

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Tomorrow, we are going to begin to consider a budget resolution that creates the framework for providing those tax cuts to the very wealthy at the expense of all Americans. I serve on the Senate Budget Committee, and last week, we had a preview of all of this. We considered the budget resolution.

Those of us on the committee had an opportunity to propose amendments that would at least put up guardrails to protect the American people from deep cuts to services that are important to them to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy. And so I offered a number of those amendments. And we will have a chance on this full Senate floor to consider these amendments in the coming days.

One amendment I offered is very straightforward. It says:

It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, [or] amendment between the Houses . . . that cuts funding to Medicare or Medicaid benefits.

So if there is abuse going on in the Medicare or Medicaid Programs, absolutely go for it. But that is not what we are talking about here.

We said: Don't cut benefits to the American people. We had a vote on this in the Senate Budget Committee, and it was party line. Every Democratic Senator voted to protect Medicare and Medicaid. Every Republican Senator voted against it. I am sure we are going to have a chance to vote on this again on the Senate floor.

I would point out, I think it was this morning or last night, President Trump said that Medicaid would not be cut. He said Medicare would not be cut. I hope since the time my Republican colleagues voted against this in the committee and the vote we will have in the next couple of days, we will have a unanimous consent vote on this bill to protect Medicare and Medicaid because President Trump just said he has absolutely no intention of doing that. Let's see what happens.

I also offered an amendment in the Budget Committee to make sure that Medicare continued to have the authority to negotiate lower drug prices for people on Medicare. We had a fight for decades to allow the Medicare Program to negotiate lower drug prices for the American people. The pharmaceutical companies have fought it tooth and nail, but we got it done a few years ago.

As a result of what we did, this year, Americans on Medicare, seniors on Medicare, will have no more than \$2,000 of out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs because we finally gave Medicare the authority to negotiate drug prices, just like insurance companies have that power. Medicare is a big insurance entity in one way. Yet they were prohibited by law from negotiating lower drug prices for the Medicare Program and the American people.

But we changed that. We gave them the authority to negotiate those lower

drug prices. And guess what. It saved the Medicare Program money and it saved American seniors money because they now have lower drug prices on a couple of classes of drugs and they are continuing to move forward on that.

I had an amendment in the Budget Committee simply to say it shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any proposal that undermines and undoes and destroys the power of Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices.

Again, the vote was all Democrats in the Senate Budget Committee voting yes to protect the ability of Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices. Every Republican Senator voted no.

I had a couple of other amendments as well. Another one was an amendment to prohibit cutting. Again, these are cuts that a lot of us don't want to make because they are important to many working families, and we certainly don't want to make these cuts to clear the way for tax cuts for the very wealthy.

So I also proposed an amendment that it not be in order to consider any legislative vehicle that would cut funding from the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. These are very important programs to make sure that every child in the classroom has the nutrition they need in order to succeed.

It is pretty basic: Let's make sure every kid in the school has the nutritious meal they need simply to sustain themselves and be able to, therefore, pay attention to what the teacher is saying rather than pay attention to an empty stomach.

So I thought, surely, our colleagues would agree that we shouldn't cut that program to make way for tax cuts for the very wealthy, but, unfortunately, the result on the vote was the same. Every Democratic Senator voted to prohibit these cuts, and every Republican Senator voted to green-light these cuts going forward.

I know our colleagues will have a chance to vote on this on the Senate floor in a couple of days because Senator HIRONO and I will be offering that amendment.

Just to close and summarize, it was 30 days ago that just down this hall, President Trump was sworn in. He said he was going to usher in a great golden age for America. Of course, sitting right behind him were the people he was talking about providing a golden age for—Elon Musk, already the richest man in the world, and other billionaire tech titans. And what we have seen in the 30 days since is that great betrayal.

President Trump is not focused on reducing prices or costs for the American people. No, he is focused on implementing the plan that he disavowed on the campaign trail—Project 2025. That is what he is focused on, the plan he knew would be very unpopular. And what that plan does is call for very deep cuts and slashing very important services that matter to the American

people, including Medicaid, in order to make room for tax cuts for the very wealthy.

So this is what the Elon Musk operation is all about, and it is all about the great betrayal. People around the country from all parties are waking up to this—not just Democrats, Republicans, Independents, people who voted against Donald Trump, and also those who voted for him thinking that he was going to deliver on those promises to cut costs—only to wake up and realize for the last 30 days that something very different is happening in America; that he is slashing and illegally slashing all of these important investments for the American people in order to take care of those people who were sitting right behind him on Inauguration Day—Elon Musk and the billionaires.

That is a betrayal.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was nearly 3 years ago that the world watched in horror as Russia pursued a bloody, full-scale invasion of the sovereign nation of Ukraine.

I was in Vilnius, Lithuania, with my colleague Senator Chris Coons on that cold, dark morning in the airport when we heard reports first trickle out that the war was, again, starting in Europe.

Three years ago, the Russian invasion of Ukraine was not a partisan issue in the United States. Congressmen, Senators on both sides of the aisle agreed on the basic facts: Russia was waging an unprovoked, illegal war and must be stopped at all costs. And for the past 3 years, we have supported Ukraine with the funding it needed to beat back Russian aggression and defend the frontline of democracy in Europe. And the Ukrainian people have done just that. Forty-six thousand Ukrainian lives have been lost—46,000 defending their Nation against Putin.

We have joined with our NATO allies and many other countries around the world standing by Ukraine, and they have shown an extraordinary courage, a courage for the history books. But it turns out that the new President of the United States, Donald Trump, does not see this the same way as I do and as we have for 3 years.

The fact of the matter is that President Donald Trump is a pushover for Russian President Vladimir Putin. He has always been, and he will always be. Since Trump took office, he has played right into Putin's hands. The outrageous comments he posted today on Truth Social make that painfully clear. In the post, Trump attacked not Putin for the invasion but the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy—blaming him for Russia's invasion which, as I said, has killed more than 46,000 Ukrainians and displaced millions more.

It is disgusting to say that President Trump called Zelenskyy, the President