

as fools. Those were the words of Dr. Martin Luther King.

I stand for peace, peace between Israelis and Palestinians. I stand for loving all babies the same. The lives of all babies should be treated equally. Hamas shouldn't hide behind babies, but that doesn't give you the right to just kill babies indiscriminately. Thousands of babies have been killed. You can't do that. That is antithetical to having a just society where peace presides.

I present to you my belief that if we are to have true peace, there has to be justice; and if there is to be justice, all babies have to be treated equally. All babies have to be respected equally. All babies' lives are equally as important. It doesn't matter where they are or who they are.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President and to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

PROBLEMS CAUSED BY DOGE CUTS

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

(Mr. SHERMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, he got his start on a TV show called, "The Apprentice." We saw how entertaining it can be to fire people, but that is entertainment. That is not how you run an organization.

We have seen a performative effort to try to convince us that they are saving money. They are doing this in order to justify their plan for a \$3.5 trillion tax cut for hedge fund managers, multinational corporations and billionaires, but they are really not saving anything.

Then, yesterday, we passed a budget resolution, and all my Republican colleagues are on Twitter, X, whatever they want to call it, saying that that resolution contains statutory language to say no tax on tips, no tax on overtime, no tax on Social Security.

Well, what did Elon Musk have to say about that or what did his organization have to say?

They organized the readers content comments to correct falsehoods that people put in their tweets, and every single time a Republican went up and said that that resolution had eliminated taxes on tips, overtime, and Social Security, the Musk organization said: Readers added context. None of the policies mentioned in this post were included in the House budget resolution. It does nothing to exempt tips, Social Security, or overtime. We know they are not ultimately going to do

that because they need the \$4.5 trillion to provide tax breaks for hedge fund managers, multinational corporations, and billionaires.

Now, government is frustrating. It frustrates me often. It needs to be improved. You know what is also frustrating sometimes? My computer is on the blink a little bit, and I just want to take a hammer and hit it up the side. That makes me feel good, but it doesn't actually make the device work any better.

There are several techniques being used by the Federal Government that may make us feel good but don't make it work any better. You see, you can fire people—and they are firing just about everybody in the government with less than 2 years of government service, the probationary employees. That destroys our future. The people hired in 2024 are those that we are going to need in 2034.

The Dodgers are a pretty well-run organization. I think better run than government. Imagine if the Dodgers were going to fire all the players who had joined in the last 2 years, just eliminate everybody in single A and double A ball, I would say they would be worse than the White Sox. You can fire people.

You can also do the buyouts. They offered everybody in government a buyout. Who took the buyout? The people who could easily get another job elsewhere because they have very high capacity and the people who are going to retire in the next year or two anyway, so why not get 8 months free vacation.

Then they have the hiring freeze. Imagine if the Dodgers stopped signing new talent, where would they be in the 2030s?

You can also stop all research, and I will get to an example of that, and then you argue, well, hey—in 2026, they can say: Hey, we saved all this money, and the research wouldn't have benefited you by 2026. However, who is going to be dying from cancer and other diseases in the 2030s because of the research they are stopping now?

Then they can do an oopsy-daisy and say: Oh, we stopped the research, and we started it again. No, no, no, no, you stopped the research. All those little white rats are dead. You can't start again. You have to start the research over.

You can stop maintenance, and I will get to an example of that. It saves you money unless you actually want things to work well.

Again and again, we are told that there is just a government mulligan, let's just do it over.

Oopsy-daisy is not the way to run a multitricillion-dollar organization.

We are told that there is \$50 million for condoms and \$100 million for condoms in Gaza, and then they said, never mind, we got it wrong. We made a mistake. Oopsy-daisy.

They decided to offer all of the air traffic controllers 8 months free pay

for quitting, and then they say, oopsy-daisy. Then today Elon Musk tweets: There is a shortage of top-notch air traffic controllers. If you have retired but are open to returning to work, please consider doing so. He just gave them 8 months' pay to stay home. Now he hopes they are going to come back. No, the fishing is good, the 8 months' pay is guaranteed.

However, it is even worse. You see, not only did they give buyouts to the air traffic controllers, but they have fired the navigational aid maintenance personnel. Those air traffic controllers are going to be looking at empty screens, and those folks remain fired. What could go wrong?

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They also stopped our efforts against Ebola. Some of the charities were barely getting by. They have gone bankrupt. They pulled their people out of Africa. Then he says: Oopsy-daisy, we are going to start that again.

What a way to run a government. There are people who are going to get Ebola as a result of this oopsy-daisy mistake, and that is another opportunity for Ebola inside a human being to mutate a little bit and then be a more pathogenic Ebola when it comes here.

Finally, they fired 300 people who were in charge of security of our nuclear weapons. Oopsy-daisy, what could have gone wrong? Keep in mind, if somebody is fired and then hired back or told they are going to be fired but then not fired—if you say, oh, no harm, no foul, oopsy-daisy—once that happens to a person, their resume is on LinkedIn. They are looking for a new job.

Nobody wants to stay with an employer, if they have other opportunities, if that employer is teasing them about firing them or, worse yet, actually fired them and got them back. Some of our best people will be leaving in the weeks to come, even if they hire them back.

There is real waste, fraud, and abuse in government. This is an example. Mr. Speaker, \$200 million of our taxpayer money is being spent on advertisements praising Donald Trump. How do they justify this? They aim these at their own base, to tell their own base: Hey, Donald Trump is great. Here is a commercial to tell us that.

They claim that these ads are aimed at undocumented immigrants and that somehow, by watching a 30-second ad, the immigrants are going to say: Oopsy-daisy, I made a mistake. Venezuela really is better than California.

I don't think so. There is nothing that can be put in a 30-second ad that is going to cause somebody who is here to decide they want to be back there. These are people who walked here from Venezuela. They went through the Darien Gap. They dealt with the forest. They dealt with the snakes. They dealt with the predators. They dealt with the drug dealers.

They came into our country at great personal risk. They are going to see a 30-second ad praising Donald Trump and decide to walk back or even fly back? What a stupid excuse that is for the obvious election interference of spending \$200 million of taxpayer money on ads praising Donald Trump.

Let's look at what is happening at the VA. They fired 2,000 people there. They are still hiring, but they have fired 2,000 people there. They have a nursing shortage in this country. The nurses they have fired are going to find jobs elsewhere very quickly, and they are not going to get them back.

The VA has stopped its clinical trials on cancer. Even people who are not veterans may be dying next decade because of the research that is not being done this decade. They are canceling operations. They are increasing the wait times at the VA. They have fired the suicide crisis line counselors.

There is veterans' blood on the hands of a man who never served his country. That is right. Elon Musk never served in the South African Army.

My district includes the Pacific Palisades. I thank so many of my colleagues for their expressions of sympathy. I have had a chance to work, as I always do, with my constituents dealing with government. It is sometimes frustrating. There are short deadlines imposed on people who have fled their homes and form letters that are confusing as hell and make people think they are not eligible.

How do we make it all worse? Fly to my district, as the President did, and announce the elimination of FEMA entirely, while I have FEMA workers working 12 hours a day with my constituents, trying to solve problems. Offer the FEMA workers, including the temporary workers, a buyout. In any disaster we go in, we have to hire temporary workers. They may only have a 3-month or 4-month job, but they are offered 8 months of pay to stay home. What a way to deal with a disaster.

Then the President says he wants to impose conditions on the aid. They want to abolish the California Coastal Commission which takes steps to prevent billionaires with beachfront property to not wall off the beach and prevent anybody else from getting in the sand. I can see why Donald Trump would identify with those billionaires. That is the condition he wants to impose?

I voted for aid for hurricane victims in Louisiana, and it never occurred to me to turn to a victim after a hurricane in Louisiana and tell them to stay on their cousin's couch and no Federal aid until their State changes its abortion laws.

Now is not the time to take hostage fire victims or hurricane victims in an effort to try to force a State government to take an action that this or that Member of Congress or this or that President wants them to take.

I want to assure the country we are going to build back better. We are

going to make sure that the Palisades does not burn again. We have a very strict fire building code that is applicable to all new construction in the Palisades and other fire-prone areas.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 17 minutes remaining.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, my party has put confidence in me and made me the chief Democrat dealing with the Subcommittee on Capital Markets. Our SEC oversees our capital markets which are the nerve center of global capitalism. Virtually all the most powerful companies in America and really the world focus on one goal, and that is to increase the value of their companies' stock on our capital markets.

Our capital markets are the envy of the world. The securities traded there are worth over \$100 trillion. It is fragile. It is delicate. It is the nerve center of global capitalism. Why don't we just let big balls take a whack at it? What could go wrong?

Whether it is crime in the streets or crime in the suites, we should not defund the police. We don't defund the men and women in blue, and we don't defund the Securities and Exchange Commission that oversees the stock and bond markets.

The SEC has a budget of \$2 billion. It secured over \$3.2 billion in fines, in effect, to those on Wall Street that did the wrong thing. It more than paid for itself and—no, that was \$3.2 billion that went back to investors, \$8.2 billion in fines. The Federal Government made four times its money on the SEC.

There are those at DOGE that want to, in effect, abolish the SEC and get the same kind of securities regulation on Wall Street that they have in Botswana or Kazakhstan—that is to say, no regulations at all—and see what happens.

Two years from now we will have to see. Did the SEC under the Trump administration secure \$8.2 billion paid to the Federal Government or \$3.2 billion returned to investors? If not, it will not be because there is no crime in the suites, that there is no crooks on Wall Street. It will not be because the wolves of Wall Street have become lambs. It will be because they defunded the police of Wall Street.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA

Mr. Speaker, a lot of attention is being spent here in Congress on China. With 28 years of experience on the Foreign Affairs Committee, I would like to address that issue. The big part of the problem started when this Congress voted to give most favored nation status to China. That was at the beginning of this century. We were told it would only increase our trade deficit by a billion dollars a year. That prediction was off by 4,000 percent.

The vast majority of Democrats voted "no" on that bill, which was the action which made China a worldwide

economic superpower. It got China into the international trading organizations and opened up access to our markets. We voted "no" when a Democratic President was twisting our arms to vote "yes." It was our proudest moment. I hope my Republican colleagues will have a proud moment when they stand up to a President of their own party.

Unfortunately, Republican votes and a few Democratic votes passed that. We now have our markets wide open to China. Their markets aren't particularly open to us, and we have huge trade deficits. Those trade deficits with China were \$150 billion higher under the Trump administration than they were under the Biden administration. They were particularly high in the partial Trump administration before COVID. It wasn't a COVID thing. Trump's policy is to yell loudly and accomplish nothing when it comes to dealing with our trade deficits with China.

Trump talks about other countries eating our lunch. Under his first administration, China ate our lunch, our dinner, our dessert, and our snacks. Americans are investing in Chinese stocks, and the question I would ask at hearing after hearing is: Can anybody give me a reason why we should use our tax system and lose our tax dollars to incentivize Americans buying Chinese stocks? And not a single member can give a reason. Not a single witness can give a reason why we should do that.

We forgo hundreds of millions or billions of dollars in taxes on the gains people earn on investing in Chinese stocks. We encourage them to invest in the Chinese economy with our tax dollars. Only one Republican has stepped forward and cosponsored my legislation to eliminate the capital gains allowance, the tax incentive for investing in Chinese stocks.

Why is that? The billionaire class wants subsidies for every investment they make, even when they are building the Chinese economy or the Russian economy or the Iranian economy. It is time to stand up to the billionaire class. China cannot be confronted if people are not willing to do so.

We also need to take steps so that Chinese stocks are not included in index funds and so that every company that reports to the SEC informs its shareholders of what risk they have due to their dependence on China and what they are doing about it so that every private company is derisking from China and doing everything they can. Then, God forbid, if China wants to end the trade relationship or, God forbid, China invades Taiwan, these companies have minimized the risk that our economy faces.

One area where we need to be particularly strong is in those islands in the Pacific between the United States and China. My father fought in the Pacific. He landed the boats on island shores. We need to maintain our influence in places like the Solomon Islands

and the Cook Islands. Solomon Islands are a place where thousands and thousands of American Marines died and many in the Navy, as well.

What have we done? We have eliminated our aid program. These countries are very small. These islands are small. The aid programs are small. Yet, they have a tremendous impact on influence in these strategic islands. We eliminated \$21 million for the Solomon Islands. We eliminated \$95,000 for the Cook Islands.

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Is this how we confront China, or is this how we have performative savings?

Now, we need to confront China. One way we also need to confront China is in international lending and the credit rating agencies, the bond rating agencies that rate the creditworthiness of countries. We need to tell those who rate the other countries' creditworthiness that if they don't repay a phony debt to China, a debt trap debt to China, that should not be counted against them.

What do I mean? When China makes a loan to Sri Lanka, that they know Sri Lanka is not going to be able to pay for that project. They put in there: Oh, if you don't pay, we get to control your port. Sri Lanka should be encouraged: Don't give your port to China. Give your middle finger to China, and you will be able to borrow from American banks and European banks and international lending associations.

We should never allow a credit rating agency under our control to ding a country that is subject to this kind of blackmail from China.

FOREIGN AID IS A GOOD THING

Mr. Speaker. This brings up the issue of foreign aid in general.

If you poll Americans, they will say we are spending too much on foreign aid. Then you ask them how much of our budget is going to foreign aid. They say 25 percent of our American budget is going to foreign aid, and it ought to be less. Then you ask them what percentage should we be spending on foreign aid, and they say 10 percent.

Well, guess what. We are spending way less than 1 percent of our budget on foreign aid. We are spending way less than the American people think we are spending. We are spending less than they want to spend, but they want it cut because they think it is over 30 times what it actually is. That is why Ronald Reagan recognized the importance of our foreign aid program.

Now, I have been in Congress for a long time, and I remember when Congress confronted the executive branch. It wasn't just Democrats against Republicans. It was all of us against the executive branch. There are times when both sides of the aisle are going to need to do that.

There are some criticisms that are valid against our foreign aid and State Department budget. The State Department is doing something that is too woke for me but is supported by Elon

Musk. That is when they have in their budget spending \$400 million to replace the perfectly good armored cars that the State Department has now, armored vehicles designed to make sure that our diplomats are safe in dangerous places. We have perfectly good armored cars, but there is a proposal that the State Department spend \$400 million on new zero-greenhouse-gas-emitting armored cars. That is pretty damn woke. You would expect DOGE to have crossed that out, but they won't because the explicit statement is that this is \$400 million for Tesla Cybertruck armored cars. You know Elon ain't cutting that.

You know what they did to fool us because they think we are stupid? They changed the document a little bit. They took out the word "Tesla." Now, the State Department is going to spend \$400 million on armored, U.S.-made Cybertrucks. Do they really think those aren't going to be Tesla? Is there somebody else who makes armored Cybertrucks in the United States? That money is going to reduce the greenhouse gases of our armored vehicles, and it is going to Elon Musk.

There are a lot of things that are said about our foreign aid budget that are completely false. Elon Musk already has admitted that his statement that \$50 million was going to condoms for Gaza was just a total mistake. Oopsy-daisy. He apologized. It is okay, he thinks, for DOGE to make a mistake, but if he can find even a single dollar of misspent money in any other agency, he says that is a reason to abolish the whole agency and fire all the employees.

Well, that \$50 million was going for anti-AIDS programs in Africa, and some of it was going for condoms. That is one of the ways you try to prevent the transmission of AIDS.

Now, why are these foreign aid programs in the interest of America? First, you might think that we have a moral responsibility as the richest country in the world to do something for the poorest countries, but let's put that aside. If we don't provide foreign aid, China steps in, our influence is declined, and China's influence increases.

If we don't provide aid to the very poorest people there, that gives them a strong incentive to try to come here. You can try to stop them with a wall, but he had 4 years to build a wall and didn't build a wall.

The best way to reduce irregular migration to America is to eliminate the reason that people are so desperate to come here.

Finally, and most importantly, our aid deals with diseases. Musk already said oopsy-daisy, he didn't mean to cut the program to fight Ebola in Africa. He tries to restore it. Of course, he has already done so much damage to it, wasted so much money, who knows what. That is more people getting Ebola in Africa, more chances for the disease to mutate and then come here.

He is fine with cutting our actions against HIV/AIDS. Same issue. That

disease mutates in every human it infects. One out of a thousand, one out of a million of those mutations make the disease more capable of surviving the drugs that we have, make it more communicable, and make it more powerful when it comes back here. A lot of Americans will be dying of AIDS next decade because of what we are not doing in Africa this decade.

Then they try to point to some other programs that are wasting money, like \$6 million to help Egypt encourage tourism. I have Republican colleagues who think that USAID is aid that must be food for people who are hungry right now and about to die of starvation. They don't know that USAID stands for U.S. Agency for International Development. The goal is not just to feed people who are hungry now, not just give a man a fish, not just give a woman a fish, but to teach them how to fish.

That is why an Agency for International Development would help Egypt develop its economy. You know what Egypt has? They have got a lot of sand. That doesn't help them too much. They have got pyramids. If they can develop their tourist industry, which is a big chunk of their economy, they won't need our food aid because they will have money of their own. It is a good program, \$6 million to help them get more tourists.

You know who started that program? Donald Trump in his first term. Yes, they made a big deal of cutting a wasteful program that Donald Trump started.

Then we are told that there is a circumcision program. There is a circumcision program, voluntary, providing this very inexpensive operation. Why? Because you reduce by 60 percent of risk of female-to-male transmission of AIDS. It is the single cheapest thing you can do to reduce AIDS. Then you make a joke out of it. Yes, you can make a joke, but it is not a joke when more people die of AIDS in Africa and more AIDS mutates in Africa because you had a funny joke.

The Ebola cut was a mistake. Musk admits it. Oopsy-daisy. The cutting efforts to deal with HIV/AIDS in Africa, also a mistake.

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

IN MEMORY OF PE KHA LAU

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, there is one other cut they made, and that is they cut oxygen in a clinic for people who have fled the terrible deaths in Burma/Myanmar. As a result, a 71-year-old woman, Pe Kha Lau, died without her oxygen.

I ask that this House not only reflect on the other 10,000 people in that refugee camp who are without medical care, but I ask that we adjourn in silence in the memory of Pe Kha Lau