. The administration proposals to slash billions in Federal funding from Medicaid, as I mentioned, would really strain our budgets.

The programs we have that would really be affected include Dr. Dinosaur. It provides low-cost or free healthcare for Vermont's children and teenagers under the age of 19, and it also provides healthcare for pregnant women, which is so tremendous, women who are pregnant getting healthcare and then after the baby is delivered, care then. That is such a critical time in their life and in the child's life. We are going to keep that, not diminish it.

Vermont Medicaid has a prescription cost assistance program that helps uninsured and those enrolled in Medicare with help on their drug costs and long-term care services for seniors. We want to keep these. We want to improve it. If there are ways that we can make it more affordable, we want to do that. But we certainly don't want to blow it up.

Vermonters could lose access to substance use treatment or mental health care. Our rural hospitals in Vermont are like rural hospitals in Alabama; they are a lifeline for our communities. They play a very important role in the well-being of communities—not just community health but the local economy. They are under enormous pressure. Doctors there are not being paid what they need to be paid. They do an incredibly good job for folks, but they are really in jeopardy.

I am working with Senator BOOZMAN and others to try to get the reimbursement rates for our community hospitals up to where they can be sustainable. The Kennedy plan would cut that and hurt us.

So the bottom line here for me on the question of any nominee is character, competence, and priorities. And on all three of these, I come up short with respect to Mr. Kennedy. Aside from the fact that we could do better, it is hard in many ways to see how we could do worse.

So I would urge all of my colleagues to consider the consequences of their vote—a vote that would put a person of questionable character, a person of questionable competence, and a person of, I feel, bad priorities at the head of our healthcare system. So I would urge my colleagues to vote no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I want to start by commending my colleague, the Senator from Vermont, Mr. WELCH, for his strong argument as to why we should all vote no on the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, and I come to the floor tonight to voice my strong opposition to this nomination.

You know, Mr. Kennedy says that he will always follow the evidence no matter where it leads. Well, if you look at his record, he hasn't done that. But let's apply that guidance and see where it leads when it comes to his own nomination.

First, is he qualified to do the job? That should be the basic threshold question for any nominee to a position such as this. And the short answer is no, but let's now look at the evidence and understand why.

We know that the Department of Health and Human Services manages some of our most critical health programs, like Medicaid, like Medicare.

It does health research that delivers treatments and cures at the National Institutes of Health and the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health.

At the FDA, the Food and Drug Administration, it determines whether or not the drugs we consume are safe and whether they are efficacious—whether they will actually do what the manufacturers say they will do.

At the CDC, the Centers for Disease Control, they disseminate information about pandemics and health risks, and they monitor the risk of outbreaks of disease around the world, especially those diseases that can travel across boundaries and hit the United States.

It helps treat our Nation's substance use crisis at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, known as SAMHSA.

It ensures patient safety in our healthcare systems at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

It runs lifesaving programs like the community health centers, Healthy Start, and the HIV/AIDS care at the Health Resources and Services Administration.

It does all that and more.

HHS also provides quality control for reproductive health services. It ensures that contraceptives are covered under the Affordable Care Act, and it makes sure that Americans can have access to over-the-counter options. HHS, the Department of Health and Human Services, also includes early childhood development programs like Head Start and childcare, programs to help the elderly age in their communities and individuals with disabilities live independently.

But when you look at that wide range of important subjects that HHS covers, Mr. Kennedy has no experience, no qualifications, in the vast majority of that work. Now, I don't think any of us expect that one Secretary of HHS can know everything. But if you monitored the hearings and listened to Mr. Kennedy's answers, you can see that Mr. Kennedy knows virtually nothing about all those important subjects. In fact, he was stunningly unprepared to discuss even the most basic programs at his confirmation hearing.

Most of us, even those of us who are not on Medicare, have some understanding of the program from our parents or grandparents. We have a sense of the basic components of Medicare. Medicare, of course, provides healthcare coverage to 68 million Americans—seniors and people with disabilities. But when Senator HASSAN of New Hampshire questioned Mr. Kennedy about those basics, he pretty much got everything wrong. He could not explain the simple components of Medicare, like what covers hospital care and what covers doctor visits?

These are not gotcha questions. These are not tough questions. These are questions that anybody who wants to be Secretary of HHS should understand, because Medicare is one of the biggest and most consequential programs within the jurisdiction of that Department. Knowing the basics, just the basics, should be easy.

So he didn't understand the basics of Medicare. How about Medicaid? Medicaid is another very important health program in our country. It covers nearly 80 million of our fellow Americans, including 37 million children. In my State of Maryland, Medicaid covers 20 percent of our residents—children and families, nursing home residents, pregnant women, and people with disabilities.

At his confirmation hearing, RFK, Jr., complained about Medicaid's ''high premiums and high deductibles,'' even though, as we know, the majority of enrollees in Medicaid don't have any premiums. Medicaid doesn't have high premiums, but what it does have is very high approval ratings.

Mr. Kennedy also erroneously said the Federal Government covers the full cost, when we know that it has been a shared responsibility between the Federal Government and the States. In fact, that has been the matter and subject of lots of debates in the U.S. Congress and the Supreme Court. He didn't know that.

So what we see in RFK, Jr., is a demonstration over and over and over

again, even when our Republican colleagues on the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions tried to coach him along, he still simply did not get it, did not get the basics.

Now, perhaps, some of our Republican colleagues—some of them—don't care so much about his lack of understanding of Medicaid. I have seen a lot of reports in the last couple weeks that House Republicans are planning to make deep cuts to Medicaid as part of a plan to cut taxes for the very, very rich and ask other Americans to pay for them, including Americans on Medicaid. So maybe for some, the fact that Mr. Kennedy is ignorant about Medicaid just doesn't get in the way.

You know, we are debating a budget reconciliation bill here in the U.S. Senate. I serve on the Budget Committee, and today in the Budget Committee, I offered a very simple proposal. I said that as part of this budget reconciliation process, the Senate should not consider—in fact, I made it a point of order—subject to point of order if we did consider—should not consider cuts to Medicare or Medicaid, simple amendment. Let's lay down some guardrails before we debate this reconciliation bill. Unfortunately, not a single one of my Republican colleagues voted for that bill to make sure that we protect Medicare and Medicaid as we go through this reconciliation process. All of my Democratic colleagues voted for it.

Now, it is bad enough that Mr. Kennedy is not qualified for this position—and clearly he is not qualified—but it is worse than that. I mean, there are lots of unqualified people that we might just pick out randomly and say: Let's nominate that person to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and we could just have an unqualified person there.

But with Mr. Kennedy, it is worse than that. He is not only unqualified, putting him in that position will put the public health of Americans at risk. And so that takes this to a whole different and more dangerous level.

And we have heard a lot about this vaccine question, but it really does go to the heart of why he poses a threat to the public health.

Now, he says he will believe us on vaccines ''if you show me the science.''

Well, he should look at the science, and he should talk to the scientists in this country, because in the past 50 years alone, vaccines have saved 154 million lives around the world, including the lives of 100 million infants. Vaccines eradicated polio and eradicated smallpox. They have prevented outbreaks of measles, where they are used, across the majority—great majority—of the population. They have kept recent generations from getting chicken pox, and, yes, they helped lift the world out of the lockdown from the COVID–19 pandemic.

So for generations—for generations—America and our Federal health Agencies have helped fuel this progress. More than 60 years ago, an American said:

> I hope that the renewed drive . . . to provide vaccinations for all Americans, and particularly those who are young, will have the wholehearted support of every parent in America.

Colleagues, that person was President John F. Kennedy.

Unfortunately, his nephew, RFK, Jr., has spent decades unraveling that hard-won legacy by spreading lies and conspiracy theories about vaccines. It wasn't that long ago that he spread vaccine conspiracy theories in Samoa, where his misinformation contributed to a measles outbreak that got 83 people killed, mostly infants and children.

We cannot let that happen to children here or others around the world. But, unfortunately, we are already seeing the cost of that misinformation and those conspiracy theories right here in America. Because that misinformation, the kind of misinformation spread by RFK, Jr., has contributed to lower vaccination rates. And, right now, there is a measles outbreak in West Texas that is threatening our children. And it is not the first one we have seen in recent months, and it will not be the last if these conspiracy theories continue to spread.

And we know that it doesn't take much misinformation to make us all vulnerable. Because if vaccination rates drop below 95 percent, in the cases of some diseases, those diseases can spread very rapidly through the population. In fact, for a disease like measles that infects just about everyone exposed, it is disastrous when those vaccination rates fall below 95 percent.

And yet these lies spread by RFK, Jr., are now burrowing themselves into the American consciousness like brain worms. And it will be bad enough if he doesn't become Secretary of HHS, given the damage he has already done, but if he becomes Secretary of HHS, he will have a bully pulpit on which those conspiracy theories can spread even further and even farther and put even more Americans at risk.

Now, once he was confronted with some of these statements that he had made previously, RFK, Jr., started to flip, and he started to flop. In fact, at his confirmation hearings, he insisted that he never meant much of what he said. In fact, he denied having made some statements altogether. He denied making statements that are on tape for everyone to hear them.

As we have heard already, in 2013, he compared the CDC's childhood vaccine program to Nazi death camps, saying:

> To me this is like Nazi death camps, what happened to these kids.

In 2019, he compared the CDC vaccine program to the pedophile scandal in the Catholic church.

In 2023, he said that COVID–19 ''is targeted to attack Caucasians and Black people. The people who are [most] immune are Ashkenazi Jews and Chinese.'' He denied saying that at the hearing.

And this and that and flip and flop, he tried to backtrack the confirmation day conversion, nomination day conversion.

He also, nevertheless, could not prevent himself, could not help himself from citing a discredited study on vaccines and autism and repeatedly refused to tell the truth that peer-reviewed studies have shown that vaccines do not cause autism. Vaccines do not cause autism.

So he is not qualified. Worse than that, he poses a danger to the public health, given his conspiracy theories about vaccines.

But let's do what he says he does and let's continue to follow the evidence, because this Nation conducts the best biomedical research in the world. A lot of it comes out of the National Institutes of Health, and I am proud that they have their home in the State of Maryland. Just last year, the NIH research helped develop an accurate blood test for Alzheimer's, a brain-computer interface to help a man with ALS communicate, and a drug to reduce reactions to peanut allergies, all those things last year at NIH.

NIH clinical trials give people hope with novel and hard-to-treat illnesses, including childhood cancer. And yet what we are witnessing in the first 22 days of this Trump administration is an attack on much of that medical research. Right now, at the National Institutes of Health, the Trump administration is wreaking havoc. They have frozen internal meetings. They have pulled down information from data sets from HHS websites. They have denied resources to the public and clinicians.

Thankfully, a Federal court had to step in and stop their refusal to provide the public with important health information, NIH and CDC.

The administration also, early on, took this illegal action in violation of the Impoundment Control Act to stop a lot of Federal grants that had already been appropriated. That also put in jeopardy a lot of NIH research. Again, fortunately a Federal court has intervened and issued a temporary restraining order.

But just in the last 3 or 4 days, we had NIH decide to change entirely the formula for reimbursing institutions that study diseases around the country, and the overwhelming evidence and testimony from the experts said that, by changing those formulas, they will do great damage to important health research in this country.

Again, a Federal judge had to intervene to stop this. We shouldn't have to rely on the courts in order to get the job done for the American people. We certainly aren't going to be able to rely on RFK, Jr., were he to be confirmed.

He poses a threat to that important research that is going on at NIH. In fact, just this past November, he said:

> We need to act fast . . . 600 people are going to walk into offices at NIH and 600 people are going to leave.

That is RFK, Jr., back in November. And if he doesn't fire you, he still doesn't want to let you do your job. He is on record saying that his plan for NIH is ''giving infectious disease a break for about eight years.''

Madam President, infectious diseases have no plans to give us a break, and we should not be giving them a break. I can say right now that we are seeing avian flu outbreaks across the United States. I am hearing a lot about it, of course, from my farmers on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and it is contributing to a huge spike in the price of eggs around the country. Yet, as this headline indicates, the ''Trump administration's communication freeze restricted access to critical bird flu information.'' That is just one story about the effort to shut down information important to our health. And it is our health because if avian flu mutates, it is not just the higher egg prices we have seen; it could start jumping from person to person, and we could see another pandemic. We should never give infectious diseases a break. They will never give us one.

Finally, I want to look at one last dimension of all of this because Mr. Kennedy says to follow the evidence, and the evidence shows that he is unqualified. The evidence shows that he would be actually worse than unqualified; he would pose a risk to the public health of our country.

So it does beg the question of whether he believes all these lies and all this disinformation. Sometimes it is hard to tell because he seems to believe whatever gets him a lot of money and a lot of attention.

Here is the evidence for that. His cousin Caroline Kennedy told the Senate that he ''vaccinates his own children while building a following by hypocritically discouraging other parents from vaccinating theirs.'' So what is good for his family he discourages other families from doing.

During his time at the misnamed Children's Health Defense, which is an anti-vaccine lobbying organization, he made millions of dollars from anti-vax lawsuits. At his hearings, when he was asked to forgo any profits he might gain from those lawsuits even as Secretary of Health and Human Services, at first he said he wouldn't, and then he said, OK, he won't take that profit for himself; he will assign it to his son. He seems to flip and flop with the winds.

When he was working to be a Democrat, he said he was ardently prochoice. Now he says he believes whatever Donald Trump believes.

He wrote entire books about climate change, but now, with Donald Trump in the White House, he is willing to ''agree to disagree.''

What the evidence shows is that he will not stand up for our public health. We have seen this pattern, of course, with other nominees who get nominated for the positions not because of their qualifications but because of the fact that they bow down to everything that Donald Trump says. We have seen that in nominee after nominee.

While, of course, the President wants people in his Cabinet who are going to follow his guidance, we would also hope that these are people who are qualified and people who don't pose a danger to the country and people who are not just doing this to make money for themselves. And when it comes to that test, again, let's do what Mr. Kennedy says: Let's follow the evidence.

Strike 1, he is not qualified. Strike 2, he is actually a danger to the public health. No. 3, he says things, according to his own cousin, that we are not sure he believes because he doesn't apply the same standard to his own family. He says things to enrich himself even when it puts others at risk.

So I would say strike 1, strike 2, strike 3, he is out, applying his own test of following the evidence. Mr. Kennedy is simply not fit to be Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. I urge my colleagues to vote no.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). The Senator from Connecticut.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am joining my colleagues on the floor today to raise the alarm about the impact on the people that we serve—in particular, the most vulnerable people we serve: the frail, elderly, children—with the nomination and soon-confirmation of Robert Kennedy, Jr., to be the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

I don't think it is hyperbole to say that there are very few people in this country that are less qualified to run this Agency than Robert Kennedy, Jr. I say that because there are few people in the country who have been so enthusiastic, so public, and so impactful in their ability to take some of the wildest conspiracy theories that are out there on the internet about our health system or about our kids or about our families, internalize them, and then disseminate them in a way that does great damage.

There is obviously a reputation that comes with being a Kennedy. There is an ability to convince and lead people because when a Kennedy speaks—when a Kennedy speaks—there is an assumption that that comes with authority and grounding in fact. So when Robert Kennedy, Jr., even as a private citizen, has adopted and amplified some of the wildest conspiracy theories out there—most notably, his belief that there is not a single safe vaccine in the United States of America—it has consequences because people listen to the Kennedy family.

But those consequences pale in comparison to the consequences that will be visited upon this country if a conspiracy theorist, someone who throws science out the window—not just a science skeptic; someone who is outright hostile to science—takes over the preeminent public health Agency in this country.

But the danger is even deeper because what is happening throughout our government today is—let's not pull punches—a billionaire takeover. Elon Musk is running the U.S. Government today for all any of us can tell, and Elon Musk is running the government in order to enrich himself.

Today, there is news that he is about to get a major contract for armored Teslas from the White House and news that he is going to personally meet with Prime Minister Modi. His agenda will not be the interests of the people of the United States of America. Elon Musk, as a representative of the White House, is going to sit down with Prime Minister Modi and talk about Tesla's business and Elon Musk's business in China. I mean, you couldn't make this up. You couldn't make this up.

He is doing press conferences in the White House, and then he is leveraging his access to power, his access to the President, his influence over American policy in order to make money for himself.

The same thing is happening at the Department of Health and Human Services.

As we speak, Elon Musk and his lieutenants have access to all of your personal data—your Medicare data, your Medicaid data. They are not in there to try to make the government more efficient; they are in there in order to make money. I don't think that is hard to believe given the fact that it is entirely clear that Elon Musk's involvement in our foreign policy is with a design to make money for himself.

The same thing is happening and will happen in the Department of Health and Human Services.

I want to talk to you for a few minutes tonight about a radical anti-patient, anti-science, and pro-billionaire agenda that will be realized if RFK, Jr., is successfully confirmed by this body. Let me walk you through the RFK policy checklist.

The first thing that we are learning about is that he is going to oversee a gutting of NIH funding. This is a big deal because a massive cut in funding for NIH—well, that is life or death. NIH does the basic research that private pharmaceutical companies need in order to cure and treat diseases. If the NIH can't do research, well then our pharmaceutical companies can't build on that research to cure diseases.

So what has happened already that RFK, Jr., has pledged to implement is one of the biggest cuts to NIH that we have witnessed in modern history. It is done under the disguise of efficiency because the cut is supposedly about reducing the administrative expenses in research. But anybody that has ever been in a lab will tell you that there is really a distinction with no difference between direct and indirect costs. You

can't do the research without the administrative help and the indirect expenditures.

For instance, these are the things that would be categorized as indirect expenses. That is what is being limited by the order that RFK, Jr., is going to implement at the Department of Health and Human Services.

MRI machines that can measure whether a cancer treatment is working or not—that is an indirect expense, the equipment that determines whether the treatment that is being researched is working or not.

Payment for specialized research assistance that analyzes the clinical data that comes out of research, like blood samples—so the human beings that analyze the data. That is an indirect expense, and that is all of a sudden going to be limited by this Executive order.

Staff that monitor patients who are in clinical trials for adverse reactions—those people are apparently indirect expenses. You are going to have less people monitoring you for adverse reactions—maybe no people monitoring you for adverse events and reactions because those staff are deemed an indirect expense.

Advanced microscopes that are used to examine genetic alterations within, for instance, a tumor tissue—critical to studying cancer development and progression. Those advanced microscopes are, according to the Trump administration, an indirect expense, and thus funding will be limited or eliminated.

At the University of Connecticut, the estimate is that they would lose $165 million per year as a result of this new policy that Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is going to enthusiastically embrace. The University of Connecticut tells me that it would mean that they would close labs, entire labs; that they would have fewer discoveries; that they would do fewer patient trials; and there would be major delays even on the projects that they would continue, meaning that some people will die unnecessarily, waiting for those cures and therapies to be developed.

OK. Well, you could say that you shouldn't hold the incoming Secretary of Health and Human Services to account for a policy, but here is the problem: This isn't just a bad idea; it is illegal. It is illegal. Congress specified very specifically in statute how money would flow to research institutions. In fact, we were very prescriptive in limiting the ability of any President to be able to unilaterally reduce the amount of money that goes for things like indirect expenses.

I am not going to vote for any nominee who is willingly going to implement an illegal order. What you are watching is an extraordinary seizure of power from the people by the executive branch.

The reason spending power in article I is vested in the legislature is because, here in the legislature, in the Congress, we represent every political party, every political faction, every part of the country. So, when we come to a decision on how the taxpayers' money is spent, we have to, by definition, come to an agreement that spreads that money out amongst people from every part of the country—people represented by both Republicans and Democrats. That means that the money is spent fairly. If the President of the United States gets to have unilateral decision-making authority over where money gets spent, it becomes a fundamental, unconstitutional corruption because the President can then just decide to spend money only on his friends and to hurt his enemies.

So I am not going to support any nominee, including RFK, Jr., who is taking jobs with the explicit promise that they are going to implement illegal, unconstitutional orders. And the Executive order to destroy NIH funding is just that.

Listen, people rely on this research. People rely on this research. People will die if this research is delayed or if labs at the University of Connecticut or at the University of North Carolina or at the University of Wisconsin close. There is no consensus out there in America to destroy medical research. Nobody voted for Donald Trump to stop cancer research or juvenile diabetes research. So, when I say that there is an anti-patient—a radical anti-patient—agenda, I want to start with this plan to illegally gut NIH funding because that is anti-patient, and it is radical because the American public does not support it.

I know my colleagues have spent a lot of time talking about RFK, Jr.'s efforts to undermine vaccines, but I just think it is worth it to, once again, read into the RECORD some of the things that he has said, because it was stunning to me. I am a member of the HELP Committee. I listened to the testimony of Mr. Kennedy, and he said: I am not anti-vaccine.

Yet let's just remind our colleagues of what he has said.

He called the COVID vaccine a ''crime against humanity.''

He said that taking the vaccine would ''increase [your] risk of [getting] COVID.''

He said the COVID vaccines ''may have contaminated the country's blood supply.''

He described the HPV vaccine as ''dangerous and defective. . . . With this level of risk, it would seem that no loving parents would [ever] allow their daughter to receive this vaccine.''

He said that the polio vaccine may have led to the increase in cancer.

He wrote that the measles vaccine ''instead of protecting children, not only delays onset of disease to later age cohorts but has the potential to cause serious and permanent injury.''

He wrote that the tetanus vaccine ''makes children more susceptible to dying from other causes.''

He stated:

> I do believe . . . autism does come from vaccines.

And, most famously, he stated:

> There's no vaccine that is safe and effective.

Yet he has the gall to come before the HELP Committee and say that he is not anti-vaccine. That is like somebody who sets fire to a building every single day and claims that he is not an arsonist.

There is danger—danger—in creating an impression that vaccines are unsafe, that vaccines cause autism. It has been debunked. There is such a thing as truth in this country. There is scientific consensus. I am not saying that we shouldn't question science, but there are questions that have been settled, and it has been settled that vaccines are not just safe but are essential for the preservation of the health of our children.

Third, I want to talk about these attacks on the FDA.

Mr. Kennedy said:

> If you work for the FDA and you are a part of this corrupt system, I have two messages for you: Preserve your records, and pack your bags.

Now, listen. I don't think there is a single Senator here who would say that we shouldn't be having a conversation about FDA reform, about making sure the system works better. But there is a draft Executive order out there, apparently, that has been reported on that talks about halving the staff at the FDA, and you are literally about to confirm somebody who says that everybody at the FDA should pack their bags. That sounds like somebody who is going to enthusiastically shut down or, at the very least, neuter the FDA.

Now, I talked about what this means at the outset. This is both anti-patient and pro-billionaire. It is anti-patient because—well, I didn't even check ''anti-patient.'' Well, it is absolutely anti-patient. It is anti-patient because, if you halve the staff at the FDA, you are just going to get fewer drugs and therapies approved as quickly. That is clear. So, ultimately, patients are going to be hurt.

But it is pro-billionaire because, once you shrink the resources, it is up to the administration as to who gets the access to the regulatory system and who doesn't. So, if you are a billionaire who is friendly to Donald Trump or if you are a pharmaceutical company that is friendly, you might get that access.

But here is the other thing that happens when it is harder for science to dictate what drugs and therapies ultimately end up in the hands of consumers: It allows the snake oil salesmen—the people who are peddling the snake oil cures, the unproven cures—it allows them to gain a foothold because there are fewer actual proven drugs and therapies that are moving through the pipeline. So the unproven, unregulated drugs get a leg up.

I am just going to show you one other chart here. It is kind of extraordinary how many people who are coming into the administration or who are

associated with the administration are peddling these scamming products. A lot of them are these things called vita gummies.

This vita gummy scam—the Surgeon General nominee is hawking these vita gummies. Mehmet Oz, who is going to be Director of CMS, is hawking what he calls miracle drugs—unregulated drugs and supplements. Alex Jones, who is a big Trump supporter, is hawking Super Male Vitality serum. The guy in line to be the next FBI Director is making money online by selling something called vaccine reversal pills.

Let me say that again. Kash Patel, who is about to be voted on here to run the FBI, is making money online by selling something called vaccine reversal pills.

So, when you curtail the ability of the FDA to be able to regulate and to be able to move legitimate drugs through the process, you are benefiting the people who are hawking the unregulated, often charlatan drugs, and I don't know that it is coincidental that a lot of those people are either close to Donald Trump or are getting jobs in the Trump administration.

One, two, three, four. The fourth thing I want to talk about is the erasure of public health data.

So this is a big deal. Researchers, clinicians, doctors—they rely on data that is posted on the CDC's and FDA's web pages. There is really important data on those web pages, but because of these Executive orders that have mandated that Agencies scrub anything, for instance, that refers to terms like ''sex'' or ''gender,'' the CDC and FDA have taken offline numerous web pages and datasets, including recommendations on how physicians should treat sexually transmitted infections. Why? Because I guess the word ''sex'' is in the word ''sexually'' transmitted infections. So the attack on science and the attack on patients includes the erasure of public health data that our clinicians rely on.

RFK, Jr., has made no commitment that he would put that data back online. This crazy, insane assault on what they call DEI means that, if you have done research on anything with the word ''sex'' in it, like in sexually transmitted infections, apparently, your research is no good. That is wild. But RFK, Jr., is, apparently, going to implement the destruction of basic public health data that has anything to do with gender or sex. That is radical. That is anti-patient.

Let me talk to you about one particular conspiracy theory because it just matters to me greatly, and this one is both anti-patient and pro-billionaire.

So Robert Kennedy has lots of really wild, really dangerous ideas, but one of them is that treating kids for depression—treating kids for depression—is what has caused school shootings in this country.

Kids always had access to guns.

He said on a talk show.

There's no time in American history or human history that kids were going to schools and shooting their classmates. It happened—you know, it [happened] coterminous with the introduction of these drugs, with Prozac and . . . other drugs.

So what he is saying is that it is not the number of guns that are out there, and it is not the assault weapons. It is the fact that we are trying to humanely treat children for mental illness.

He also says:

We have always had an abundance of guns [in the United States]. In the last 20 years, there has been no per capita increase in the number of guns we have.

That is totally inaccurate. That is totally inaccurate. So, as somebody who has spent their career working to protect kids from gun violence and who believes that gun violence is a public health issue, it is heartbreaking and unacceptable to me that we are about to nominate a candidate to lead the preeminent public health Agency, not just in the United States but in the world, who believes that guns are not the primary cause of school shootings but that antidepressants are. There is zero evidence of that fact—zero evidence of that fact.

That should be offensive to every parent in this country who may not know exactly how we solve the problem of school shootings in this country but who certainly knows that the problem is not that we are treating kids for mental illness.

I want to talk about two last important elements on RFK, Jr.'s policy checklist.

The first—and I have referred to this throughout my remarks—is this idea that you are going to have to take a loyalty pledge to the President and his political agenda in order to receive funding. This is that DEI Executive order that says that they are going to end radical and wasteful government DEI programs. They say, if your research program has anything to do with environmental justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, sex, or gender, that they are going to cease funding your program.

Now, once again, that is illegal. The President cannot—cannot—apply additional conditions to grant programs authorized by Congress beyond those that are explicitly authorized by Congress. Sometimes, the President has some wiggle room, some ability to make decisions that apply extra conditions, but Congress has not given the President the ability to issue an order as wide and as broad and as vague as this. Nobody out there in the medical research field has any idea what this means. They have no idea whether they are running a DEI research program or not. So what it allows for is another fundamental corruption for the Department of Health and Human Services to just decide, inside a closed, walled-off room, what is DEI and what is not.

I just speculate that there is probably going to be a whole bunch more DEI research programs in Oregon and Connecticut than there would be in Mississippi or Texas. It is just another way to move money away from people who may not line up with your political ideology or your political agenda as a President and hand it to your loyalists and to the people who are with you.

Then, finally, I will just come back to one of the places that I started. Elon Musk and his billionaire crowd—they are inside the Department of Health and Human Services right now. Right now, an unaccountable billionaire who didn't get elected to anything has access to your most intimate personal information—your Medicare records. Whether you have seen a doctor, whether you have had a surgery, whether you have gotten treatment for mental illness or addiction, Elon Musk, an unaccountable billionaire, the richest man in the world, has access to that data.

Maybe we aren't certain what Elon Musk is going to do with all of that data—by the way, he apparently has access to your Treasury data, to your tax records, and to your Social Security information as well—but RFK, Jr., is not going to stop that. He is not going to stop an unaccountable billionaire from having access to some of the most sensitive data that exists—your health records.

Elon Musk is interested in having access to this data in part because it gives him a competitive edge over the folks that he is trying to win business against.

So any way you cut it, Robert Kennedy's agenda for the Department of Health and Human Services is anti-patient, and it is pro-billionaire. Gutting NIH funding, undermining vaccines, attacking the FDA, erasing public health data, blaming shootings on antidepressants—by the way, that is pro-billionaire because guess who gets helped when guns aren't the problem; it is the wealthy, rich owners of the gun companies—using this vaguely termed notion of DEI to force people to pledge loyalty to Donald Trump in order to receive Federal funds and then giving Elon Musk and his friends access to very sensitive health records.

I know a lot of my Republican friends know in their hearts that this is a very dangerous choice, and I am very sad for this body that on this nomination that so clearly implicates one of the most sacred responsibilities of the U.S. Congress—the protection of the health and welfare of our children, of our families—that we weren't able to find a way to tell President Trump: Pick somebody else. Pick somebody else. Find somebody who isn't so enthusiastically going to gut funding for research. Find somebody who doesn't show such affection for conspiracy theories. Find somebody who doesn't blame shootings on treating kids for mental illness.

There are a lot of really conservative healthcare leaders out there, a lot of

healthcare leaders who supported Donald Trump who won't do as much damage as RFK, Jr., will do.

There is still time for my Republican colleagues to join us and send a message that loyalty to the people of this country and a commitment to protecting the healthcare of this country matters more than loyalty to President Trump.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, my colleague from Connecticut is here past midnight. Why is he here past midnight? Because the health and welfare of our children and our families are at stake. That is why I am here, too—because it matters. It matters that you have someone in charge of Health and Human Services who has some at least basic understanding of the issues and basic experience managing a Department or managing an organization. But the candidate, the nominee, RFK, Jr., fails—fails on experience, fails on ethics, fails on qualifications. I must say the diagnosis is grim in each of these three areas.

Let's talk a little about his experience running an agency or his medical experience. In fact, when Mr. Kennedy was asked during his confirmation hearings about some of the Agencies he would oversee, he got his facts completely wrong about just the core basics—about Medicare, a critical healthcare program for seniors throughout our Nation.

It has these parts—A, B, and C—and people in the medical world all know every detail about this. When he was asked about it, he kind of just guessed, and he said: Well, Part A covers primary care, Part B covers physicians, and Part C is a full menu of healthcare services.

Well, not even close—not even close. Part A covers inpatient hospital services; part B, outpatient and home health services; and Part C, Medicare Advantage. I don't know if he could have explained what Medicare Advantage is.

Everyone who works in the field of providing healthcare through Medicare understands these core, basic foundations, as well as lots of other details.

Senator CASSIDY talked about another piece of the healthcare puzzle. We have Medicare. We also have Medicaid. Medicaid in Oregon is the Oregon Health Plan. It provides healthcare to families who are struggling, who are not yet fully into the middle class.

He said that all of Medicaid is fully paid by the Federal Government. No. No, it is not. In fact, in Oregon, the State picks up two-fifths of the tab, and there are different categories and different ratios.

Maybe one could say that these details—one doesn't need to know every aspect of it, but the architecture of our healthcare system, the basic architecture, just the simplest, most fundamental pieces, he has no idea about.

These are incredibly important programs in our States, Medicare and Medicaid. Forty-four percent of the births in Oregon are covered by Medicaid.

You know, Oregon is a very rural State. We have some big cities, but we have a lot of rural areas. Medicaid coverage rates are higher in rural areas because incomes are lower and more people qualify.

Medicaid is incredibly important in the counties that are very rural in my State. In my 36 counties, a good two-thirds of them or three-fourths of them would be considered extremely rural.

It is important to people in rural America that you have a leader who understands and cares about the healthcare program for rural America, but that individual is not RFK, Jr.

Not only that, it is vital that the Health and Human Services Secretary understands which ideas don't work.

Once again, our Republican colleagues are pushing to impose work requirements on Medicaid enrollees. Now, every developed country but the United States fully backs the idea that healthcare is a right. It is not a privilege that comes out of your wealth. They understand that in order to be able to work, you have to have healthcare so you can be well enough to work. That is every other country. But here, the elite across the aisle only want healthcare for the rich. They want to cut down Medicaid. They want poor people to struggle and never be able to get wealth so they can never get a job so they can keep talking about how lazy people are. Well, that is just absurd and wrong in every possible way.

Ninety-one percent of Medicaid enrollees who aren't disabled are either employed, in school, or caring for family members. Yet, every few years, my colleagues across the aisle trot out this myth, and every few years, it gets debunked, and then they bring it back. Just in a cycle, like sunspots or something, it comes around every few years.

We actually have facts on what has happened when this misbegotten idea is undertaken.

In 2018, when Arkansas implemented new work requirements during the first Trump administration, to maintain their health insurance, Arkansas Medicaid enrollees had to fill out a mountain of paperwork every month. Many of these folks worked part time. Many worked hourly jobs. Some worked several jobs to make ends meet. Not surprisingly, it is very hard, when you are struggling with making multiple jobs fit, to have the time to do massive paperwork all the time. They are working their jobs, and they are taking care of their families.

So what happened? Other Medicaid enrollees were working but could not reliably meet the required number of hours given the normal fluctuations of low-wage and hourly work. If you ever, ever have lived in a blue-collar community—and I live in a blue-collar community—people who are patching together various part-time jobs—the managers change the schedules continuously. So now your schedule for one job conflicts with the schedule for the other job.

Anyway, it is very stressful and it is very challenging to be getting minimum wage or near minimum wage and conflicting schedules and managers changing those schedules and still trying to deal with raising kids and being there when you need to be there.

Roughly 18,000 people lost health insurance in Arkansas before a Federal judge halted the new work requirements for violating the intended purpose of the Medicaid Program.

Well, there was another State that tried this out—Georgia. They implemented work requirements in 2023. Not wanting their work requirements to be struck down by the courts, Georgia lawmakers lowered the requirements for Medicaid enrollment, thereby technically expanding coverage to fulfill the purpose of the program.

In doing so, the State of Georgia estimated that another 175,000 people would enroll in the program. They estimated 175,000, and only 6,500 people enrolled. The State of Georgia spent $60 million in administrative fees tracking compliance with the work requirements—$60 million; 6,500 people; $10,000 for a Medicaid enrollee in Georgia just on administrative overhead, not providing healthcare. The costs just kept piling up.

Uninsured people still need to see a doctor, but instead of seeing their doctor and getting care early, uninsured people wait to get care until they wind up in the emergency rooms.

There is an old but accurate saying: ''An uninsured patient is the most expensive patient.'' So anyone with half a brain would want people to be insured. They will get care earlier. They don't end up in the emergency room. It will save money. People are healthier. They are more likely to work. And it costs less. It is a win-win on every level.

Well, if you strike down the support for Medicaid here, States have to figure out if they can pick up the difference. Picking up the difference means they have to wrestle with whether to raise taxes.

Why do my colleagues across the aisle in other States have to raise taxes to provide basic healthcare?

Oh, my goodness, yeah, impose that burden on families trying to get on their feet and be able to thrive.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, every Medicaid dollar spent today reduces future deficits by $2. That is a pretty good return. That is an investment we can't afford not to make. And the loss of Medicaid coverage hits rural communities particularly hard.

As I have noted, most of my home State is rural. A couple of weeks ago,

we saw what happened when Medicaid funding was frozen after Donald Trump's dead-of-night directive to cut off funding for programs that families depended on. Critical access hospitals, rural clinics, federally qualified health centers were terrified that they would have to lay off staff or shut their doors. Any loss of Medicaid funding for these communities would threaten what are often the only hospitals or clinics in these rural areas. They are always struggling.

But when Medicaid was expanded, when Oregon seized that opportunity, a lot of patients who were never able to pay a bill could now pay the bill because they had insurance, and that meant a much stronger foundation for rural healthcare. Don't we want a stronger foundation for rural healthcare?

It is critical to have a Secretary for Health and Human Services who understands these issues, and that individual is not RFK, Jr.

He is, however, something else: one of the world's best-known purveyors of conspiracy theories about the alleged harm that comes from effective vaccines. That is, he is a conspiracy theorist who says these effective vaccines that everyone else knows are effective, he is going to tell you something different. He is going to tell you that HPV and measles and tetanus and flu and polio and chickenpox vaccines don't work.

His conspiracy theories have been debunked time and time again. They have been repudiated time and time again, including the big one—and that is that vaccines cause autism. This is a straightforward thing that has been studied time and time and time again. And it is a powerful conspiracy theory if you happen to have a child who has autism and if it starts appearing about the same time that you are giving a lot of childhood vaccines. You could believe that maybe that is the cause. So it has been studied time and time again in children who have vaccines, who don't have vaccines. The vaccines do not cause autism.

And yet, what has he done? He says: I believe autism comes from vaccines.

In the middle of a 2017 measles outbreak in Minnesota's Somali-American community, he falsely told parents the following:

> Africans and African Americans may be particularly vulnerable to vaccine injuries including autism.

He also falsely claimed that the global decline in measles was caused by ''nutrition and clean water,'' not the measles vaccine, and that children in California were getting measles ''from the vaccine or . . . from somebody who got the vaccine.''

In other words, he stood it on its head and said those who are getting sick—who are getting sick because they did not have the vaccine—were getting sick because they had the vaccine.

All of this misinformation does real harm.

He even raised doubt over flu shots, claiming that ''there is zero evidence that the flu shot prevents any hospitalizations or any deaths.'' This is completely untrue. This is wrong. A lot of people in America die every year from the flu, so this has been extensively studied.

Now, I didn't get flu shots until the COVID epidemic came and my wife, who was a nurse, said: While you are getting that COVID shot, get your flu shot. I had never gotten a flu shot before. I never worried about it. I didn't think about it. It never occurred to me. Lots of people didn't. So it was very easy to study those who get flu shots and those who don't.

And what RFK, Jr., did was not be honest with people—in fact, to tell people information he undoubtedly knew was untrue. And the result is more people get sick, more people die.

Finally, Kennedy also referred to the COVID vaccine as ''the deadliest vaccine ever made.'' Well, we know how many people were dying before we had the COVID vaccine, and we now know how much safer things are. We are not sitting here on the floor tonight with a mask over our face. Our accompanying staff do not have masks over their face. The folks in the elevator today didn't have a mask because the threat of COVID has receded because we have a COVID vaccine.

This misinformation isn't just some harmless fun. These conspiracy theories are not some harmless fun. They do real harm. They do real harm.

I want to read to you a letter from Josh Green. He is the current Governor of Hawaii, and he is a physician. He wrote the following. I am going to quote it extensively:

> Mr. Kennedy has spent years undermining one of the greatest public health achievements in history: vaccines. His rhetoric directly contributed to the tragic 2019 measles epidemic in Samoa, which infected thousands and killed 83 people, primarily children.

He goes on to say—the Governor of Hawaii, current Governor, a physician:

> I witnessed this personally. As Hawaii's Lieutenant Governor at the time—

This is the Governor now—

> and a practicing physician at the time, I led an emergency medical team to Samoa to administer life-saving vaccinations after misinformation—much of it spread by Mr. Kennedy and his network—led to a collapse in immunization rates.
>
> We saw firsthand the devastating consequences: grieving parents, overwhelmed hospitals, and a nation in crisis.
>
> The impact of Mr. Kennedy's reckless actions extends beyond Samoa. He has spread vaccine misinformation globally, leading to preventable disease outbreaks that have infected countless people.

That is the letter from the Governor of Hawaii, also a physician, who went on an emergency medical trip to Samoa and witnessed firsthand people—children—dying because of the lies from RFK, Jr.

That is not a person you bring in to lead your healthcare system, and every one of my colleagues across the aisle knows it. They know they are hurting people by putting him into this office.

So I ask them: Rethink your responsibility to serve the people of the United States. That is your responsibility as a Member of this U.S. Senate. You have constituents in your home State. The President is not your constituent. The President has platinum-plated healthcare. We are not worried about the President getting the best healthcare. We are concerned about our constituents.

I could tell you a lot more because I have a lot of information here. My colleague from California is here, and I am looking in his direction to see if he is ready to speak. If he is, I am going to wrap up.

I am particularly struck by the letter written to us by Caroline Kennedy, first cousin to RFK, Jr. I will just summarize it and say, it is not complimentary. She says in the most dramatic terms that we are making a massive mistake to put him in charge; that he has served his wallet, he has served without ethics, he has served in a way that has hurt people time and time again, and he does not belong in office.

Mr. President, we are here, as my colleague was before me, CHRIS MURPHY from Connecticut, as my colleague from California is now—we are all here after midnight. We are here after midnight because this matters, because more people will suffer and die across this country, more children will die because of the incompetence and the full lack of ethics of the individual being considered to head up our healthcare system.

Let's not make this mistake when we vote on his final nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, today, we consider the nomination of RFK, Jr., to lead the Department of Health and Human Services.

In a time when science has given us the tools to extend life, to eradicate disease, to protect the most vulnerable among us, this body is being asked to confirm a man who has dedicated the better part of his career to attacking science.

But the debate over RFK, Jr., and his anti-science agenda does not take place in isolation. It is part of a broader and far more reaching and destructive agenda. It is part of an effort to dismantle public services, to strip away all the country's resources, to defund the Department of Health and Human Services, to take away from those who have little and hand it to those who have everything.

So this is not just about RFK, Jr.; it is about every senior who relies on Medicare, every low-income family whose children get healthcare through Medicaid, every person who depends on

the government not as a luxury but as a necessity.

I want to take us back for a moment to talk about why we even have a Department of Health and Human Services in the first place. Because when a government works the way it is supposed to, when public health and security is taken seriously, HHS exists to ensure that no American has to choose between their health and bankruptcy. It exists because we decided as a nation that we would not let people lose everything just because they get sick, that we would not let children die from preventable diseases, that we would set basic rules on food and drug safety to protect families, that we would invest in science not as an indulgence but as a way to improve the life and the quality of life for all Americans.

And, tonight, we are being asked to hand over that responsibility to a man who has spent his career undermining scientific achievement, to a man who has told Americans a thousand different times in a thousand different ways not to trust the very science that has saved millions of lives.

So who exactly is RFK, Jr., and what does he believe? Let's talk about what this nominee has actually said. In 2005, he wrote an article, one so riddled with falsehoods that even the publisher, Rolling Stone, retracted it—this article accusing the government of covering up a supposed link between vaccines and autism, an article that said vaccines ''poison[ed] an entire generation of American children.'' That claim has been debunked more times than any of us can count.

The New England Journal of Medicine, the CDC, the WHO, the American Academy of Pediatrics—every credible institution that studies this issue has confirmed what the science has long established: Vaccines do not cause autism.

But Mr. Kennedy did not retract the claim. He did not acknowledge the overwhelming scientific consensus. No. No. He doubled down. He founded the Children's Health Defense, an organization that masquerades as a public health group while spreading disinformation that has fueled vaccine hesitancy across this country and beyond.

His group has falsely linked vaccines to neurological disorders, to chronic illnesses, to developmental delays. They have suggested, without a shred of evidence, that childhood immunization schedules are unsafe. They have flooded social media with scare tactics, with conspiracy theories, with outright lies that have led parents to refuse vaccines for their children.

They even sold children's onesies with catch phrases like ''No Vax, No Problem'' and ''Unvaxxed, Unafraid.''

And because words have power, because a lie repeated enough can masquerade as truth, the damage has been staggering.

The 2019 measles outbreak in Samoa: Why did that happen? Because vaccination rates plummeted down to just 31 percent after anti-vaccine activists spread fear and misinformation. Robert F. Kennedy was part of that.

His organization amplified the very lies that led Samoan parents to hesitate, to delay, to forgo the measles vaccine—reckless, irresponsible, and deadly.

Mr. President, 83 lives were lost when measles tore throughout the region. Most of those killed were children. There were parents who trusted, as all parents do, that the world would be safe for their sons and daughters, and what did they find? They found that trust abused by people peddling misinformation, by reckless speculation dressed up as concern, by the very ideas Mr. Kennedy has trafficked in for years.

Let's not pretend that this is some harmless contrarian at play here, that this is some cocktail party eccentric, or that this is some kind of lively academic debate. When a man tells millions of people not to vaccinate their children and they listen, children die.

It did not stop there. In 2021, in the middle of a once-in-a-century pandemic, as COVID–19 tore through communities and filled emergency rooms to capacity, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., used his platform not to encourage vaccination, not to protect the public, but to do quite the opposite. He promoted the lie that mRNA vaccines alter human DNA. False—they do not. He suggested, without evidence, that the COVID vaccine was more dangerous than the virus itself—false. He compared vaccine mandates to Nazi Germany, invoking Anne Frank—a grotesque and offensive distortion of history.

As recent as 2023, RFK was on podcasts arguing that ''there's no vaccine that is safe and effective.''

This is the man we are considering for Secretary of Health and Human Services—a man who, when presented with lifesaving science, does not champion it, he undermines it; a man who, when given the choice between protecting public health and indulging conspiracy theories, chooses conspiracy every single time.

It is worth asking ourselves why Donald Trump would support a nominee so unqualified for this position, whose views are so contrary to science. Yes, I get it, RFK dropped out of the Presidential race and endorsed Donald Trump, but is there more to it than that? I think the answer is yes.

To understand why Donald Trump would support a nominee so unqualified, it is worth asking ourselves why scientists like Anthony Fauci, who have devoted their long careers to deploying science in the service of better health, have been made a villain by Donald Trump. Because the answer lies in the mirror image of the two. Why promote RFK, Jr., the vaccine charlatan, and at the same time vilify Anthony Fauci, the vaccine champion?

I will say this: Of all the attacks on our institutions during the first 4 years of Donald Trump, nothing was more corrosive to our democracy than his relentless assault on the truth because nothing is more useful to a demagogue than to destroy the very idea of truth. If nothing is to be believed, then nothing is to be believed. If there is not some shared experience to draw upon, then what is left to decide who should govern but political tribe or violence and one-man rule?

This is why the demagogue always attacks a free press and calls it fake. He must cause the public not to believe its lying eyes. A vicious mob attacks the Capitol; the would-be despot calls them tourists. The mob attacks police and beats them; the would-be despot calls them political prisoners. He fires inspectors general whose job it is to root out corruption and says it is to fight corruption. He wants to dismantle the Agency that protects consumers; he says that it is to protect consumers. He wants to plunder the Treasury to make his rich friends richer and shower them with tax cuts, and he says he is saving the Treasury by emptying it.

But why the attack on science? What has science to do with a despot's need to attack the truth? Well, what is the scientific inquiry but a search for fact and truth? And what is the scientist but the symbol of a search for fact and truth? Want to attack the truth? You must attack the truth tellers. You must attack science itself. Out with the Faucis and in with the charlatans.

But the truth cannot be made to disappear so easily. I remember who saved our country during its most deadly pandemic in 100 years, and it wasn't the charlatans. It was the scientists and the healthcare workers and the essential workers.

We saw true heroes during that pandemic. I remember the images clear as day—first responders without the necessary PPE rushing into homes where infected individuals were afraid and alone; nurses and EMTs working back-to-back shifts and watching their friends, neighbors, and communities torn apart inside and out by this horrible disease.

We got out of that pandemic in significant part because of the vaccine and the brave healthcare providers who administered it and other lifesaving care, not despite it.

While Mr. Kennedy postures as a skeptic, while he frames himself as a crusader against corruption, his organization did nothing to help us through that deadly pandemic, and, in fact, he has profited handsomely from the fear that organization sows.

In 2020 alone, Children's Health Defense saw its revenue double, raking in millions as the pandemic worsened. Mr. Kennedy built himself a lucrative career not by exposing anti-science falsehoods but by spreading them, by cultivating them, and profiting from them. This is opportunism of the most grotesque kind. This is grift masquerading as principle. And now, we are being

asked to entrust the health of 330 million Americans to this man?

I have to ask because it demands to be asked: What exactly is the vision here? What kind of Health and Human Services Secretary does the Trump administration believe they are appointing?

I think they know, and I think they know they have their man in RFK, Jr., because if your goal is to dismantle public health, if your goal is to dismantle the truth, if you want a Secretary who will tell people to ignore doctors and trust whatever random YouTube video they last saw, then, yes, this is your guy. If you want a Secretary who won't say no even if the falsehoods cost lives, like advocating bleach or horse dewormer to cure COVID, this is your guy.

If you want a Secretary who has no will, desire, or guts to stand up to Elon Musk or Donald Trump, who craves nothing more than the attention that a high office will bring, then this—this is most definitely your guy.

If your goal is to make sure that Medicaid—the single largest source of health insurance in this country—becomes nothing more than a cautionary tale at the behest of RFK, Jr., and Dr. Oz; if you want millions of people to lose coverage; if you want seniors to see their Medicare protections gutted, then by all means, let's give Mr. Kennedy the job.

While they are gutting healthcare, while they are stripping away protections, while they are making measles great again, they want to hand out tax cuts to billionaires like party favors. Trillions of dollars taken out of our healthcare system and handed over to the wealthiest among us. Trillions of dollars to people who already have more than they could spend in a hundred lifetimes. But that child in Medicare or Medicaid who needs insulin, that senior on Medicare who has a heart condition—no, we are told there is just not enough in the budget for them.

Well, I reject the cynical notion that government exists only to serve the powerful. I reject the idea that expertise is optional, that science is negotiable, and that the well-being of the American people is just another chip to be bargained away. I reject it, and I know I am not the only one.

I do not believe in a government that exists only to protect the powerful, I do not believe that we are at our best when we are most indifferent, and I do not believe that the American experiment was meant to end with a nation that surrenders its own future to cynics and con men.

So let me tell you what I do believe. I believe in the doctor pulling a double shift in the community hospital, exhausted but unwavering, because she took an oath to heal. I believe in the mother who walks her child into a free clinic and breathes easier knowing that today, at least, her son's asthma will be treated and he will breathe easier. I believe in the scientist who spends a lifetime working in obscurity so that one day no child has to suffer such a terrible and specific disease again. I believe in a government that does not mock these people, that does not sabotage them, that does not sell them out for the benefit of a few at the expense of the many. And I believe we need the best and brightest to shepherd our healthcare system, our resources, to maximize every dollar in search of every cure.

RFK is not the best or the brightest. He will not bring back Camelot or make America healthy again, but his ignorance of science just might make people sick again, might deprive them of a treatment they need again, might cause hospitals to close again, might discourage young people from entering the sciences again. He just might.

We must not confirm a man who so willingly endeavors to be the enemy of the truth when it comes to our health. We need to vote like our lives depend on it because, for a great many Americans, it will.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, it is truly astounding that the Senate stands on the brink of confirming Mr. Kennedy to lead America's public health Agencies.

If the Senate weren't gripped in this soon to be infamous period of total capitulation, I don't think this nominee would have made it as far as a hearing. If I told you a couple of years ago: There is a guy who has been nominated to run public health nationwide. His job will be to protect American families from death and disease. He is going to run the whole public health system—Medicare, Medicaid, the CDC, the NIH, all of it. He will decide how we protect the country from infectious disease. He will set the rules for every hospital in the country. He will decide what healthcare and medicines get covered by Medicare. He will manage our response in the event of a pandemic.

And then I told you: Well, there are a few concerns about this nominee. First of all, zero relevant experience. He is a trial lawyer, a politician from a famous family, no medical or scientific background. He has never run a hospital or a health system or anything like that.

Second of all, he has said some pretty wild stuff about public health over and over and over again, like, he proposed that COVID–19 might be ''ethnically targeted'' to spare Jews—''ethnically targeted'' to spare Jews. He said Lyme disease was a military bioweapon.

For years, he has been persuading American families against routine childhood immunizations. He has compared the work of the CDC to ''Nazi death camps.''

If a couple of years ago I told you all of that and I told you the Senate was about to put America's health in this man's hands, you would probably tell me the Senate has lost its mind.

By the way, it is OK to challenge scientific consensus, and it is not just OK, it is necessary to question the way we manage our healthcare system and our food system. They are not working. But that is not the issue here. The issue for the Senate is, are we going to put in charge of American public health a man with no relevant credentials, who for decades seems to have latched on to just about every piece of half-baked conspiracist pseudoscience he has come across?

I mentioned earlier that Mr. Kennedy compared the CDC's work to ''Nazi death camps.'' These aren't comments I take lightly given my ancestors were exterminated in Nazi death camps and the folks who work at the CDC are my constituents.

And Mr. Kennedy, if confirmed, will take charge of HHS and, therefore, the CDC, at a moment when an onslaught of political attacks by the new administration have thrown the CDC into chaos. Huge amounts of CDC data and reporting were simply disappeared from the internet—cancer data, maternal mortality data.

There has been an unprecedented interruption of the ''Mortality and Morbidity Report.'' That is data that has been consistently reported since the 1930s.

Public reporting about bird flu has been interrupted, while it rips through chicken flocks and has been documented jumping to humans.

The administration tried to freeze funding for the CDC's flagship infectious disease monitoring program, the one that detects outbreaks before they are out of control, and that effort was stopped only by a court order.

And we are hearing threats to gut the CDCs workforce, at a time when the country needs the CDC firing on all cylinders to prevent deadly outbreaks of infectious disease.

If this administration guts and gags the CDC, who is going to defend the Nation from Ebola. Who is going to protect kids from measles? Who is going to save us from TB?

And then there is this crusade against health equity—''equity,'' an unspeakable word now under our new official MAGA state ideology. Health equity—that means trying to address the huge race and class disparities in health outcomes that plague our country. For example, it means making sure clinical trials include minority groups so we get good data on how to save all lives, not just some lives. It means figuring out how to get women in remote, rural communities prenatal checkups. It means addressing the fact that maternal mortality for Black women in Georgia is three times higher than for White women.

Trying to make healthcare in America equitable—''equitable,'' meaning dealing fairly with all concerned, no matter how much money you have or

the color of your skin or where you are from—that is important work. The quality of your healthcare shouldn't depend on how you look or how rich you are or where you grew up. And yet this obvious point and the work to address it is suddenly now not just politically incorrect; it is politically forbidden. And the people who do this work are being forced onto administrative leave. They are being shunned, and they are being publicly threatened.

Mr. President, here are excerpts from a letter I received today from a constituent.

Good afternoon, Senator OSSOFF. I write to you today with a heavy heart and a profound sense of concern.

After decades of dedicated service to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—working under both Republican and Democratic administrations to improve vaccine uptake, advance health equity, and fight the disparities that have long plagued underserved communities—I now find myself facing an alarming and deeply troubling situation.

My constituent continues:

This morning, I was placed on the DEI watch list web site and publicly identified as a target. Compounding this distressing reality, my personal and internal CDC-related information has been exposed on a public web site, placing me in immediate danger. I have since received unexpected deliveries to my home, and my personal information is now in the hands of individuals aligned with the views of the current administration—individuals whose intentions I cannot discern but whose actions are already proving to be invasive and threatening.

The letter goes on.

I am left with no choice but to remain vigilant, prayerful, and confined to my own home—effectively a prisoner for doing my duty as a public health professional. The fear and uncertainty that have overtaken my daily life are not just a personal burden but a dire warning about the dangers faced by those who commit themselves to the work of health equity and public service. Even more distressing is the silence and inaction of those who should be stepping in to address this injustice.

That is a letter I received today from a constituent who has served at the CDC for decades and who has now been doxed and publicly targeted and fears for her safety, apparently because working to reduce health disparities for communities and people who have lousy access to healthcare and poor health outcomes makes you a political target.

And this constituent isn't alone. There are dozens more CDC workers in Georgia who have faithfully served our country for years and who face the very same harassment and the same threats.

This is ugly and menacing stuff, and the license for it comes directly from the President of the United States.

Tomorrow morning, unless Senate Republicans can summon a shred of courage, the Senate may be poised to confirm someone to lead America's public health system who is obviously unqualified and unfit.

As we speak, the world's flagship disease control Agency is in chaos and under political attack, and public servants who dare to try to improve health outcomes for the poor and disadvantaged fear for their safety—all brought to you by the President who said: Maybe bleach injections could cure COVID.

None of this bodes well for the health and safety of the American people. I will oppose the Kennedy nomination. It is not too late for my colleagues gripped by political fear to do the same.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:06 a.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate February 12, 2025:

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

TULSI GABBARD, OF HAWAII, TO BE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING SAM YERIAN

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary bravery and selflessness of Sam Yerian, a young man whose quick thinking and decisive action saved three lives on June 12, 2024. At just 16 years old, Sam demonstrated remarkable courage, risking his own safety to help others in distress. Without his actions, a devastating tragedy would have occurred.

That day, Sam heard cries for help from Deer Lake and immediately sprang into action. Grabbing a life jacket, he jumped on his jet ski and raced to save two children drowning in the water nearly 200 yards from shore. Fighting against wind and waves, he pulled both children—neither wearing life jackets—onto his jet ski, preventing disaster.

As he made his way to shore, the children pointed to their grandfather, who had jumped in to save them but was now exhausted and barely afloat. Realizing the urgency, Sam made a critical decision—he removed his own life jacket and gave it to the man, ensuring he had a chance at survival before bringing the children to safety.

Sam then returned for the grandfather, who was unresponsive in the water. With incredible strength, he pulled him onto the jet ski with assistance onshore, got him to waiting emergency responders. After several days in the hospital, he made a full recovery—an outcome that would not have been possible without Sam's courage.

Beyond this act of heroism, Sam is a dedicated student-athlete and servant leader. Now 17, he is a junior at Clarkston High School, competing on the Junior Varsity Golf Team and the Varsity Tennis Team, which reached the State Championship last year. Just a day after he saved 3 lives on Deer Lake, he traveled to Puerto Rico for a service trip to build homes for those in need, further demonstrating his commitment to helping others. He also mentors younger students as a Link Leader and volunteers with Xceptional Heroes, an organization supporting young adults with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, earning multiple Pride in the Pack nominations for his kindness and leadership.

Mr. Speaker, Sam Yerian's heroism on June 12, 2024, was a reflection of his character—brave, selfless, and committed to serving others. His actions prevented what could have been a terrible loss, and his example continues to inspire his community.

HONORING MR. STEVEN CADE

HON. JENNIFER A. KIGGANS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate one of my constituents, Mr. Steven Cade, as he retires from federal service, marking the culmination of a military and civilian career that spans over 44 years of faithful service to the defense of our great Nation.

A graduate of the United States Naval Academy, Mr. Cade served as a Navy Surface Warfare Officer from 1985 to 2005. While on active duty, he completed sea-duty assignments in the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets and deployments supporting operations in the European, Indo-Pacific, Central, and Southern Commands. His major staff assignments included duty in Operations and Plans on the staff of Commander, U.S. Seventh Fleet; Special Assistant to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; and as a program manager for U.S. Fleet Forces Command in Capabilities and Resource Integration (N8) and Readiness and Training (N4/7). He was also designated a Navy Foreign Area Officer for East Asia/Pacific while on active duty.

Mr. Cade began his civil service career in 2005, serving as Director for Fleet Capabilities and Force Development (N8/N9) at U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFF) in Norfolk, Virginia, the Navy's headquarters for global force management and the Naval Component Commander to U.S. Northern Command. There, he was responsible for integrated Fleet capability and readiness assessments to support Navy programming and acquisition planning, transition of new capabi]ities into the Fleet, and development of warfighting concepts of operations and experimentation programs. During his time at USFF, he also served as Deputy Director, Fleet Warfare Programs (N8B), leading warfighting capability analyses, and as Deputy Executive Director, responsible for Fleet readiness assessments, strategic planning, and headquarters administration. He was promoted to the Senior Executive Service in 2010.

On February 28th, Mr. Cade retires from Military Sealift Command (MSC), where he has served as the command's Executive Director for over seven years. At MSC, Mr. Cade provided inspired leadership and strategic vision in service to nearly 10,000 personnel assigned to 23 locations and aboard 140 ships, employing the Nation's largest contingent of merchant mariners, the 5,800-strong Civil Service Mariner workforce.

I want to especially recognize Mr. Cade's family for their endless support over these years. As he enters this new chapter, I join his friends and colleagues in wishing him fair winds, following seas, and well-deserved rest, relaxation, and quality time with his family, especially his wife Leigh-Anne.

I thank him for his service.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR. RODNEY T. TAYLOR, JR.

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Rodney T. Taylor, Jr., who passed away on November 25, 2024, at the age of 80. Dr. Taylor was a dedicated psychologist and an influential figure in the field of addiction treatment.

Born in Winchester, Virginia, in 1944, Dr. Taylor grew up in Pennsylvania. In 1974, Dr. Taylor and his wife, Sushma Deva Taylor, moved to Marin County. Dr. Taylor dedicated his professional life to helping individuals and families facing the challenges of addiction. After earning his master's degree in counseling psychology and his Doctorate in clinical psychology, he served as Director of the Chemical Dependency Program at Gladman Memorial Hospital and later became Senior Clinician at Center Point, a nonprofit rehabilitation agency in San Rafael. Throughout his 38-year tenure he provided expert care and transformative counseling to help countless individuals achieve lasting recovery. Known as 'Doc,' he was respected by peers and former clients alike for his ability to connect deeply with others.

In addition to his work in Marin County, Dr. Taylor shared his knowledge and advice around the world. His contributions were valued by colleagues in the U.S., India, Australia, Europe, and South America, and his work continues to influence the work of addiction professionals today.

Dr. Taylor and his wife were married for over 52 years. Their bond was one of deep partnership, rooted in both personal and professional endeavors. Together, they traveled the world, bringing knowledge and compassion to communities in need. Dr. Taylor is survived by his wife, Sushma, his son Thaine, his two sisters, Jane Fox and Leanna Van Buskirk, and a host of friends, colleagues, and former clients who considered him not only a mentor but also a dear friend.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Rodney T. Taylor, Jr.'s contributions to the field of addiction treatment, his genuine kindness, and his unwavering commitment to making the world a better place will never be forgotten. He left an indelible mark on the countless lives he touched, and his legacy will continue to inspire those who had the privilege of working alongside him. Please join me in expressing appreciation for his lifetime of generosity and sincere condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues.

CONGRATULATING SOUTH DAKOTA'S DALLAS GOEDERT AND THE EAGLES ON SUPER BOWL LIX WIN

HON. DUSTY JOHNSON

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate South Dakota's own Dallas Goedert and the Philadelphia Eagles on their Super Bowl LIX win on February 9, 2025. Dallas Goedert was born and raised in Britton, South Dakota. After graduating from Britton-Hecla High School, he was recruited by South Dakota State University's football program.

As a Jackrabbit, Goedert had 198 receptions for 2,988 yards and 21 touchdowns. including two straight 1,000-yard receiving seasons. Goedert's collegiate career at South Dakota State saw him as a two-time first-team Football Championship Subdivision All-American.

After an impressive collegiate performance at South Dakota State, the Philadelphia Eagles selected Goedert in the second round and 49th overall of the 2018 NFL draft. As of the end of the 2024 season, he has accumulated an impressive 349 receptions for 4,085 yards and 24 touchdowns while being challenged with injuries. Despite being placed on injured reserve on December 7, 2024, he returned for the playoffs and contributed to the Eagle's victory in the Super Bowl LIX, recording two receptions for 27 yards in a 40-22 win over the Kansas City Chiefs.

I am proud to recognize Dallas Goedert's outstanding perseverance and his impact as a role model for athletes and individuals across the nation. He is an inspiring reminder of the strength found in determination and hard work. I congratulate Goedert and the Eagles on their remarkable victory.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, due to unforeseen circumstances, I regrettably missed votes on February 11, 2025. Had I been present, I would have voted: Nay on Roll Call No. 38, On Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 122. No on Roll Call No. 39, On Agreeing to the Resolution H. Res. 122.

REMEMBERING JEROME H. KERN: A CHAMPION OF THE ARTS, PHILANTHROPY, AND PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Jerome H. Kern, a remarkable leader whose passion for the arts, philanthropy, and public service law made a significant impact on Denver and beyond.

Jerry was a man of immense intellect, unwavering commitment, and profound generosity. He was a force of nature, a sharp legal mind, a tenacious leader, and an advocate for the arts, business, and public service.

Born in Brooklyn in 1937, Jerry graduated cum laude from the New York University School of Law, where he was a Root Tilden Scholar and managing editor of the New York University Law Review.

After law school, Jerry had a distinguished legal and business career. He initially worked as a senior partner at Baker & Botts, LLP, where he was the senior corporate lawyer in the New York office. For over 20 years, he served as the principal outside legal counsel to Tele-Communications, Inc. (TCI) and Liberty Media. He later became vice chairman and a board member at TCI and played a key role in major media mergers, including the AT&T/TCI merger and the Time Warner/Turner Broadcasting merger.

Jerry used his success in life to fulfill his true calling—relentless advocacy for the public good. As a trustee of NYU School of Law, he learned that the Root-Tilden Scholarship that had helped him get a start in life was being limited by severe budget deficiencies. He not only donated $5 million to the program but also led a $30 million endowment effort that resulted in the program's renaming as the Root-Tilden-Kern Scholarship. His dedication to public interest law has paved the way for countless students to pursue careers in service of the greater good. Since his efforts, more than 450 public interest lawyers have gone out to serve their own communities.

After Jerry and his wife, Dr. Mary Rossick Kern, moved to Denver, he learned that the Colorado Symphony was facing financial ruin. Not only did he save the symphony, but agreed to give a sustainable future by becoming CEO and President of the Board and leaving behind an $88 million endowment that secures its place as a cultural cornerstone for generations to come. His advocacy for a world-class concert venue continues to shape the future of Denver's performing arts scene.

Beyond the arts, Kern's philanthropic contributions extended to public service and health care. He founded and chaired the Institute for Children's Mental Health, endowed a research chair at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, and worked tirelessly with Volunteers of America Colorado, sponsoring the construction of the Michael Kern Kitchen, which provides Meals on Wheels to those in need. In 2002, Jerry and Mary were honored with the Volunteers of America Humanitarian of the Year Award.

As a Root-Tilden scholar myself, I dedicated my career to public service—and Jerry was a strong model of how to make this happen.

His life was one of service, vision, and relentless advocacy for the arts and public good. His legacy will undoubtedly continue to inspire those who believe in the transformative power of culture, philanthropy, and law. I extend my deepest condolences to his family, friends, and all who were fortunate enough to know him. His memory will remain a guiding light for those who seek to make a meaningful impact in their communities.

REMEMBERING APOLINARIO ''ARIO'' YSIT, JR.

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. SWALWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and legacy of Apolinario Ysit, Jr., a dedicated community leader, loving husband, father, and grandfather, on the occasion of his passing on Saturday, January 18, 2025, at the age of 87.

Born in Sacramento, California, on January 18, 1938, Apolinario, ''Ario,'' grew up on his family's 13-acre ranch, where he learned the values of hard work and service. In 1948, he moved with his family to Niles, California, where he attended Niles Elementary and Washington High School while actively participating in the Boy Scouts of America.

In 1955, he met the love of his life, Joyce, while she was working at the Niles Movie Theater. They married two years later at the Little Brown Church of Sunol and built a beautiful life together, raising their children, Victoria and Jeffrey, in their Kilkare Road home.

Ario proudly served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1955 to 1957 before embarking on a successful career as a general contractor.

Even in retirement, he remained deeply engaged in public service, serving on numerous boards, including the Alameda County Planning Commission, where he was named Commissioner of the Year in 2003, the Alameda County Fair Board of Directors, and the Alameda County Fire Commission.

His passion for his community earned him the title of the ''unofficial Mayor of Sunol,'' as he worked tirelessly to secure funding and resources for local projects. His leadership helped establish the Sunol Depot Gardens Park, and his dedication to civic engagement included work with the Citizens Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.), the Sunol Business Guild, and the Sunol Community Advisory Committee, among many other organizations.

Ario's unwavering commitment to Sunol and Alameda County will be remembered for generations. He was more than a leader—he was a friend, mentor, and advocate who embodied the spirit of service. His legacy of generosity, dedication, and love for his community lives on in all who had the privilege of knowing him. May his memory continue to inspire us all.

RECOGNIZING HARRY L. CHANDLER

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable life and legacy of Harry L. Chandler—a revered veteran, esteemed member of our community in western Massachusetts, and a national hero.

Harry L. Chandler was born on March 6, 1921, in Holyoke, Massachusetts, to Louis and Ida Cohen. From an early age, Harry demonstrated a love for service and commitment to his community. He attended Holyoke Public Schools, leaving just short of graduation in

1939 to enlist in the United States Navy. Sworn into the Navy in July 1940, Harry chose to become a Corpsman, a role that perfectly melded with his gentle, caring nature.

On December 7, 1941, Harry witnessed the attack on Pearl Harbor. His bravery and service during that day, rescuing fellow sailors amidst chaos, stands as a testament to his courage and dedication. Throughout World War II, Harry served in various capacities and earned numerous commendations, including the Asiatic-Pacific Area Theater Medal with two stars, the WWII Victory Medal, and the Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal. He retired as a Senior Chief (HMCS) in 1981 after 40 years of service to the United States Navy and Naval Reserve.

Beyond his military service, Harry was a successful businessman, co-owning Highland Upholstery Co. in Holyoke, Massachusetts, with his brother Martin. He was a respected member of many fraternal organizations, including the Mount Tom Lodge of Masons, the Melha Shriners Hospital, and the Submarine Veterans of WWII.

Harry was a devoted husband to Anna McMahon, and together they raised a loving family. He is predeceased by his beloved wife Anna, daughter Patricia Russotto, sisters Rose Hendel and Eve Salwitz, brother Martin Cohen, and long-time companion Muriel O'Conner. He is survived by his daughters Kathleen Fahey and Carole Anne Cowles, his eight grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, and five great-great-grandchildren. His life was a testament to love, dedication, and service.

Harry Chandler emulated what it meant to be a part of the Greatest Generation—selflessly serving his Nation without hesitation and without want for recognition. His actions on that fateful day on December 7, 1941, are forever etched in our Nation's history. The heroics he demonstrated—rescuing fellow sailors while witnessing the tragic fate of the USS *Arizona* and USS *Utah*—are a stark reminder of the price he and his fellow servicemembers paid to protect our freedom. His legacy is an inspiration to us all and will live on for eternity.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognizing Harry L. Chandler, not only as a veteran of World War II, but as a pillar of strength, resilience, and humility. His legacy is an inspiration to us all and will undoubtedly continue to influence our community for generations to come.

My thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time. I join a grateful Nation in mourning the loss of Harry Chandler—a true American hero.

RECOGNIZING DANIEL L. RITCHIE

HON. JASON CROW

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. CROW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Daniel L. Ritchie. Former Chancellor of the University of Denver, Ritchie was beloved in our community for his commitment to the University, to philanthropy, and to his role as a civic leader in Denver.

Ritchie wore numerous hats in his professional career, but he was always guided by values he called his ''cowboy ethics.'' These values included:

Live each day with courage.
Take pride in your work.
Always finish what you start.
Do what has to be done.
Be tough, but fair.
When you make a promise, keep it.
Ride for the brand.
Talk less and say more.
Remember that some things aren't for sale.

Ritchie lived by these principles, but he was also a person who was quick to demonstrate empathy, to lift up others, and to listen to those people and those causes in need of attention. He served the University community as Chancellor from 1989 to 2005, and helped raise over $400 million in investments to university infrastructure and facilities, including tens of millions of dollars of his own money. The University's athletics complex, the Daniel L. Ritchie Center for Sports & Wellness, bears his name and thousands of Coloradans walk through its doors each year to watch Division I teams compete in college athletics.

A passionate supporter of athletics, Ritchie also knew that well-rounded students benefited from diverse perspectives. He created the Cherrington Global Scholars program at the University, a program designed to facilitate participation in study abroad programs and grow a student body prepared for ''global citizenship.''

Daniel L. Ritchie was a steady force of nature and a leader who earned the respect of those he represented. His contributions to our state, whether through positions at the University of Denver, Denver Center for Performing Arts, Daniels Fund, Denver Art Museum Foundation, Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation, or one of his many other commitments to our community, are a legacy we're grateful he leaves behind.

I honor these achievements, send my gratitude to his loved ones, and thank the ''Cowboy Chancellor'' for his service to our state.

HONORING DR. STEVEN PACKER, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF MONTAGE HEALTH, FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO HEALTHCARE AND MONTEREY COUNTY

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Steven Packer, whose dedication to healthcare has profoundly transformed the well-being of individuals and families across Monterey County. Dr. Packer has served as President and CEO of Montage Health since 1999, spearheading the growth and innovation of this integrated, nonprofit healthcare network. Under his stewardship, Montage Health has evolved from its origins as Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula to become a national model for community-centered healthcare.

Dr. Packer has expanded access to high-quality care for countless residents of California's Central Coast. Through the creation of urgent care clinics, wellness centers, physician practices, community health programs, and Monterey County's first Medicare Advantage program. He prioritized the growth of Monterey County's healthcare workforce, forging partnerships with Monterey Peninsula College and California State University, Monterey Bay, to create career pathways for nursing and physician assistant students. His efforts have resulted in Montage Health's position as the largest private employer in Monterey County and a leading healthcare resource for the region.

Beyond these achievements, Dr. Packer has dedicated his time and expertise to numerous boards and community initiatives. As former chair of the California Hospital Association and a board member of Stevenson School, Vizient West Coast, and NORCAL Mutual Insurance Company, he has consistently demonstrated a commitment to both local and industry-wide progress.

I want to commend Dr. Packer's legacy of leadership, innovation, and compassion, as he retires from his role as President and CEO of Montage Health. His contributions extend far beyond bricks and mortar; they embody a deep compassion and unwavering dedication to improving lives. From his early days as a pulmonologist and ICU medical director, to his role as a visionary CEO, Dr. Packer has exemplified excellence, service, and innovation in every facet of his work.

I know he will continue to be a voice for care, compassion, and community connection as he embarks on his next chapter of service.

HONORING THE 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KING WILLIAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 300th anniversary of the King William County Courthouse, which stands as the oldest courthouse building in continuous use in the United States.

The King William County Courthouse was constructed in 1725 and was the heart of local self-government and much of the social, economic, and communal life of King William County. The Courthouse was used during the colonial period to elect members of the House of Burgesses, and it served as the designated polling place when the governor deemed other elections were necessary. During the early stages of the American Revolution, local patriots forming the county committee convened in the King William County Courthouse, where Carter Braxton, committee chair and future signer of the Declaration of Independence, received the news of the Battles of Lexington and Concord.

The King William County Courthouse is considered the best preserved of the Commonwealth's remaining colonial court buildings. The building was listed in the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1959, the Virginia Landmarks Register on November 5, 1968, and the National Register of Historic Places on October 1, 1969. The King William County Historical Museum and the King William Virginia 250 Planning Committee will hold a celebration on April 12, 2025, commemorating the 300th anniversary of the historic King William County Courthouse.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask that you rise with me in honoring The King William County

Courthouse on the anniversary of 300 years of continuous use.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO AMEND THE SAVE OUR SEAS 2.0 ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce a bill that would make the District of Columbia and the territories expressly eligible for the wastewater infrastructure and trash-free water grants established by section 302 of the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act. These grants, respectively, fund the construction of improvements to reduce and remove plastic waste and post-consumer materials from wastewater, and support projects to reduce the quantity of solid waste in bodies of water.

The Save Our Seas 2.0 Act makes local governments expressly eligible for these two grants, but it does not make D.C. and the territories expressly eligible for them, even though D.C. and the territories, like local governments, conduct the activities contemplated by these grants.

In 2022, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held that D.C. was not a local government for purposes of the post-consumer materials management infrastructure grants established by section 302 of the Save Our Seas Act 2.0. I am concerned that the EPA will hold that D.C. and the territories are not local governments for purposes of the wastewater infrastructure and trash-free water grants established by section 302 of the Save Our Seas Act 2.0. This bill would ensure that D.C. and the territories are expressly eligible for the wastewater infrastructure and trash-free water grants.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING FALLEN OFFICER JEREMY LABONTE

HON. RICHARD McCORMICK

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to express my most sincere condolences to the family and friends of Roswell Police Officer, Jeremy Labonte, who was senselessly killed in the line of duty in a heinous act of violence.

Officer Labonte was a member of the Roswell Police Department since November of 2021, where he served as a night-shift patrol officer. As a member of D-Squad, he was beloved and respected by his fellow officers and peers.

On Friday, February 7, 2025, while responding to a call, Officer Labonte was killed, leaving his family, fellow officers and the entire community devastated. This tragedy is the first of its kind in the community since the 1980's.

Officer Jeremy Labonte was a hero. He was someone who had dedicated his entire life to public service and has long stood for the values which all Georgians hold dear. Serving the community was just what he did, and he did so with honor.

Today, I honor the life of this brave young man. He is a shining example of excellence, sacrifice and honor. I will continue to pray for his family and friends during this tragic time. I also pray for the protection and safety of all the brave men and women who wear the uniform and protect our communities every day.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF COMMISSIONER ROY BROOKS

HON. MARC A. VEASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the incredible career of Tarrant County Commissioner Roy Charles Brooks, whose decades of service have positively impacted not only his home county but also the State of Texas and the entire Nation. Commissioner Brooks has spent over 30 years working tirelessly for the people he serves, whether as a community volunteer, an elected official, or as a steadfast advocate for the most vulnerable among us.

Tarrant County, one of the fastest-growing urban counties in the United States, has seen incredible progress and innovation under Commissioner Brooks' leadership. With a population nearing 2 million, it is no small feat to address the diverse needs of such a large and growing community. But Commissioner Brooks has risen to the challenge, always putting the welfare of his constituents first.

Since taking office in 2004, Commissioner Brooks has been at the forefront of tackling healthcare disparities, working diligently to bring healthcare to those who need it most. He has advocated for the expansion of access through the Affordable Care Act, fought for healthcare for the homeless, and worked tirelessly on issues like infant mortality, obesity, and health disparities. His dedication to healthcare is not just a matter of policy—it's personal. It's about ensuring that everyone in his community has the opportunity to live a healthy, thriving life.

On the national stage, Commissioner Brooks has shown his leadership as well. As the 2017 President of the National Association of Counties (NACo), he led with a vision of serving the underserved, focusing on breaking the cycles of poverty and addressing the long-lasting impacts of childhood trauma. His initiative, ''Serving the Underserved,'' has inspired countless others to fight for policies that protect and uplift our Nation's most vulnerable communities.

Moreover, Commissioner Brooks has driven transformative programs in Tarrant County. He spearheaded the Tarrant County Ex-Offender Re-Entry Program, which provides crucial support to those re-entering society after incarceration. He launched the Nurse Family Partnership, an evidence-based program supporting first-time mothers, and has been a vocal advocate for the health and wellbeing of the homeless through the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Healthcare for the Homeless.

In all of his work, Commissioner Brooks exemplifies the qualities of integrity, compassion, and innovation. He has been a pillar of his community, not just in his role as a public servant, but as a father, husband, and leader. He is married to Dr. Jennifer Giddings Brooks, an accomplished educational consultant, and together they have raised two outstanding children—Royce, a Harvard-trained attorney and Executive Director of Annie's List, and Marion, an entertainment lawyer based in Los Angeles.

Roy's legacy is one of service, leadership, and unwavering commitment to improving the lives of those around him. His efforts have made Tarrant County a better place, and he leaves behind a legacy of positive change that will continue to impact the county, state, and Nation for years to come.

I want to personally thank Roy for his dedication, his tireless work, and his incredible service to the people of Tarrant County and beyond. His leadership has been a beacon of hope, and he has left an indelible mark on this country. On behalf of the people of Texas and the United States, I congratulate him on his retirement and thank him for his extraordinary career. May his next chapter be just as rewarding as the one he has just completed.

God bless, and I thank Roy Charles Brooks.

APPRECIATING KAROLINE LEAVITT

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, just recently, Karoline Leavitt gave her welcomed first press conference as White House Press Secretary serving with President Donald Trump.

As a 2019 graduate from Saint Anselm College in New Hampshire, Karoline is the youngest person to hold this critical position as the public voice of the President.

Initially working as an intern in the first Trump administration, she later rose to assistant press secretary, followed by communications director for the greatly talented Congresswoman ELISE STEFANIK, soon to be the American Ambassador to the United Nations.

Karoline most recently was the National Press Secretary on the Trump re-election campaign, gaining the trust of the President, where he stated, ''Karoline is smart, tough, and . . . a highly effective communicator. I have the utmost confidence she will . . . help deliver our message to the American people as we Make America Great Again.''

In conclusion, God Bless Our Troops as the Global War on Terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent as warned by the FBI. Trump will reinstitute existing laws to protect American families with Peace Through Strength.

I am grateful to have hosted legitimate President Salome Zourabichvili of the nation of Georgia for the Trump Inauguration as she protests the rigged election of president in that country.

HONORING 125 YEARS OF BLACK AVIATION

HON. JASMINE CROCKETT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Black History Month, it's only right that I rise today to honor the rich history of 125 years of Black Aviation. I specifically would like to recognize the lives and contributions of two individuals who had the determination to fly in the face of discrimination and adversity.

Mr. John Frederick Pickering of Gonaïves, Haiti, applied for an aviation patent in 1899. The patent, granted in 1900, included an electric motor and directional controls, which later became known as the ''blimp.''

Mr. Charles Frederick Page of Pineville, Louisiana, was born into slavery, yet, taught himself to read and write. In 1903, Mr. Page applied for an aviation patent, which was awarded in April of 1906, just one month before the Wright Brothers' patent was approved. Mr. Page's patent advanced airship technology through his innovative design which improved stability, propulsion, and control of the airship.

Both pioneering Black men made their valuable contributions to the exciting world of aviation during a time of intense prejudice. It is incumbent upon us to know, recognize, and celebrate their works, talents, and great efforts. Today's aviation industry would not be what it is today without Mr. Page and Pickering's bravery and intelligence.

TRIBUTE TO BETTY HENDERSON

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of an extraordinary public servant, a trailblazing political activist, a cherished matriarch of her community, and a personal friend. Betty Henderson departed this life on February 8, 2025, leaving behind an indelible mark on Orangeburg County, the state of South Carolina, and beyond.

Betty Henderson was born on January 1, 1947, in Branchville, South Carolina, to the late Nuncie and Salte Williams. From an early age, she displayed a deep sense of determination and a passion for service. Educated in the public schools of Orangeburg County and New York City, she pursued further studies at The Citadel and the University of South Carolina, completing IAOO coursework. She also studied business at Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College. Betty became a licensed real estate appraiser and spent over 15 years as a legal assistant at the Davis Law Firm in Orangeburg.

It was in public service where Betty Henderson's impact was most profoundly felt. For 28 years, she served as the Orangeburg County Tax Assessor, making history as the first African American female assessor in South Carolina. Her tenure was marked by an unwavering commitment to fairness and excellence, and she became the only African American ever inducted into the South Carolina Association of Assessing Officials Hall of Fame.

Betty's dedication to democracy and civic engagement extended far beyond her professional career. For over two decades, she served as Chair of the Orangeburg County Democratic Party, working tirelessly to increase voter participation and strengthen grassroots organizing. Under her leadership, the party secured opportunities for South Carolinians to meet then-Senator Barack Obama, a presidential candidate at the time, at Claflin University. She played a pivotal role in bringing the 2008 presidential debate to South Carolina State University. Betty also founded the party's cook-off fundraiser, which later became the Betty Henderson Elected Official Cook-Off, a testament to her enduring legacy.

In recognition of her outstanding leadership, she was named Chairperson Emeritus of the Orangeburg County Democratic Party after her retirement and was honored as the State County Democratic Chairperson of the Year at a South Carolina State Democratic Convention. Because of her tireless efforts, all county elected officials in Orangeburg today are Democrats.

Betty Henderson was also a pioneer in local government. She was the first African American since Reconstruction to be elected to the Branchville Town Council, where she served for twelve years, including ten years as Mayor Pro Tempore. She was deeply committed to the well-being of her community, serving on numerous boards, including the Orangeburg Family Health Center, the Orangeburg-Calhoun-Allendale-Bamberg (OCAB) Community Action Agency Board, the Orangeburg County Department of Social Services Board, the Regional Medical Center Board, and the CASA Family Systems Board. She was a proud and active member of the NAACP, White Rose Chapter No. 1, Queen of the National Order of the Eastern Star, and La Charm Club. A skilled organizer and strategist, Betty also managed many local, state, and national political campaigns, playing a vital role in shaping the political landscape of South Carolina.

Her lifelong commitment to service was recognized with numerous accolades, including Who's Who Among Women, the African American Women in Leadership Award, the NAACP Appreciation Award for Community Service, the American Business Women's Association Business Associate Award, the Kappa Alpha Psi Women of the Year Award, the South Carolina State University First Lady Scholarship Award, and the Unsung Hero in Politics Award.

Beyond her public service, Betty was a woman of deep faith. She was a devoted member of Canaan Baptist Church in Branchville, where she served as Budget Chair, Hospital Chair, and Program Committee Chair. Known by her family and friends as a beacon of compassion and generosity, she was always willing to extend a helping hand to those in need. Her life embodied the words she lived by:

If I can help someone as I pass along this way, then my living will not be in vain.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues join me in honoring the remarkable life of Betty Henderson. Her tireless dedication to public service, political activism, and steadfast commitment to her community have left a lasting legacy. May we carry forward her spirit of service, and may she rest in peace.

HONORING THE FLEMINGTON JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER ON THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. KEAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Flemington Jewish Community Center (FJCC), which is marking the celebration of its 100th anniversary as a cherished spiritual and cultural home in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. Since its founding, the FJCC has exemplified the spirit of community, service, and faith: principles that have guided it to its position as a flourishing center of Jewish life and learning.

The history of the FJCC stretches back to the early decades of the twentieth century, when a wave of Jewish farmers, inspired by the promise of opportunity and liberty from oppression, found their way to Hunterdon County. 1922 marks the founding of the Hebrew Citizens Congregation of Hunterdon County, the brief precursor to today's Flemington Jewish Community Center.

The FJCC's earliest permanent home was a small house on Park Avenue in Flemington, which was remodeled to suit the religious and cultural needs of its growing membership. During these formative years, the congregation's devotion to community and Jewish life was evident not only in weekly services and holiday observances, but also in robust cultural activities. Furthermore, as the world plunged into the Second World War, the Center turned its attention outward, raising funds for defense bonds and organizing to support displaced Jewish populations worldwide. The congregation's compassion, resourcefulness, and generosity established the Center as a moral beacon in Flemington and beyond.

In the post-war period, the FJCC renewed efforts to build a larger and more modern facility—a vision realized through a new synagogue on East Main Street, which was dedicated in 1948. Under the steady guidance of religious leaders like Rabbi Maurice Idell, and later Rabbi Evan Jaffe, the FJCC's mission expanded even further. Hebrew classes, a Ladies' Auxiliary, youth activities, and vibrant cultural programs created a profound strength of community.

As the congregation continued to thrive, it outgrew its Main Street home and, in 2006, celebrated the completion of a new 23,000-square-foot facility in Raritan Township. Under the guidance of Rabbi Eric Cohen, dedicated officers, staff, and volunteers, the congregation has embraced this modern space. From its Nursery and Hebrew Schools to adult education and dedicated interfaith outreach and charitable engagements, the FJCC stands today at the heart of Jewish life in Hunterdon County, and reaches members from Trenton to Princeton, and from Annandale to Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

As the earliest members hoped a century ago, the FJCC today is far more than a synagogue—it is a true community center. It provides a welcoming atmosphere for families on Friday evenings, Torah discussion on Saturdays, and learning opportunities for youth and adults alike. It brings together individuals of all backgrounds, reflecting the pluralism and mutual respect that are hallmarks of both American democracy and Jewish tradition. May it

continue to be a sanctuary where tradition thrives, learning flourishes, and community guides generations to come. On this 100th anniversary, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Flemington Jewish Community Center.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, please accept this personal explanation as I was unexpectedly detained during vote proceedings. Had I been present, I would have voted: NAY on Roll Call No. 34 and YEA on Roll Call No. 35.

HONORING THELMA CASTILLO

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Thelma Castillo for her decade of service as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce. Since 2014, Thelma has worked tirelessly to strengthen the Chamber's role as a champion for businesses in Michigan's Thumb region. Under her leadership, the Chamber experienced record growth, expanded its advocacy efforts, and enhanced its ability to support local businesses. Her impact has been profound, and her legacy will be felt for years to come.

A highly accomplished professional, Thelma brought over 18 years of chamber experience to her role, having previously served at the Detroit Regional Chamber, one of the largest and most influential chambers in the country. Her expertise in workforce initiatives, leadership development, economic advocacy, and operational excellence positioned her as a transformative leader in the Blue Water business community. Throughout her career, she secured over $15 million in grants, funding programs that supported business expansion, workforce training, and economic development. One of her most notable initiatives was ''Intern in Michigan,'' a statewide program designed to retain young professionals in the region through internship opportunities.

Thelma's leadership extends beyond the Chamber, as she served on numerous boards and organizations dedicated to economic growth, workforce development, and civic engagement. She was actively involved with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Organizational Management, the American Red Cross of Southeastern Michigan, the Legal Aid and Defender Association, the Hispanic Business Alliance, and the Workforce Innovations in Economic Development initiative. Her commitment to collaboration and strategic planning helped forge strong partnerships between businesses, educational institutions, and government entities.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Thelma is known for her passion, integrity, and unwavering commitment to the community. She is a devoted wife to Len Frisch, a Detroit firefighter, and a loving mother to her son, JJ Dominguez.

Mr. Speaker, Thelma Castillo's leadership, dedication, and vision have strengthened the Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce and the broader business community. Her contributions have paved the way for continued economic growth and prosperity in the region. I thank her for her years of service and wish her all the best in this next chapter of her life.

THREAT TO ISRAELI DEMOCRACY

HON. JENNIFER A. KIGGANS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD remarks submitted at the request of a Virginia Beach constituent, Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman of Temple Lev Tikvah, and are a reflection of his views:

I have returned from the torn Land of Israel where I grew up, following a visit throughout July of a shaking, even shocking experience. Israel is undergoing a trauma whose lasting impact is impossible to predict. However, the current internal crisis threatening Israeli democracy, the Middle East's sole one, is due to the most extreme coalition government in Israel's history attempting to alter its Western liberal orientation by disabling the Supreme Court's standing as an independent Judiciary. Consequently, the unprecedented mass demonstrations for months in opposition to the proposed radical agenda which I watched in disbelief and participated in, have reflected a powerful popular response determined to preserve Israel as both the Jewish and democratic state envisioned by its founders. Already adversejy affected are the Israeli economy, military, public health, the woman's status, education, Pride community and society at large, while Israel's enemies, Iran and its proxies, become further emboldened. The special relationship between Israel and the United States is at risk as well as the essential bond between Israel and American Jewry.

With heartfelt, even prophetic pathos and deep grasp of the multi-layered Israeli scene since its inception and prior, veteran Israeli author Ari Shavit offers us a concise manifesto for urgent action with the goal of ''Saving Israel,'' his recent book's alarming title (Saving Israel. Rishon LeZion: Miskal-Yedioth Ahronoth Books and Chemed Books. 2023). He begins with a statement of both profound gratitude and grave concern, ''the State of Israel is a miracle. No other nation did what we have: To build anew a national home following two thousand years. No progressive democracy succeeded to flourish as we have, following a Shoah and living under a volcano. Despite all the troubles, problems, weaknesses, difficulties and blemishes—The Zionist dream has been realized. The people of Israel lives and the state of Israel lives. Our sons and daughters have in our ancestral land what our grandfathers and grandmothers did not: Sovereignty, freedom, prosperity, pride and progress. Being a technological, economic, military and political super-power, Israel of the 21st century is a strong country capable of shaping its own fate and march toward a brilliant future. But the deep 2023 crisis threatens the Israeli miracle and erasing our astonishing successes, leaving us homeless.''

Shavit does not mince words. On the one hand, heaps praise upon Israel's successes though Israel is not a global, as the author claims, but a regional superpower. In light of trying beginnings and facing monumental challenges that were likely to doom the fragile creation: Attacks from a collection of superior military establishments while absorbing penniless immigrants from west and east three times larger in size, into a war zone with meager resources. On the other hand, he bemoans the Jewish people's destructive tendencies that brought down Jewish sovereignty and led into long exile and ultimately a consuming Holocaust. ''And the Jewish people has multi-talents though sorrowfully it lacks the talent to be a people. It tends toward extremism, internal strife and self-destruction. . . Israel needs to be both powerful and ethical, both national and liberal, both Jewish and democratic. Only a combination of resoluteness and openness will guarantee that not weakness nor zealousness will bring ug again to the pit's cusp.''

The author is convinced that the goal is within reach though the hour is late and the Israelis with all their complexities and tribal tendencies ought not further delay. He thus concludes, ''The good and silent great Israeli majority will not remain still. The democratic Jews will not let a wondrous national and human enterprise to go down. For all of us have a stake in this special place. And we all know that there wouldn't be a Fourth Commonwealth. The Third Commonwealth is the Jewish people's last opportunity. With determination, love and faith we'll defend Israel and rebuild the house.

HONORING ROSIE'S CAFÉ ON ITS SECOND ANNIVERSARY

HON. GABE VASQUEZ

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Mr. VASQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rosie's Café and its owner, Jackie Chavira, on the café's second anniversary. Since it opened on January 21, 2023, Rosie's Café has served great food to the Grants community.

Jackie Chavira was born and raised in Grants and is incredibly proud to call it home. Jackie's parents opened Rosie's Laundry fourteen years ago, a testament to their hard work and dedication. After her mother retired, she encouraged Jackie to follow her own entrepreneurial path and open the restaurant. Jackie inherited her parents' unwavering work ethic and resilience, which shaped her journey. As her parents once told her, and she now tells her children, ''The only thing you're going to inherit is hard work.''

After Jackie purchased the building for Rosie's Café, she made several significant investments, including updating the plumbing, replacing the roof, and purchasing new equipment. With no prior experience in restaurant ownership, she faced a series of challenges along the way. She persevered through a winter without heat, a summer without air conditioning, and a monsoon season with a leaky roof and kept Rosie's Café open.

Jackie eventually joined the Chamber of Commerce and began attending meetings. These days, though she is more settled, Jackie continues to work tirelessly to keep the dream alive. Most recently, she earned her catering license, making her the only business in Grants licensed to cater.

Opening this restaurant was truly a labor of love for Jackie and her family, inspired by her mother's dream of owning a restaurant. Jackie

then took on the responsibility of obtaining all the necessary licenses and permits while continuing to work alongside her mother. During difficult times, her grandpa's encouraging words, ''la cabeza pa'rriba'' reminded her to keep moving forward.

Today, Rosie's Café is renowned for its signature Chile Relleno Plate, lovingly prepared by her mother. The restaurant's success is a testament to her family's strength, resilience, and dedication.

On behalf of the people of New Mexico's 2nd Congressional District, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Jackie Chavira, her family, and the team at Rosie's Café for sharing their love through food with the community of Grants. We congratulate them on their second anniversary and commend the dedication and hard work that have impacted the local community. We look forward to their continued success in the years ahead.

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 13, 2025 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

FEBRUARY 19

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
To hold hearings to examine pending nominations.
SR–418

10 a.m.
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Business meeting to consider an original resolution authorizing expenditures by the committee during the 119th Congress.
SR–253

Committee on Environment and Public Works
To hold hearings to examine improving the Federal environmental review and permitting processes.
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.
SH–216

10:15 a.m.
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine spectrum auction delays.
SR–253

Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine children's safety in the digital era, focusing on strengthening protections and addressing legal gaps.
SD–226

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

4:15 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Airland
To receive a closed briefing on the F–15E United States Central Command Operations.
SVC–217

FEBRUARY 20

10 a.m.
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Troy Edgar, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, and James Bishop, of North Carolina, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.
SD–342

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate confirmed the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard, of Hawaii, to be Director of National Intelligence.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S871–S956

Measures Introduced: Twenty-six bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 532–557, and S. Res. 75–76. **Pages S929–30**

Measures Reported:

S. Res. 76, authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. **Page S929**

Measures Passed:

Local Access to Courts Act: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. 32, to clarify where court may be held for certain district courts in Texas and California, and the bill was then passed. **Page S932**

Kennedy, Jr. Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. **Pages S877–S923**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 53 yeas to 47 nays (Vote No. EX. 51), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S877**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that notwithstanding Rule XXII, the post-cloture time with respect to the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. expire at 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, February 13, 2025; that following disposition of the nomination, the motion to invoke cloture with respect to the nomination of Brooke Rollins, of Texas, to be Secretary of Agriculture, be withdrawn, and Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination, with no intervening action or debate; that following disposition of the nomination of Brooke Rollins, Senate resume consideration of the nomination of Howard Lutnick, of New York, to be Secretary of Commerce, and Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination at 1:45 p.m.; and if cloture is invoked on the nomination of Howard Lutnick, all time be considered expired, and Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration, and if cloture is invoked on the nomination, all post-cloture time be expired; and that Senate vote on confirmation of the nominations of Howard Lutnick and Kelly Loeffler at a time to be determined by the Majority Leader, in consultation with the Democratic Leader, no earlier than Tuesday, February 18, 2025. **Page S923**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, post-cloture, at approximately 9:30 a.m., on Thursday, February 13, 2025. **Page S932**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 52 yeas to 48 nays (Vote No. EX. 50), Tulsi Gabbard, of Hawaii, to be Director of National Intelligence. **Pages S871–77, S956**

Measures Discharged: **Pages S926–27**

Executive Communications: **Pages S927–29**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S929**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S930–31**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S931–32**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S932**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S932**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—51) **Page S877**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 1:06 a.m., on Thursday, February 13, 2025, until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 13,

2025. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on pages S932–33.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on the Budget: Committee ordered favorably reported an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034.

THE ARCTIC AND GREENLAND

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Arctic and Greenland's geostrategic importance to U.S. interests, after receiving testimony from Jennifer Mercer, Section Head, Section for Arctic Sciences, Office of Polar Programs, Directorate for Geosciences, National Science Foundation; Alexander B. Gray, American Foreign Policy Council, and Rebecca Pincus, Wilson Center Polar Institute, both of Washington, D.C.; and Anthony Marchese, Texas Mineral Resources Corp., New York, New York.

ADVANCING CARBON CAPTURE

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine advancing carbon capture, utilization and sequestration technologies and ensuring effective implementation of the USE IT Act, after receiving testimony from Kevin Connors, University of North Dakota Energy and Environmental Research Center, Grand Forks; Dan Yates, Ground Water Protection Council, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Jack Andreasen Cavanaugh, Breakthrough Energy, Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Finance: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Jamieson Greer, of Maryland, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee ordered favorably reported an original resolution (S. Res. 76) authorizing expenditures by the Committee for the 119th Congress.

Also, committee announced the following subcommittee assignments:

Subcommittee on Education and the American Family: Senators Tuberville (Chair), Paul, Murkowski, Scott, Banks, Husted, Moody, Blunt Rochester, Murray, Kaine, Markey, Kim, and Alsobrooks.

Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety: Senators Mullin (Chair), Marshall, Scott, Hawley, Tuberville, Banks, Husted, Hickenlooper, Baldwin, Murphy, Kaine, Hassan, and Alsobrooks.

Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security: Senators Marshall (Chair), Paul, Collins, Murkowski, Mullin, Hawley, Banks, Husted, Moody, Markey, Murray, Baldwin, Murphy, Hassan, Hickenlooper, Kim, and Blunt Rochester.

Senators Cassidy and Sanders are ex-officio members of each subcommittee.

NATIVE COMMUNITIES' PRIORITIES OVERSIGHT

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine Native communities' priorities for the 119th Congress, after receiving testimony from Mark Macarro, National Congress of American Indians, William Smith, National Indian Health Board, Kerry D. Bird, National Indian Education Association, and Rodney Butler, Native American Finance Officers Association, all of Washington, D.C.; and Joseph Kuhio Lewis, Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, Kapolei, Hawaii.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Todd Blanche, of Florida, to be Deputy Attorney General, and Abigail Slater, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, who was introduced by Representative Michael Simpson, both of the Department of Justice, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Committee ordered favorably reported S. 371, to require certain reports on small business disaster assistance to be published on the website of the Small Business Administration.

Also, committee adopted its rules of procedure for the 119th Congress.

Committee recessed subject to the call, and will next meet on Thursday, February 13, 2025.

LONGEVITY

Special Committee on Aging: Committee concluded a hearing to examine optimizing longevity from research to action, after receiving testimony from Dan Buettner, Blue Zones, Miami, Florida; Rhonda Patrick, FoundMyFitness, San Diego, California; Eric Verdin, Buck Institute for Research on Aging, Novato, California; and Sarah C. Nosal, American

Academy of Family Physicians, New York, New York.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 53 public bills, H.R. 1223–1275; and 22 resolutions, H.J. Res. 40–58; and H. Res. 126–128, were introduced. **Pages H673–77**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H678–79**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Miller-Meeks to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H647**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:52 a.m. and reconvened at 12 p.m. **Page H653**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:12 p.m. and reconvened at 3:31 p.m. **Page H654**

Midnight Rules Relief Act: The House passed H.R. 77, to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for ''midnight rules'', by a yea-and-nay vote of 212 yeas to 208 nays, Roll No. 41. **Pages H654–63**

Rejected the Jacobs motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on the Judiciary by a yea-and-nay vote of 205 yeas to 213 nays, Roll No. 40. **Pages H661–62**

H. Res 122, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 77) was agreed to yesterday, February 11th.

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, February 13th. **Page H673**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H654.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H662 and H662–63.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Committee Meetings

CAREER READY STUDENTS: INNOVATIONS FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies held a hearing entitled ''Career Ready Students: Innovations from Community Colleges and the Private Sector''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PROTECTING AMERICAN INTERESTS IN A CONVERGENT GLOBAL THREAT ENVIRONMENT

Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Protecting American Interests in a Convergent Global Threat Environment''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Education and Workforce: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 1048, the ''DETERRENT Act''; H.R. 649, the ''Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025''; H.R. 1069, the ''PROTECT Our Kids Act''; H.R. 1005, the ''CLASS Act''; and H.R. 1049, the ''Transparency in Reporting of Adversarial Contributions to Education Act''. H.R. 1048, H.R. 649, H.R. 1069, H.R. 1005, and H.R. 1049 were ordered reported, as amended.

AI IN MANUFACTURING: SECURING AMERICAN LEADERSHIP IN MANUFACTURING AND THE NEXT GENERATION OF TECHNOLOGIES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade held a hearing entitled ''AI in Manufacturing: Securing American Leadership in Manufacturing and the Next Generation of Technologies''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

THE FEDERAL RESERVE'S SEMI-ANNUAL MONETARY POLICY REPORT

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The Federal Reserve's Semi-Annual Monetary Policy Report''. Testimony was heard

from Jerome H. Powell, Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

PART 2: COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 119TH CONGRESS

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Part 2: Committee Funding for the 119th Congress''. Testimony was heard from the following Chairmen: Thompson of Pennsylvania, Foxx, Arrington, Comer, Bost, Guthrie, Jordan, and Rogers of Alabama; and Representatives Craig, McGovern, Boyle of Pennsylvania, Connolly, Takano, Pallone, Raskin, and Smith of Washington.

THE CENSORSHIP-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The Censorship-Industrial Complex''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 231, the ''Colorado River Basin System Conservation Extension Act of 2025''; H.R. 249, to redesignate certain facilities at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.; H.R. 302, the ''Water Rights Protection Act of 2025''; H.R. 331, to amend the Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act to clarify a provision relating to conveyances for aquifer recharge purposes; H.R. 618, to amend the Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act of 1989 to include the City of North Las Vegas and the Apex Industrial Park Owners Association, and for other purposes; H.R. 1001, to provide for a memorandum of understanding to address the impacts of a certain record of decision on the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund; H.R. 1044, to amend Public Law 99–338 with respect to Kaweah Project permits; H.R. 1110, the ''Grazing for Wildfire Risk Reduction Act''; and the Committee's Authorization and Oversight Plan. H.R. 302, H.R. 231, H.R. 618, H.R. 1110, and H.R. 331 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 249, H.R. 1001, and H.R. 1044 were ordered reported, without amendment. The Authorization and Oversight Plan was adopted, as amended.

LEAVING INDIAN CHILDREN BEHIND: REVIEWING THE STATE OF BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION SCHOOLS

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Leaving Indian Children Behind: Reviewing the State of BIE Schools''. Testimony was heard from Kathleen Sedney, Assistant Inspector General for Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, Department of the Interior; Melissa Emery-Arras, Director for Education, Workforce, and Income Security Team, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

THE WAR ON WASTE: STAMPING OUT THE SCOURGE OF IMPROPER PAYMENTS AND FRAUD

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency held a hearing entitled ''The War on Waste: Stamping Out the Scourge of Improper Payments and Fraud''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

FROM TRANSFORMATIVE SCIENCE TO TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGHS: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S NATIONAL LABORATORIES

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Energy held a hearing entitled ''From Transformative Science to Technological Breakthroughs: DOE's National Laboratories''. Testimony was heard from the following Department of Energy officials: John Wagner, Director, Idaho National Laboratory; Thom Mason, Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory; Paul Kearns, Director, Argonne National Laboratory; and Kimberly Budil, Director, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH: SBA LENDING PROGRAMS AND THE VITAL ROLE OF COMMUNITY BANKS

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Driving Economic Growth: SBA Lending Programs and the Vital Role of Community Banks''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

AMERICA BUILDS: A REVIEW OF PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS ROADWAY SAFETY

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a hearing entitled ''America Builds: A Review of Programs to Address Roadway Safety''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: EVALUATING VA COMMUNITY CARE

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''Roles and Responsibilities: Evaluating VA Community Care''. Testimony was heard from Sharon Silas, Director, Health Care Team, Government Accountability Office; Julie Kroviak, Principal Deputy Assistant Inspector General, Office of Healthcare Inspections, Office of the Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs; Steven Braverman, Chief Operating Officer, Veterans

Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Ways and Means: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 1155, the ''Recovery of Stolen Checks Act''; H.R. 997, the ''National Taxpayer Advocate Enhancement Act of 2025''; H.R. 998, the ''Internal Revenue Service Math and Taxpayer Help Act''; H.R. 1152, the ''Electronic Filing and Payment Fairness Act''; and H.R. 1156, the ''Pandemic Unemployment Fraud Enforcement Act''. H.R. 1155, H.R. 997, H.R. 998, H.R. 1152, and H.R. 1156 were ordered reported, as amended.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the posture of United States Northern Command and United States Southern Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a closed session in SVC–217, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine navigating Syria policy after Assad, 10:30 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Linda McMahon, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education, 10 a.m., SD–562.

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, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 331, to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and the nomination of Kashyap Patel, of Nevada, to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, 9 a.m., SD–216.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: business meeting to continue consideration of 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, and S. 300, to improve accountability in the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, Time to be announced, S–216, Capitol.

House

Committee on the Budget, Full Committee, markup on Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2025, 10 a.m., 210 Cannon.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The USAID Betrayal'', 8:30 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

9:30 a.m., Thursday, February 13

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, post-cloture, and vote on confirmation of the nomination at 10:30 a.m. Following disposition of the nomination, Senate will vote on confirmation of the nomination of Brooke Rollins, of Texas, to be Secretary of Agriculture.

At 1:45 p.m., Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Howard Lutnick, of New York, to be Secretary of Commerce, and on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

9 a.m., Thursday, February 13

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of H.R. 35—Agent Raul Gonzalez Officer Safety Act.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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