

likelihood is he will change his view on many other healthcare issues, to the detriment of the American people. One thing he won't change his views on is vaccines. I am sure because he has held that so deeply.

My Republican colleagues should think very carefully before voting to elevate a vaccine skeptic and conspiracy theorist to oversee our healthcare system.

If confirmed, I fear greatly that Mr. Kennedy will take steps that severely undermine public health, weaken safety standards, and put the needs of for-profit corporations ahead of the needs of American families.

Sooner or later, public backlash is going to build, and Republicans will have wished they hadn't signed their names for such a troubled nominee. So one final time—one final time—I implore my Republican colleagues to reject the nomination of Mr. Kennedy to be Secretary of HHS. A vote to confirm Mr. Kennedy is a vote I truly believe many, many Republicans and most Americans will eventually very deeply regret.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, now on costs, lowering costs for average families in the budget resolution. Well, my colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, my fellow Americans, welcome to the age of Trumpflation—Trumpflation. If there was one mandate that Donald Trump had after winning the election, it was to fight inflation. Remember what he said on the campaign trail? He said:

When I win, I will immediately bring prices down starting on Day One.

Starting on day one, he said he will bring prices down. Well, today is day 25, and inflation is not down but actually up by 3 percent—higher than what economists were expecting. At the grocery store, the price of pork and chicken and beef are all up. Eggs are up 15 percent from last month. Gas prices are up 2 percent from last month. Used cars are up. Auto insurance has become more expensive. And what is Donald Trump doing about all this? He is making the problem worse by threatening trade wars with our own allies.

Here is what the CEO of Ford Motor Company said yesterday. The CEO of Ford Motor Company warned yesterday that “a 25 percent tariff across the Mexico and Canada borders would blow a hole in the U.S. industry that we've never seen.” That is the head of Ford Motor. That is not some liberal Democratic economist. The head of Ford Motor says that tariffs will blow a huge hole—a hole in the U.S. auto industry.

What he is doing on tariffs is, again, sort of like everything else. It is sort of a meat-ax approach, a slash-and-burn approach, not looking at each individual case and seeing what is good and what is bad.

Inflation is the No. 1 issue on people's minds. It was the biggest issue during the election. And already, Donald Trump is breaking his promise to

do something about it. The American people are starting to take notice already, even though we are only on day 25 of Trump's term. A recent CBS poll showed that 66 percent of voters do not think Trump is focused enough on lowering prices. Sixty-six percent of voters do not think Donald Trump is focused enough on lowering prices. And do you know what? They are absolutely right.

In the 3 weeks that Donald Trump has been President, he has been focused on pretty much everything but fighting inflation, which is the No. 1 thing people care about. We have seen this maneuver so many times before from Donald Trump. He knows that he has no real answers to fixing inflation, so what does he do? He distracts. He distorts. He says ridiculous and wild, strange things hoping to distract the country from the fact he is not doing his job. It is why he talks about things like renaming the Gulf of Mexico. It is why he is talking about hotels in Gaza. It is why he is talking about annexing Canada. None of these things have anything to do with the thing that matters most—lowering the cost of living for average American families.

Meanwhile, what are the Republicans doing here in Congress? What are my Senate Republican colleagues doing? Are they fighting inflation maybe? No way. No way. Republicans are full steam ahead with cutting taxes for the ultrarich, paid for on the backs of working- and middle-class families.

Just look at the gargoyle-like budget proposal that the House Republicans released yesterday. Republicans want to make billionaires even wealthier by raising costs for working people. The Republican budget slashes nutrition programs that help 40 million Americans put food on the table. The Republican budget proposes massive cuts to Medicaid, threatening healthcare for tens of millions of people. It will make food, healthcare, energy, and housing more expensive—all to cut taxes for the ultrarich, hurting the middle class, raising costs for the middle class to help the ultrawealthy. The Republican budget plan can be described in one word: “radical.”

Republicans should remember well what happened the last time they cut taxes for the ultrawealthy. It backfired with the rest of America. If Republicans try to cut taxes for the ultrarich again, history is going to repeat itself, and it will cost them dearly at the ballot box.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MULLIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF BROOKE ROLLINS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I am honored to speak on the floor of the

Senate and support Brooke Rollins to be Secretary of Agriculture. The Senate will vote on her nomination in this Cabinet position today, and I encourage my colleagues to vote yes.

America's farmers, ranchers, and foresters need a leader at USDA who will be an advocate for their livelihoods and rural America and be a strong voice to address the pressing needs of our agriculture community. Brooke Rollins is that person. In her hearing before the Senate Agriculture Committee, she pledged to do everything within her ability to ensure that our farmers, ranchers, and rural communities thrive. And we know she will follow through on that because rural America helped shape her into what she is today.

She is leading a life of service that began with membership in her smalltown Texas FFA chapter. She continues to credit her FFA adviser for his support and mentorship in her agriculture career. She invited him to attend the nomination hearing before the Senate Agriculture Committee last month, along with the Texas State FFA officer team she served with in high school.

Texas Governor Rick Perry knew Brooke Rollins had a heart for Texas farmers and invited her to join his policy team, where she advocated for agriculture. She continues that passion today.

Her executive leadership during the first Trump administration and her regular collaboration with President Trump make her uniquely qualified to serve in this position and advocate for family farms.

She understands the significant responsibility of this role during one of the most economically challenging times for agriculture producers. Hard-working farmers who grow our food are struggling to operate, let alone make a profit in this current economic climate. High inflation and steep input costs far outpacing depressed market prices have put many farm families on a course toward bankruptcy, with multigenerational operations fighting to continue their family legacies.

In December, Congress approved natural disaster and emergency assistance to help producers obtain critical operating loans for this crop year. Ensuring delivery of this aid will be one of her first priorities as Secretary. I am confident she will pursue policies to help rural America live up to its potential.

While we first met during the first Trump administration, I have had the opportunity to get to know her better during her confirmation process, and she has demonstrated her enthusiasm for being a voice for smalltown American agriculture producers. I am grateful she is willing to take on this big responsibility and is willing to be a part of the solution to help rural America at this time of unprecedented challenges.

As chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I have met with

farmers, ranchers, and agriculture stakeholders from all over the country, and they have been sounding the alarm of the dire circumstances they face in producing a safe, affordable, and abundant supply of food. Farmers from my home State of Arkansas shared with the committee last week about the difficult conversations they are forced to have right now about continuing their multigenerational farms and risking their families' futures in the industry. Unfortunately, this is a conversation many more farm families across the country will have if we do not act quickly.

Congress must deliver an updated 5-year farm bill that modernizes the safety net in order to minimize the liabilities farm families take on when they plant their crops. Food security is national security. Our country is blessed to have grocery stores stocked with food to put on our tables. This is the result of the hard work of our farmers and ranchers. These producers need the tools to be successful and continue to grow the food, fiber, and fuel our Nation depends on.

I know Brooke Rollins shares my commitment to enhancing policies that help farm families and rural communities thrive. Given her executive leadership, she is well prepared to hit the ground running when she walks through the doors of the USDA as Secretary and to deliver this certainty and predictability our producers need. I look forward to working with her and strengthening rural America for the men, women, and families who call it home.

I also want to thank everyone on both sides of the aisle for making it such that we can do this in such an expeditious way. It took a lot of cooperation. I think it just shows how important our farmers are to both Democrats and Republicans. It is one of the few areas in which it is not a partisan issue. It is all about helping the men and women who work so, so very hard to provide the food we eat.

With that, I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF BROOKE ROLLINS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, anybody who knows me well knows that I say this a lot, and that is that agriculture is the lifeblood of South Dakota and the lifeblood of our country, and farmers and ranchers are hard at work every single day to feed America and the world. But what I hear lately from farmers and ranchers is not good.

Agriculture producers across the country have faced strong headwinds in recent years—higher input costs, high interest rates, lower commodity prices—all leading to declining farm income year after year. Natural disasters have struck many of our farm regions, and the bird flu continues to ravage agriculture across the country.

Of course, in the last few years, the Biden administration was hardly much

help. It imposed burdensome regulations like WOTUS, or waters of the United States, that threatened to devastate the farm sector. The administration put expanding market access on the back burner while our agricultural trade deficit grew to record levels, and their profligate spending led to inflation that hit farmers and ranchers especially hard in the form of higher input costs.

Meanwhile, Democrats here in Congress failed to prioritize a modernized farm bill to support agriculture through these challenges, and we are now more than a year past due for an updated farm bill. America's farmers and ranchers deserve better—much better.

I expect things will be different under President Trump, and I know that farmers and ranchers will have a friend in Brooke Rollins, the President's choice for Secretary of Agriculture.

Ms. Rollins grew up in the small, agricultural town of Glen Rose, TX. She spent summers working for her family on their farm in Minnesota, helping with their corn, potato, and soybean crops. She was a 4-H'er, an FFA State officer, and a barrel racer, and her four kids are keeping up her family's way of life by showing cattle in Texas.

After studying agriculture development at Texas A&M, Ms. Rollins went to work for then-Governor Rick Perry, where she worked on agriculture policy. She then continued her ag work by building up a Texas think tank, empowering the voices of farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. Then she served in President Trump's first administration—first leading the Office of American Innovation and then on the Domestic Policy Council.

Brooke Rollins is a policy wonk with a farmer's heart. She understands the needs of agriculture producers, and she knows how to deliver results. She promises to get right to work after she is confirmed on four key priorities: first, getting disaster and economic aid out the door and into the hands of farmers; second, getting the bird flu and other animal disease outbreaks under control; third, getting the farm bill done; and finally, revitalizing the U.S. Department of Agriculture to focus on its core mission and put America and American agriculture first. I am looking forward to working with Ms. Rollins on these key priorities.

Under this Republican majority, delivering a modernized farm bill is a priority, and I am glad that Ms. Rollins has pledged to work with Congress on one of the top farm bill needs, which is strengthening the farm safety net—essential to keeping existing operations going—and encouraging the next generation of producers to get started.

I was also pleased to hear Ms. Rollins acknowledge the need to improve the management of national forests. The Black Hills National Forest, among others across the country, has seen its timber industry decimated by bad man-

agement policies. So I look forward to working with the USDA, under Secretary Rollins, to provide relief from the dire situation in western South Dakota.

I am encouraged as well that she will prioritize getting disaster and economic assistance out the door. Last year, many parts of the country suffered from natural disasters, including South Dakota. As I said, farmers and ranchers have suffered lower commodity prices and declining incomes. In December, Congress passed \$31 billion in agricultural disaster and economic assistance, and we need to get that money into the hands of farmers and ranchers working to rebuild.

Brooke Rollins understands the mission of the USDA. She understands the day-to-day needs of America's farmers, and she has the expertise to deliver results. I trust that she will put America's farmers and ranchers first as Secretary of Agriculture, and I look forward to working with her in this role.

(The remarks of Mr. THUNE pertaining to the introduction of S. 587 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. THUNE. 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. 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.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes, Senator CRAPO for up to 5 minutes, and Senator SCHUMER for 2 minutes prior to the scheduled votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, late into the night, Senators spoke on the Senate floor about why Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is the least qualified nominee to ever be tapped as America's chief health officer.

On issue after issue, Mr. Kennedy has demonstrated a profound lack of knowledge, at best, and deeply dangerous views, at worst.

Mr. Kennedy has refused to tell Americans how we would manage healthcare issues that they are deeply worried about: vaccine safety, women's reproductive health, drug pricing, and affordable healthcare, to name a few. This leaves millions of Americans alarmed about the future of health and science in America.

Last week, two Oregon medical students approached me to talk about Mr. Kennedy's nomination. These medical students told me they were less concerned about the damage Mr. Kennedy would do as HHS Secretary in the weeks and months to come. These medical students are not only worried